

THE
Journal
OF
THE KILVERT SOCIETY



Elizabeth Anne Kilvert
10 April 1846 – 16 January 1911

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

www.thekilvertsociety.org.uk

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*Contributions are welcome for the September Journal – in
words or pictures – by post or email by 17 July 2012, please*

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

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Inside back cover Publications list

Dates for your diary

Wednesday March 7

A visit to Bath. Please advise the Secretary of your interest if
you wish to attend this event.

Friday April 27

Annual general meeting at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford at
7pm. Speaker: Mr Bill Cainan Curator of the Regimental Mu-
seum of the Royal Welsh Regiment who will be giving a talk
about Rorke's Drift with reference to the Diary entry.

.Saturday April 28

At the Radnorshire Arms Hotel, Presteigne. 10.30am. Seminar.
Speaker Mr David J Harrison who will be talking on Capel-
ly-ffin & Father Ignatius. Also a talk by Mr John Toman 'The
Other Brother: Edward Kilvert at Marlborough College'.

Saturday May 26 & Sunday May 27

Weekend at Bredwardine focusing on the Rev Francis Kilvert's
life in the village.

Saturday June 23

Meet at Monnington for lunch followed by a walk to Brobury.
Meet at Monnington at 12 noon.

Sunday June 24

Service at Monnington Church at 3pm.

Saturday September 29

Meet at Clifford at 12 noon for either a picnic or a pub lunch
followed by a walk in the area.

Sunday September 30

Church service may be arranged details to follow in the *Journal*.

Front Cover Elizabeth Anne Kilvert, a widow for 32 years **Back cover** Hardenhuish then and now.

Photographs in this issue are taken by David Elvins, Alan Brimson, Ann Dean, Richard Vine and Charles Boase among others

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

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&p.

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', 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 Edmondes-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 chapter 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&p.

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&p.

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. Bloreng 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 Mabber 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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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 Chairman

I AM writing in middle January and looking forward to the forthcoming Kilvert year. Kilvert events are always times to renew old friendships and welcome new members. I suppose we all hope for the fine weather we have experienced for outdoor events over the last few years. However, the weather has not always been kind for us.

I remember a visit some of us made to the Radnorshire Hills in the early 1990s when the leader of our walk was the late, much missed Gordon Rogers (and his bag). We all assembled on a narrow road off moorland and ate our sandwiches before the rain started. It was the end of June but more like a cold January late

From the Secretary

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 27 April 2012. Any two members of the society may nominate one or more members for election to the committee. Such nominations and items for any other business must be received by the secretary by 27 March 2012.

The arrangements for the A.G.M and seminar weekend are as follows:

On the Friday evening, following the business of the meeting and a buffet supper, we will be given a talk by Bill Cainan, Curator of the Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh. He will speak on Rorke's Drift/Isandhlwana, to highlight the shock of the news in the Borders area from where many of the men were recruited. Francis Kilvert mentions this episode in his diary entry for 11 February 1879. Bill will also enlighten us on the Hay detachment of the Brecknockshire Rifle Volunteers, often mentioned in the *Diary*.

At Saturday morning's seminar, we have two speakers, both members of the Society. David Harrison will give an illustrated talk on 'Cape-y-ffin and Father Ignatius and Eric Gill' and John Toman will talk on 'Edward Kilvert – Brother Perch'. As usual the afternoon is free. May I suggest a visit to the Radnorshire Museum at Llandrindod Wells to view the Society's archive?

In the evening our annual dinner will be held. This relaxed and informal evening epitomises the fellowship of the Society. There is always a lovely buzz about the dining room as we meet up with old and make new friends.

You will notice in Forthcoming Events an extra item on the 26/27 May, when a Kilvert weekend is to be held at Bredwardine as a fundraiser to improve facilities at the Church. The Kilvert Society committee are fully supporting this event with speak-

From the Editor

THIS edition of the *Journal* endeavours to put right an unfortunate oversight that I, as Editor, should have been alert to – that last year marked the centenary of the death of the widow of Francis Kilvert.

I suspect Elizabeth Anne Kilvert is viewed ambivalently by some Members of the Society. On the one hand it was she who 'took Kilvert away from us' without the recorded excitements of romance (and who is said to have excised passages from the *Diary*); and on the other we have the memories of her niece (and goddaughter and bridesmaid) Miss M.A. Rowland, in *Looking Backwards*, about how 'she and Uncle Frank were devoted to each other.... She never fully recovered [from his] sudden home-call.... Her whole life was spent in the unselfish care and thought for others.'

The article by Margaret Collins on page 139 goes a long way

afternoon. We followed Gordon and it began to rain very heavily. As we progressed along the sodden ground more and more returned to their cars but Gordon and a few of us marched onwards and up Llandeilo Hill. We eventually reached our destination, the grave of Twm Tobacco. Gordon gave us a short talk and a reading from the *Diary* and we returned triumphantly to our cars to drive to the nearest tearoom. Despite the appalling weather it was a very memorable visit and a triumph of sorts.

However, I do hope we continue to be lucky with fine weather and I look forward to seeing many of you at our first visit of the year, in March, to Bath.

ers and display material etc. Many of the houses mentioned by Francis Kilvert will be available to visit, including the Vicarage, the Cottage (the home of the Misses Newton) and also the Old School, along with many others to be included in a guided walk. Please do your best to support this event. The Society endeavours to improve our relationships not only with Bredwardine but also the parishes of Clyro and Langley Burrell; our support and interest in this event is vital.

The Archive Conservation project has now reached a most satisfactory conclusion with the recent return to the Museum of the two rebound albums of watercolours. The collection is now completely reassembled in pristine condition and kept in a safe environment.

Thanks must go for the wonderful financial support from you the Members, without which the project would just not have got off the ground. The Pilgrim Trust, The Garfield Weston Foundation and Mr James Hughes-Hallett of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation provided grants to match our fundraising efforts which ensured a very successful conclusion of the project.

I must pay tribute to our conservator, Kate Newton, who with great professionalism managed the complete project. Always free with her advice and prepared 'to go the extra mile' for the Society, Kate found us the oil painting conservator, the bookbinder and even the cabinet makers. Her enthusiasm for the project was astonishing and ensured the project was completed on time and to budget.

And finally, we have an interesting programme of events for 2012. I do hope you will be able to support them. Please return your booking form for the A.G.M. weekend as soon as possible (including those of you who only require supper on the Friday evening).

towards redressing the balance. Writing to me she said: 'I have enjoyed thinking and writing about her. Like you, I thought her main legacy was rather negative, but on reading *Looking Backwards* she emerges in a much more sympathetic light, as a young woman whose life experience echoes Hamlet's slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.'

While offering my heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to this edition, I would like especially to express my gratitude to Stephen Hunt, who has generously shared with us his fascinating research into his family's historic connection with Birds' Marsh, the idyllic patch of country between Langley Burrell and Hardenhuish (now threatened by development). Stephen's excellent book is available at £6.95 from the address given on page 138. He also freely made available to the *Journal* the historic photographs that grace his book.

Annual General Meeting of the Kilvert Society 2012

The Annual General Meeting of the Kilvert Society will be held in the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, on Friday 27 April 2012 at 7pm.

Agenda

1. Welcome to Members.
2. Secretary's Announcements.
3. Apologies.
4. Minutes of A.G.M. of 15 April 2011.
5. Matters Arising.
6. Obituaries.
7. Chairman's Remarks.
8. Financial Report.
9. Election of Officers.

i) Existing Officers offering themselves for re-election

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

The following are ex-officio Officers

Hon. Archivist	Mr C. Dixon
Hon Editor of the Journal	Mr C. 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

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

A talk to be given by Mr Bill Cainan, Curator of the Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh on Rorke's Drift with reference to Francis Kilvert's *Diary* entry of 11 February 1879.

Vote of Thanks and Close of meeting

Alan Brimson, Hon. Secretary

THE KILVERT SOCIETY:

Charity Registration No: 1103815

Statement of Accounts for the Year ending 31 December 2011

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
Appeal Donations	£1,025.20	£10,458.58
Subscriptions	£3,994.00	£4,091.00
Donations	£400.50	£327.00
Gift Aid	£1,126.28	£1,591.3
AGM Income	£239.00	£276.50
Publication Sales	£622.84	£1,518.52
Events	£805.05	£3,896.50
Interest	£4.86	£11.64
Transfers	<u>£1,145.21</u>	<u>£1,700.00</u>
	<u>£9,362.94</u>	<u>£23,871.08</u>

EXPENDITURE

Grants & Subscriptions	£465.00	£455.00
Monuments & Collections	£18,056.24	£17,053.01
Postage, Stationery, Phone	£607.83	£757.77
Printing	-	£1,108.00
Journal Printing & Postage	£2,630.68	£3,644.37
Insurance	£152.00	£150.00
Events	£803.66	£3,757.00
AGM Expenses	£595.36	£439.51
Transfer	£1,145.21	£1,700.00
Website	£1,199.99	
Unpaid Cheque	£12.00	
	<u>£25,667.97</u>	<u>£29,064.66</u>

ASSETS

Balance Lloyds	£4,651.84	£4,038.32
Balance Lloyds Appeal Fund	£1,277.33	£19,196.98
Nationwide Building Society	<u>£11,914.21</u>	<u>£10,913.11</u>
		£34,148.41
Excess Expenditure over Income		<u>-£16,305.03</u>
	<u>£17,843.38</u>	<u>£17,843.38</u>

Richard Weston, Honorary Treasurer

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

John Wilks, Honorary Auditor

Minutes of the 2011 Annual General Meeting of The Kilvert Society

MINUTES of the 2010 Annual General Meeting of The Kilvert Society held at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, on Friday, 15 April 2011 at 7pm.

The Chairman welcomed members and especially new members to the meeting. He asked that everyone sign the attendance book which was being passed round.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from the following people: Geoff Atherton, (Swansea), Sally Fury (Abergavenny), Jim Hall (Chippenham), James Hughes-Hallett (London), Mr & Mrs A. Harvey (Kings Capel), Trevor Hockin (Sutton Coldfield), Diana Jones (Hay-on-Wye), Deirdre Mahon (Abergavenny), John Sant (Kidderminster), Sue and Michael Sharp (Kinnersley), Grace & John Tearle (Buckingham), Michael Tod (Abergavenny), Caroline & Jim Webber (Calne), Anne & Elizabeth Wheeldon (Hereford).

SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alan Brimson reminded members that the June weekend would be held at Dorstone with a walk to be led by Peter Beddall. The Sunday service would be held at Clyro. In September members would visit Langley Burrell and Hardenhuish. Alan advised that refreshments would be provided following the meeting by the subscriptions secretary, Sue Rose. A payment of £4.50 per head should be made at the door. Publications would also be on sale from Colin Dixon. The speaker, following the interval, would be Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles. Saturday's events would be held at the Radnorshire Arms Hotel, Presteigne. Coffee at 10.30 a.m.; 11 a.m. John Toman to talk on 'Blessings on Science and Her Handmaid Steam: Kilvert and Railways'. The annual Dinner, also at the Radnorshire Arms Hotel, 6.30 for 7pm.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 23 April 2010, having been printed in the March *Journal* and also circulated at the meeting, 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 to the Society since last year's A.G.M. (copy with minutes) and members stood in silence as a tribute to their memory.

ACTING CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Alan 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 over the past year and for chairing committee meetings; Richard Weston and Colin Dixon for their work on the conservation project; Charles Boase for his work on the *Journal* and the seamless transition from one editor to the other. He advised members that Jeff Marshall had now taken on the work of press officer. He thanked Peter Beddall for acting as the Society's 'Bob the Builder' and Sue Rose for being subscriptions secretary and unofficial catering manager. He also thanked the remaining members for their background work, which was invaluable. Alan advised members that the Kilvert graves had been cleaned and were now well worth a visit and that the memorial seat at Bredwardine had new carved supports and had been stabilised and restored by Peter Beddall.

Alan said trips to Skegness, Bettws, Weston-super-Mare and Llanbedr had been a great success and had been blessed with wonderful weather. Jeff Marshall thanked Alan for organising

everything so well. Alan said the newly conserved archives' collection was now back in the museum at Llandrindod Wells and asked as many people as possible to visit the museum on Saturday afternoon. He said Kate Newton, the conservator, Heather Pegg, the past curator of the museum, together with Will Adams, the current curator, would be there to answer questions and explain the restoration. He said the new website for the Society would include details of the archives. He said although the archives were 'back home' it was now time to pay the bills and he said it was important that all pledges be honoured.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Richard Weston gave details of the Appeal Fund and how the money had been spent so far:

Paper conservation (Kate Newton)	£12,700.00*
Digitisation (NLW)	£6,066.00
Oil painting conservator	£701.00
Sketch books and binding work (two more books to be paid for)	£3,240.00
Two cabinets and wallboard	£8,300.00
Total to date	<u>£31,007.00</u>

* *A further payment is due.*

He said he would give a full statement of expenditure next year.

Income: Richard said Appeal donations were drawing to a conclusion; subscriptions were reasonably stable; publications were up because of the sale of *Who's Who* and the transfer of money showed the outlay for the original survey of the Archives which had now been paid into our Account from the Appeal Fund

Expenditure: The donations to the Kilvert churches had been increased and a donation to St Harmon's included. Work on the seat at Bredwardine and the two Kilvert graves was included under Monuments. The expenses for the committee had increased mainly because of postage and travelling. There were no questions and the acceptance of the accounts was proposed, seconded and carried. John Wilks was thanked for acting as Auditor.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The present officers were willing to stand for re-election and the following officers were proposed, seconded and carried:

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
Ex Officio:	
Editor of the <i>Journal</i> :	Mr C. Boase
Hon. Archivist:	Mr C. B. Dixon
Hon. Minutes Secretary:	Mrs V. J. Dixon
Publicity Officer:	Mr J. Marshall

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

Continued at foot of following page

Financial Report on the Completion of the Appeal

THE conservation work on the Kilvert Society collection is now complete and I can present an account of the donations that we have received and the amounts we have paid out to the various craftsmen and women who have done such a marvellous job for our archive.

Firstly, however, I would like to thank you, our members, for your wonderfully generous contributions to this fund which was started in June 2009 following the circulation of Alan's eye-catching appeal. The first two donations came in very promptly from our two stalwart supporters, Liz and Anne Wheeldon (thanks and best wishes to them) and the cheques and standing orders flooded in as the months passed. In total, as you can see, a marvellous figure of £18,292.34 has been received.

Secondly, very grateful thanks must go to our three grant benefactors: The Garfield Weston Foundation, The Pilgrim Trust and The Esmée Fairbairn Trust, where James Hughes-Hallett personally supported our application, resulting in their most generous gift.

Gift Aid also contributed the marvellous sum of £3,400 in 2009, reclaimed from the contributions of the membership during that year. Many thanks to HMRC for that!

So a total of just over £37,700 has been achieved from various sources to support our project, which, when launched, we estimated would cost £38,000 – pretty close!

As far as the expenditure is concerned the major part of the work was in the hands of Kate Newton, one of the top paper conservators in the country, and she has done an amazing job in bringing the collection back to life. She spent 275 hours on the work over more than a year and her fees amounted to £13,715, which includes of course over a thousand pounds for materials.

Julian Thomas took on the task of conserving and rebinding the marvellous sketchbooks of Edward Kilvert (Kilvert's uncle), which contain particularly evocative watercolours of India. Julian's fees for many hours of painstaking work, which has completely revived this part of the collection, came to £6,240.

Jenny Williamson was in charge of cleaning and restoring our oil painting of Thomas Furley Smith (father of Rev. William Robins Smith) and this took sixteen hours at a cost of £701.50.

The Society would like once again to thank Kate, Julian and Jenny for their work on behalf of the Society.

Framework Ltd. of Carmarthen were asked by the Society to provide the two new cabinets and one display wall that were required for an improved and clearer display of our collection. We have been delighted with the way that they looked when they were delivered in time for our A.G.M. event in 2011 despite the sad death of during their construction of John Butler, their managing director and chief designer. Framework charged us £8,300.30 and our thanks go to them for the very high quality of their workmanship.

The digitisation of the collection by the National Library of Wales was recommended to us originally and we felt that this

would be an ideal way of storing the collection permanently and making it available on our new website. This work cost £6,066.76 and a copy is now permanently stored in the National Library's archives and is also available in the collection room of the Llan-drindod Wells Museum.

The website itself has cost £1,188 and was set up during the second half of the year by Core Web Design of Penarth. Please do have a look at it if you have not already done so: the website is to be found at www.thekilvertsociety.org.uk. It is already proving its worth with an increase in the number of visits.

Lastly, descriptive storyboards for the collection were created and, inclusive of inevitable transportation costs, these amounted to £220.21 and complete the expenditure to date.

The appeal account at 31 December stood at £1,277.33. There will be some costs for the annual charge to the National Library for storage and maintenance of the digitisation records and also some ongoing costs for the maintenance of the website. We do feel, however, that these two elements in the conservation story are vital to furthering interest in Francis Kilvert. It is proposed to keep the appeal account open for next year but in due course any balance will be carried over into the main account.

Richard Weston (Treasurer)

Appeal Fund

Income

Donations from Members	£18,292.34
Grants from:	
Esmée Fairbairn Trust	£7,000.00
The Pilgrim Trust	£8,000.00
Garfield Weston Foundation	£1,000.00
Gift Aid Reclaimed	£3,400.00
Interest	£16.76
	£37,709.10

Expenditure

Kate Newton, Paper Conservator	£13,715.00
275 hours & original report	
Julian Thomas, Bookbinding – Sketchbooks	£6,240.00
Jenny Williamson, Painting restoration	£701.50
Bristol Framing, Storyboards	£145.21
Framework, 3 Cabinets and Wall Fixture Museum	£8,300.30
Cabinet – Llandrindod Wells Museum	
National Library of Wales, Registration	
& Cataloguing Collection	£6,066.76
Travel Expenses, Committee members' expenses	£75.00
Core Web Design, Website	£1,188.00
	<u>£36,431.77</u>

Balance in Account as at 31.12.11:

£1,277.33

Continued from previous page

Alan said he was pleased to advise that David Elvins, *pictured right*, had been asked to serve on the committee. It had subsequently been unanimously agreed that he be nominated for the post of Chairman. David had agreed and Alan asked those present to vote on this recommendation. The nomination was seconded and carried. David thanked the meeting and said that he would carry out his duties diligently.

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

There being no other business the meeting closed for refreshments.

After the interval Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles gave his talk on 'Kith, Kin and Kilvert





Members pausing in the clearing in the wood near Keeper's Cottage to hear how the picnic party danced Sir Roger de Coverley



Autumn in Wiltshire with spring in the step

Our Society's excursions are even more of a treat if you are walking in RFK's footsteps for the first time. DAVID HARRISON, reporting on our visit last September to Langley Burrell and Hardenhuish, eloquently conveys the sense of pleasure and excitement felt when a place is first matched to its Diary entries

SATURDAY, 24th September 2011, dawns –

'O Frabjous Day!' Today, at last, after 66 years I will see the birthplace of my hero, The Revd. Francis Kilvert. Charles Boase and I crossed Offa's Dyke and entered England aiming for Wiltshire, at noon we met with other intrepid members of the Kilvert Society at Langley Burrell, N.E. of Chippenham.

St. Peter's Church, Langley Burrell, is where Robert Kilvert was rector, 1855-82, and his son, Francis, curate in 1863-4 and again in 1872-6. The Church is in a lovely setting, mostly hidden from the busy Chippenham Road. Originally 9th century, Saxon, with much rebuilding, reroofing, with four 17th century bells in the tower. There are many Ashe family memorials inside the Church and in the churchyard Francis' father and mother, Thermuthis, whose gravestone is surrounded by tiny, pink cyclamen with distinctive bent-back petals.

Squire Ashe, who had the living of St. Peter's within his gift, lived in a very grand three-decker Georgian pile to the rear of the Church and was a great nuisance to Robert Kilvert. He had the too-close vicarage taken down and a new one built a little further away and out of sight.

Following in the footsteps of Jim Hall, 24 members (10 ladies & 14 gents, only one in shorts) negotiate death's highway, a.k.a. the Chippenham Road where we paused to learn of Sally Killing who appears in the diary on 27 April, 1873: *Visited old Sally*

Killing. She said when she was young women never wore their gowns out haymaking. If a farmer saw one of his women working in a gown he would order her to take it off. She herself had been weeks without putting on her gown from Monday morning till Saturday night, in the hay harvest.... 'But now,' said Sally contemptuously, 'now they are all ladies. They wear dresses now, not gowns.

Autumn in Wiltshire is a pretty season with the hedgerows burgeoning with elderberries and sparkling with the black gold of blackberries. We passed neighbouring cottages rejoicing in such names as Lark Rise, Dunroamin, Yer Tiz. In a most neighbourly, one might say almost Kilvertian fashion, boxes and bags of free apples and pears adorned gateways the length of the lane for passing travellers.

The ensemble next fell upon The Langley Tap for lunch and refreshment, emerging replete at 2.15pm to once again dodge the tractors and speeding traffic.

Crossing the fields we set course for Hardenhuish (pronounced 'Harnish' by locals). Alan Brimson, who by now had rolled up his distinctive trousers to half-mast, proclaimed 'Forward, this might be a bit muddy, folks!' But Jim Hall was in the lead, so all was well. The undergrowth gave way to a dense wood and a section of high roots reminiscent of the Florida Everglades. Through an iron gate made by a local blacksmith to a clearing where we heard the diary entry for 18 May 1874: *Amelia Brown*



boiled our kettle. We played hide-and-seek in the wood and danced Sir Roger de Coverley under the oaks in the green glade near the keeper's lodge. Agnes and Edith made a pretty picture once for a moment as they stood together on the mound at the foot of one of the oaks, dressed alike sisterly in bright magenta skirts.

The sheets of bluebells were still in all their splendour and the pink rhododendrons were just beginning to show their blossoms.

Emerging from the woods we entered the domain of the once well-to-do Clutterbuck family of Hardenhuish Park. The centre of the economic gravity of England has moved downwards since the 18th & 19th centuries, of course, and in Hardenhuish Lane there was an easy example of social mobility at its best, or worst, depending on your point of view. This pleasant suburb offered 'a new, exclusive, gated development of luxury cottages for those over 55'.

St. Nicholas' Church, Hardenhuish, 'the Church on the Hill', is a perfect little Georgian gem built in 1779. The architect, John Wood, designed the Royal Crescent and Circus in Bath. Robert Kilvert was the incumbent here when his wife, Ther-muthis, gave birth on 3 December 1840, to the Diarist Robert Francis Kilvert, in the Rectory opposite. This fact is commemorated by a metal plaque fixed next to the front door.

A further reading – St. Valentine's Morrow, 1875: *It was a brilliant lovely day and I walked over to Allington through Harnish. As I went across the fields and by the side of the winding Allington brook and looked back up at the dear old white house upon the hill, backed by the dark mass of the trees in the wilderness and overtowered by the cupola of the bright green ivied church, and saw the brown and grey farm buildings nestling warm and sheltered at the foot of the hill, my heart rose up and went out towards my old sweet house, and the tears came into my eyes as a thousand sweet and happy memories swept across my soul. Sweet Harden Ewyas.*

Nowadays the Clutterbucks' exten-



sive Park is occupied by three schools which enjoy an enviable campus and extensive sports field. Against the south wall of the Church is an iron-slatted seat where Francis used to sit to admire the view in tranquillity. Beyond the east end of St. Nicholas' stands the Ricardo Monument, built over a vault containing nine members of the Ricardo family, the most notable of whom was David Ricardo, M.P., the eminent economist.

By the juggling of cars the members hurtled on to Chez Jim where our guide and host welcomed us all to enjoy a sumptuous tea provided by Sue Rose in his splendid garden.

Here, off a quiet lane where Jim was born 75 years ago, the two stone-built cottages are now one. In Kilvert's time thatched, but now joined and tiled. Above the chimney Jim's weather vane topped by an antlered roe deer betray him as a true countryman, a part-time pheasant plucker and good shot. The sitting room held no less than eleven sets of mounted antlers still attached to the skulls of the roe deer which Jim had bagged locally.

David Elvins proposed the vote of thanks to Jim and his helpers, and Alan and the members responded enthusiastically.

So..... 'Callooh! Callay!' what a wonderful day. Kilvert's birthplace and the lanes and byways of his curacy seen at last. Thank you, Jim.

From top, the church of St Nicholas seen from Hardenhuish Rectory; our chairman David Elvins snaps the plaque at the Rectory, the grotto at Langley House; Jim Hall at home at Marsh Farm; and Eric Ball inspects the name of the blacksmith, Martin, on a gate at Birds' Marsh



Francis Kilvert and Birds' Marsh

Our September Chippenham outing took in Birds' Marsh, where we met up with STEPHEN HUNT, a member of the family that lived in Keeper's Cottage. Here he draws on the book he has written on the area and also talks about proposals to build 750 houses there. The illustrations are from his book

IT IS surely Francis Kilvert's power to evoke and make us cherish a sense of place that makes us return to his compelling entries, well over a century after he penned them. The sum of the human community and the character of its agricultural and economic production and services, its wildlife, topography, history and folklore all combine to make a rural setting distinctive. As a chronicle of such details Kilvert's *Diary* keeps company with such keenly observed classics as Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne*, Mary Russel Mitford's *Our Village*, Flora Thompson's *Larkrise to Candleford*, the writings of fellow Wiltshireman Richard Jefferies and Ronald Blythe's *Akenfield*. Kilvert's ability to bring to life and colour his locality ensures that we remember his writings with the finest of this tradition. His alertness to the pleasures and beauties of rural life, balanced with its gossip, hardships and sometimes cruelties, makes for a bittersweet prose that avoids representing village life as a bucolic idyll.

Kilvert Society members will be aware that there are two Kilvert countries. Born at Hardenhuish, he was native to the north of Chippenham, Wiltshire. Here he served as curate of Langley Burrell, the parish of his father, Robert Kilvert, from 1863 to 1864 and 1872 to 1876.¹ He was also intimately familiar with the area around

Clyro, on the border of what is now Powys and Herefordshire, where he was curate from 1865 to 1872. At the heart of Kilvert Country in Wiltshire, and particularly close to my heart, is the area adjacent to Langley Burrell called Birds' Marsh. This is a discrete area bounded by Jackson's Lane to the north, Langley Road to the east, Hill Corner Road to the south, and Malmesbury Road to the west. At the centre of Birds' Marsh is a wood shaped rather like a child's drawing of a whale. In the present day it measures 23 acres, although in 1840, and perhaps in Kilvert's





time, the expanse of trees was 30 acres. Kilvert mentions Birds' Marsh seven times in his extant diaries (two are merely passing references). In Kilvert's day the Keeper's Cottage would have stood deep in woods. Derelict since the 1960s, the cottage has now virtually disappeared, but for some traces of mossy rubble. When Kilvert knew Birds' Marsh during the 1870s members of the Brown family inhabited the cottage. In an intriguing piece of folklore recorded in June 1873, for example, he writes that:

*Walter Brown of the Marsh says that his grandfather old William Brown the keeper once saw some fairies in a hedge. But before he could get down out of the cart they were gone.*²

The entry is most likely to refer to William Brown (c.1779-1858) who is recorded as the tenant of the cottage on the Langley Burrell tithe map for 1840. There were two men called Walter Brown in the family that lived at Birds' Marsh. The first was born (c.1836) to William Brown and Mary Brown. The second was son of William Brown's son, Jacob, and daughter-in-law, Amelia Brown (née Matthews), and was baptised in 1862.³ Kilvert's description of Walter Brown as William Brown's grandson suggests that this conversation regarding fairies was shared with the latter, who would have been around eleven years old at the time.

We know, from other entries in Kilvert's *Diary*, that the keeper and his wife resident in the cottage at this time were Jacob Brown (born Langley Burrell c.1828-unknown) and Amelia Brown (born Chippenham c.1825-unknown). The following was written 17 May 1870:

*Emmie, Sam, Katie, Fanny, Dora and I all walked to the Marsh after dinner by the fields behind the school, entering the Marsh by the Barrow gate. Katie dropped a golosh in the meadows and Sam went to look for and found it after some search. Dora and I found an Osmunda shooting by a pond where we planted it last year, as it would not grow in the Rectory garden. We went to the keeper's cottage to get 'plain water' for Katie to drink. Saw Amelia Brown. The porch beautifully covered with honeysuckle and a fine white lilac at the end of the cottage rising to the gable. A large black and tan terrier chained near the gate barked a good deal and Katie wanted him beaten.*⁴

Three of Francis Kilvert's companions on that spring day in 1870 were his sisters Emmie (Emily), Fanny (Frances) and Dora (Sarah Dorothea Anne). Sam was his brother-in-law (Emmie's husband) and Katie was his niece (Emmie and Sam's daughter). Langley Burrell School was built at the instigation of local landowner Robert Ashe in 1844. Following its eventual closure in 1974, it now remains as a private house.

David Hunt and Agnes Rose Hunt (my great-grandparents) moved into the Keeper's Cottage after the Brown family, during the mid-1880s. A Hunt family photograph, taken in approximately 1920, indicates that the porch of the rustic cottage was still festooned with honeysuckle as it had been when the Kilverts visited half-century earlier.

Kilvert again mentioned Amelia Brown, following another visit to 'the Marsh' with his sister on 18 May 1874: *Went with Dora at 3 o'clock to a picnic in the Marsh. There were present the Vicar of Chippenham and Mrs. Rich, Florence, Nettie and Gertrude Rich, Georgie Awdry of Monkton, Agnes, Edith, Mabel, Evelyn, Beatrice and Julia Awdry of Seagry.*

Amelia Brown boiled our kettle. We played hide-and-seek in the wood and danced Sir Roger de Coverley under the oaks in the green glade near the keeper's lodge. Agnes and Edith made a pretty picture once for a moment as they stood together on the mound at the foot of one of the oaks, dressed alike sisterly in bright magenta skirts.

*The sheets of bluebells were still in all their splendour and the pink rhododendrons were just beginning to show their blossoms.*⁵

Members of the Kilvert Society read this passage during their ramble around Langley Burrell in September 2011. Kilvert beautifully draws out the colours of the scene – green, magenta, blue and pink – in a way that captures the shifting moods felt in Birds' Marsh Wood. It is at times forbidding, with its shadowy thickets and smell of rotting vegetation, yet at the right season walkers will suddenly break out into sunny glades, flowers and birdsong. Kilvert's recorded visits are largely in May and June when the area is most enchanting. In former years Birds' Marsh Wood would have been less overgrown, when the Keeper's Cottage was

inhabited and boasted an adjoining garden, and the woodland was managed and coppiced. The passage tells us that the rhododendrons, that the Ashe family planted earlier during the Nineteenth Century, were already flourishing. They were a popular local attraction for visitors who liked to stroll through the woodland paths. Today, however, these huge shrubs are proliferating to the detriment of other species.

In a few lines Kilvert delightfully brings to life a lost world of cavorting clergymen, dancing merrily beneath the oaks with their family and friends. Although adapted from ancient folk dances, the Roger de Coverley was first named as such and transcribed during the late Seventeenth Century, for example in *The Dancing Master*, published by John Playfair.⁶ It became a great favourite during the early Nineteenth Century when it was included as the lively 'Finishing Dance' in Thomas Wilson's influential *Complete System of English Country Dancing*.⁷ It subsequently appeared in Charles Dickens's *Christmas Carol* and George Eliot's *Silas Marner*.

In his descriptions of such capers, Kilvert finds a way to gild the most quotidian aspects of country life with an otherworldly quality. This is certainly true of the prae-ternatural glimpse caught in a brief entry of 21 June 1873:

*Near the keeper's cottage the setting sun made a green and golden splendour in the little open glade among the oaks while the keeper and two other men walked like three angels in the gilded mist.*⁸

This vignette has the ambience of the early art of Kilvert's contemporary, Samuel Palmer (1805-81). There is also a sense of the social separation of the cottage dwellers. They are engaged in manual activities, a world apart from the genteel world of the local clergy and minor gentry that Kilvert inhabits. Amelia Brown boils the kettle. Dappled in natural motley, her husband Jacob is camouflaged so as to appear almost as a species of Birds' Marsh wildlife:

*After dinner went to the Marsh with Perch to see the bluebells. They were not quite in full bloom, but here and there we saw a beautiful sheet, a mist of blue among the fern, variegated by two white bells. The rhododendrons too are just coming out. We were sitting on the old stump seats under the great ashes, when we saw a man coming along the green ride in chequered shade and shine. It was Jacob Brown the Keeper, with a spud [a thin spade used for uprooting weeds] over his shoulder. The rides were swarming with rabbits and hares, and we thought we saw one fox steal across a ride. We went down to the 'Slates', the may bushes were glorious in their whiteness and fragrance. We had entered the Marsh by the barrow gate and we came out by the Church gate.*⁹

'Perch' was Edward Newton Kilvert, the Diarist's brother.

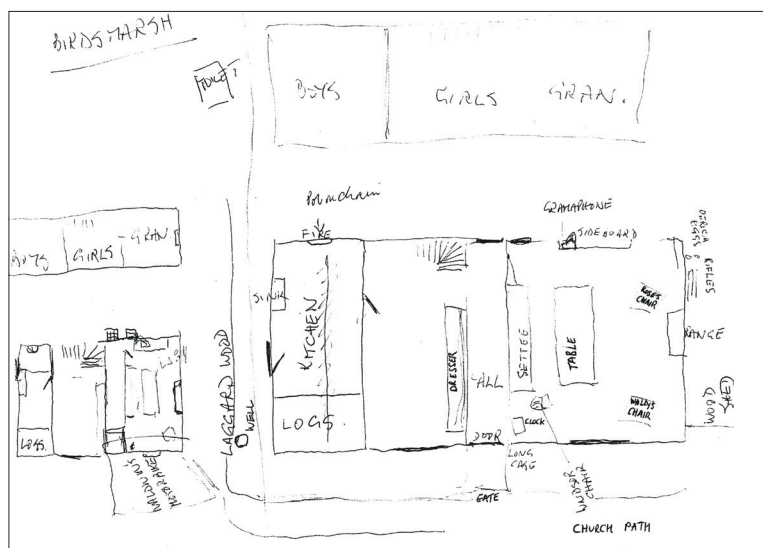
Robin Tanner (etcher and educationalist) and his wife, Heather Tanner (writer and peace campaigner), were among the greatest admirers of such entries in Kilvert's *Diary*. They even learned that the Diarist's great-grandfather was buried in their garden at Old Chapel Field in Kington Langley, which was consecrated ground.¹⁰ In 1969 they commissioned Kington Langley craftsman Alan Duckett to make a memorial gate to Kilvert.¹¹ This was placed in a field between Birds' Marsh and Kington Langley where the diarist used to walk. It was based upon a wicket gate that Kilvert had named the Poet's Gate.¹² Robin Tanner took an old-fashioned 'squeeze belly' stile located nearby in Kilvert's field as the model for his etching, *The Meadow Stile*.¹³ The Tanners' enthusiasm for Kilvert in these years was no doubt inspired by their involvement with the Kilvert Society. Robin records

that Heather edited a memoir by the Diarist's father, Rev. Robert Kilvert (1803-1882) in 1970.¹⁴

However, the Tanners' interest in Kilvert was more longstanding. In his autobiography, *Double Harness*, Robin Tanner de-



Above, Keeper's Cottage, occupied until the 1960s. Below, a ground plan



May Hunt and passenger in front of Keeper's Cottage



Top, the 1885 Ordnance Survey map of Langley Burrell and Birds' Marsh.

Below, the developers' newsletter about their plans for 750 houses. This would destroy a sizeable chunk of the Birds' Marsh area, says Stephen Hunt, including some of the fields that the Kilvert Society would have explored last autumn. When the natural history of the area was surveyed many of the oldest trees and most ecologically valuable meadows and hedgerows were in fact in the area threatened by the proposal rather than in the wooded area, he says. Langley Burrell and The Parsonage are on the right.

North Chippenham

Community Newsletter

November 2011

The North Chippenham Consortium, which is made up of Barratt Developments, Persimmon Homes & Heron Land Developments, is proposing to build up to 750 new homes on land south of Birds Marsh Wood.

The scheme proposes new family homes, affordable housing and a green buffer separating the development and Birds Marsh Wood.

The development will also provide new community facilities, including play equipment and landscaped community open space.

The proposed scheme will be served by a new main road link and includes provision for employment uses and a new primary school.

Why here?

Wiltshire Council is producing a draft Core Strategy which outlines the Council's policies and strategy to guide development in Wiltshire moving forwards.

In order to meet the need for new housing, the Core Strategy identifies a number of 'strategic sites' outside of the existing urban areas where development will take place.

Development of land north of Chippenham has been identified as a sustainable and deliverable option for meeting housing needs at Chippenham

Community benefits

This scheme would have benefits for existing local communities, including:

- The creation of new jobs, through the provision of 2 hectares of new employment land to the west of the site
- New local facilities, which may take the form of a new community hall and/or a retail unit
- A new primary school could serve the entire local community
- A new road link would help to alleviate congestion on the existing local road network and within the town centre

scribed the newly published volumes of Kilvert's *Diary* as an 'enduring comfort' to them during the Second World War. He was dismayed at the environmental destruction taking place at that time, feeling that farmers used the war effort as an excuse to 'despoil the countryside'.¹⁵ Ironically this was at a time when art and literature incorporated many rural themes to cultivate a love for the English countryside that was being defended in the War.

Unfortunately the countryside at Birds' Marsh is threatened in the present day. A road and housing development have been proposed for fields immediately above Hill Corner Road. In recent years local people have successfully fought three campaigns to protect this parcel of Kilvert country. Now it is in danger once more.¹⁶

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- 10 University of Bristol Special Collections. D.M. 1450/1 The Letters of Robin Tanner. Letter to Sam Black, 12th October 1978.
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- 15 ROBIN TANNER, *Double Harness*, 116.
- 16 For further details see: <http://www.chippenhamcommunityvoice.co.uk/contacts-a-links.html> [accessed 12 October 2011]

Stephen Hunt's book, *Birds' Marsh, Chippenham: An unfinished Story*, 2010, (78 pages, illustrated, paperback, £6.95, ISBN 978-0-946418-58-9) is available from Hobnob Press, PO Box 1838, East Knoyle, Salisbury SP3 6FA, tel: 01747 830 015, email: john@hobnobpress.co.uk



‘Losses and crosses’: Elizabeth Anne Kilvert – a postscript

In ‘Some thoughts on losses and crosses at Bredwardine’ in the last Journal MARGARET COLLINS discussed how the Newton sisters added to the pressures on Francis Kilvert. Here she tells of the disrespectful way they treated his widow, the centenary of whose death last year we sadly failed to mark

HIS [Kilvert’s] sudden home-call ... was a great shock to my Aunt and she never really fully recovered from it... writes Miss M.A. Rowland, Elizabeth Kilvert’s niece and goddaughter, in a letter to the first President of the Kilvert Society. She devoted herself to Parish work on her return to her parents and eventually removed with her sisters to Eastbourne. Miss Rowland speaks of Elizabeth with fond affection (*Looking Backwards*, pp.24/25). The ensuing 32 years until Elizabeth’s own death in 1911 were lived in the shadow of her untimely bereavement. Like Queen Victoria she mourned a beloved husband for decades.

Exactly when Kilvert and Elizabeth met is not clear but Miss Rowland says *They met during a tour to Paris – with a mutual friend, the Rev. A.L. Mayhew.*

Anthony Lawson Mayhew was Kilvert’s friend from Oxford days who would have been well aware of Kilvert’s failed romances and of his longing for a wife and family. It seems that Mayhew, Kilvert’s dear old College friend and the only person to whom we know he showed his *Diary*, was acting as match-maker. It is generally thought that this tour took place sometime during the second gap in the *Diary* (June 1876–December 1877) but we cannot be certain. I think it is even possible that it was as late as the spring of 1879. All we know for sure is that Elizabeth’s niece remembered her aunt saying she wished *to take out that part of [the Diary] which alluded to herself.*

On 12 March 1879, Dora received a letter from James Pitcairn containing a proposal of marriage and the *Diary* ends abruptly after the next day’s entry on 13 March. The proposal was undoubtedly a crisis point for Kilvert. Dora had been her brother’s companion, confidante and competent vicarage housekeeper; forthright, she confronted the butcher *in the lane and gave him her mind* about his late deliveries! The imminent prospect of being left on his own in Bredwardine vicarage at the beck and call of his patron Miss Julia Newton and her sister Catherine surely dismayed Kilvert and concentrated his mind. Kilvert’s need for a wife became a priority and he was either introduced to Elizabeth at this point by Mayhew or, more probably, Kilvert rekindled



their acquaintance. Elizabeth is the choice of Kilvert’s maturity, for he realises that he urgently needs a replacement for Dora and not a young beauty in her teens or early twenties as with his previous love affairs. At 33, Elizabeth was only two years older than Dora and the same age as Kilvert’s sister Fanny to whom he was close. Did he follow the example of James Pitcairn and send a proposal to Elizabeth by letter? The fact that the *Diary* ends the day after Dora receives James’s proposal suggests that this might have been the case, with Elizabeth coming on the scene very quickly and thus later taking out that section. This would support the view that their first meeting had indeed taken place during the second gap in the *Diary*. With this romance there is none of Kilvert’s characteristic dithering; he was driven to act promptly. In any event he made a happy choice, for Elizabeth’s goddaughter writes of her aunt that *she and Uncle Frank were devoted to each other.*

Elizabeth Anne Kilvert’s will sheds a little more light on her. The opening sentence

reads: *It is my desire that I shall be buried at Bredwardine in the County of Hereford...*

The will was signed on 5 October 1907. On her death in January 1911 Elizabeth’s estate amounted to almost £5,000 which included her share in the family home at Eastbourne. In the next sentence she allocates a sum of £25 each to her brother and sister, Rev William Creek Rowland and Mary Sarah Rowland, solely for discharging their duties as her executors and in addition to any other legacies. The next named beneficiary is *my sister-in-law Sarah Dorothea Anne Pitcairn* (Dora of the *Diary*) who is to receive £50. All *the nephews and nieces of my late husband The Reverend Robert Francis Kilvert* are named and remembered with a legacy. Elizabeth’s siblings and her Rowland nieces and nephews are beneficiaries, as are her two Rowland godchildren. The will was drawn up 28 years after Kilvert’s death and it would appear that Elizabeth was still close to Dora, who was by then living on the Isle of Wight.

However, a short codicil was added on 13 January 1911 three

1879. Marriage solemnized at the Church in the Parish of Wootton in the County of Oxford

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Mourner
358	August 20 th 1879	Robert Francis Kilvert	28 th of age	Bachelor	Clerk in Holy Orders	Bredwardine in the County of Hereford	Robert Kilvert	Clerk in Holy Orders	R
		Elizabeth Anne Rowland	24 th of age	Spinster	—	Wootton	John Rowland	Emmerton	

Married in the Parish Church of Wootton according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church after Banns by me, Robert Kilvert, Minister of the Gospel, with

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Robert Francis Kilvert in the Presence of us, John Rowland Catherine Rowland Anna R. Rowland Francis H. Kilvert.

days before Elizabeth's death. It relates solely to the Kilvert family and in it Elizabeth wishes to *revoke the legacy of fifty pounds made to Mrs J.E. Pitcairn*. Of the £270 allocated to the Kilvert family *Twenty five pounds to be given to Mrs Valintine and twenty five pounds to Mrs J.E. Pitcairn sisters of my late husband Robert Francis Kilvert. The remainder of the money to be divided among his nephews and nieces living at the time of my death*. This codicil was signed by different witnesses from the original will. Probate was granted on 17 March 1911.

I had not intended to dwell on the contents of Elizabeth's will which I looked up to see if she mentioned her wishes for her burial, which she does (she says nothing regarding the actual location of her grave at Bredwardine). I was intrigued to note that, so close to her death, Elizabeth went to the trouble of drawing up a codicil regarding bequests to her Kilvert relatives. The purpose of doing so appears to have been the halving of her original bequest to Dora and sharing it with a 'Mrs Valintine'. Puzzled, I could only think that this lady must have been Kilvert's sister Thersie, whose husband Rev William Smith had died in 1889. This was confirmed when I later read a *Newsletter* article from 1979 by the Society's late Secretary, Edward West, entitled *T. Percival Smith* which refers to *his mother Thermuthis Valentine* (sic). There is no mention of Mrs Valintine in the will of 1907.

Undoubtedly this alteration by codicil was important to Elizabeth. Perhaps her investments in the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company, identified for the Kilvert relatives, dwindled in some way and she wanted to ensure the bequest. Or was it simply to include Mrs Valintine? Maybe she had renewed her connection with Thersie after making the original will in 1907 and the friendship with Dora had lapsed a little. The discovery that Thersie was indeed 'Mrs Valintine' confirmed my earlier hunch that the codicil may well have had something to do with the passing on of the *Diary* notebooks within the family, for we know that they ended up in the care of Thersie's son Percival who sent them to the publisher Jonathan Cape.

I also looked up the will of the main protagonist in the burial saga, Miss Julia Newton of the Cottage, Bredwardine, who is buried close up alongside Kilvert. Miss Newton died intestate but was a wealthy woman who left an estate of over £8,000. Letters of Administration in the Probate Registry were granted to her brother Sir Charles Newton. So it would appear that Miss Newton left no formal instructions regarding her burial but clearly she had made all the arrangements and her wishes were known to those involved. It is quite possible that the Misses Newton reserved both plots for themselves in order to pre-empt Elizabeth's burial by Kilvert's side.

How was it that Elizabeth Kilvert came to be buried so far

away from her husband? The caption under the photograph of her grave in the *September Journal* put it succinctly: '[it is] about as far from her husband's grave as it is possible to go and over by what is in effect the graveyard rubbish dump' (although I suspect that the rubbish dump is an unfortunate later addition). On first sight the location of Elizabeth's grave seems to add insult to injury as if the Newton sisters, from beyond the grave, had somehow succeeded in writing her out of the story. Julia Newton died in 1886 and Catherine Newton, who is buried close up on Kilvert's other side, in 1896. This was fifteen years before the death of Elizabeth whose niece speaks of her aunt's *great grief* that she was unable to be buried at his side. Assuming that Elizabeth was still making her pilgrimage to flower Kilvert's grave each Easter, which her niece said she *did as long as her health allowed*, she would in all likelihood have been doing so after Catherine Newton's death in 1896. Elizabeth's heart was surely full as she stepped over the Newton graves to lay her tribute of primroses for her husband.

It was a long journey to make each year from Oxfordshire and later from Eastbourne. Elizabeth's niece well remembers *going on the pilgrimage with her on one occasion* (*Looking Backwards* p.25). Did Elizabeth and her niece stay at a hotel in Hereford or did sympathetic parishioners offer hospitality? Initially, Elizabeth may even have stayed at the Cottage but would certainly not have wished to do so once Miss Julia Newton's burial arrangements became apparent. When Elizabeth made this annual pilgrimage, particularly in the years immediately following Kilvert's death, the parishioners surely welcomed her with open arms. The newspaper report of the newlyweds' homecoming makes it clear that Kilvert was held in great affection in the parish as, sadly, does the account of his funeral. It is easy to imagine Margaret Davies, mother of Little Davie, welcoming Elizabeth fondly and re-living the story of her little boy's death and telling Elizabeth what a strength her late husband had been to the family during that terrible Christmas of 1878. As the years went by, local people greeting Elizabeth doubtless expressed some strong opinions regarding the effrontery of the Misses Newton's burial arrangements and the disrespect shown thereby to her as Kilvert's widow and indeed to Kilvert himself, who would surely never have chosen to be buried between the Newton sisters.

I pondered much on the location of Elizabeth's grave and the fact it was not nearer to Kilvert's, or even in the main churchyard. Had the Misses Newton somehow fixed it that his widow was as far away as possible from their own dear Francis? With the passage of so many years this seemed rather a wild notion. It was my husband who suggested that maybe Elizabeth herself gives us the answer. In her will Elizabeth states only that she

desires to be *buried at Bredwardine* where her husband lies. Yet at the same time she wishes to (literally) distance herself from the Newton sisters, the incongruity of whose burials serve only to cause amused speculation and comment, thereby detracting from the dignity of her husband's memorial. It is as if Elizabeth is saying 'I wish to be buried at Bredwardine but I strongly desire to dissociate myself from the outrage perpetrated upon me by Julia and Catherine Newton in denying me my place by my husband ... I do not wish to be buried near by, thus tacitly allowing them pride of place, but to be as far away from them as possible.' Elizabeth's family would have been well aware of her feelings on the matter and her wishes regarding the location of her grave.

After Elizabeth's death her family arranged for her final solemn pilgrimage to Bredwardine. Robbed of her rightful happiness in life, Elizabeth's sorrow was compounded by the knowledge that in death she would never be buried next to her husband. If she had been able to have the assurance that they would, at the last, lie beside each other for evermore it would have afforded her some solace during the long years of widowhood. Although her niece and goddaughter tell us that the gentle and kind Elizabeth lived a busy, unselfish and useful life and was much loved, she surely wept bitterly on occasion when she contemplated this last unkindness of fate.

How many of those who had known Kilvert stood in silence for Elizabeth's burial in Bredwardine churchyard annexe in January 1911? In his biography David Lockwood (p.146) tells how Margaret Davies the mother of Little Davie lived at the Old Weston until her death in the 1940s. I am sure she was present, along with others who had known him, to honour the widow of the man she only ever referred to as 'dear Mr Kilvert'.

In contemplating Elizabeth, I am reminded of the haunting melody of the part-song *The Long Day Closes* by Sir Arthur Sullivan. Written in 1868, the words by H.F. Chorley are a meditation on bereavement and loss reminiscent of the stanzas of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. The song was popular and is very likely to have been known to Elizabeth and to Kilvert. The final four lines speak to me of Elizabeth:-

*Go to the dreamless bed
Where grief reposes;
Thy book of toil is read,
The long day closes.*

In the far corner of Bredwardine churchyard, Elizabeth's grave continues to bear unspoken witness to a story of personal tragedy. The marble cross matches that of her husband and the inscription is poignant in its simplicity; Elizabeth Anne is finally 'At Rest'.

RELATED READING

Looking Backwards, A Kilvert Miscellanea, edited by CTO

PROSSER, KS Publications, 1969; second edition 1979

Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary, compiled by TONY O'BRIEN, KS Publications, 2010

Francis Kilvert by DAVID LOCKWOOD, Seren Books, 1990

All My Days, A tribute to E.C.J. West, edited by MICHAEL SHARP, 2003, KS Publications

The Long Day Closes by SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN (1868). This song remains popular with choirs and there are several recordings. At the time of writing there are good performances on YouTube, notably the Kings Singers at the Proms in 2008.

Kilvert courtships: an alternative view

What we know of Kilvert's relationships is filtered through his eyes, but there's much more to be told. SHEILA JONES looks in detail at three of his frustrated romances

Fanny Thomas

THIS whole short episode is contained within II/p27 to II/p.43, a matter of a just over fortnight. Kilvert fell in love at a party at Llanthomas, though of course he had known Fanny for several years previously as a school-girl. By the end of the two weeks or so, he was resigned to waiting and hoping *that one day circumstances may be less hard and painful than they appear at present*.

This is an appropriate point to mention the writer's contention that far from Fanny being Daisy Thomas's nickname, as William Plomer confusingly believed (II/p.29), 'Daisy' was a private name for use only in his *Diary*, just as was 'Kathleen Mavourneen' and all the other names by which he referred to the young girls and women he met.

When Kilvert records in his *Diary* his love for her, he talks about being *restless and miserable with uncertainty, of suffering a restless feverish night*. This is the Romantic Hero *par excellence*, unless he was more highly strung than is indicated by the rest of the *Diary*. If we had the full entries for these two days, we might find he was carrying out all the duties and pleasures of his ordinary life.

He consulted Mrs Venables, who gave him advice and encouragement, and Mr Venables, with whom he discussed *ways, means, prospects*. In other words, could he afford to support a wife and family? The immediate answer was No. He had enough money to keep himself quite comfortably as a bachelor, but he had no job security and no home. The word 'prospects' is interesting, though, for which see below.

On that same day, Wednesday, 13 September 1871, Kilvert walked over to Llanthomas and told Fanny's father that he wanted to marry her. Mr Thomas observed, reasonably enough, that Kilvert's immediate prospects were poor, and so he could not allow an engagement for the time being. He observed that he didn't like long engagements, meaning that there was no sense in Fanny preparing for marriage when Kilvert might take several years to get preferment. This was a common Victorian view. When he said Fanny was *so young*, he was quite right, since, whatever her age, Fanny had just left school. He actually sounds taken aback by Kilvert's request to be allowed to court Fanny for he said *When you were here on Friday I saw she liked you*. He appears to be committing Fanny before finding out whether she loved Kilvert enough to marry him. Finally he asked Kilvert not to show Fanny he loved her – until the time when his financial affairs are on a better footing is implied. This again is reasonable, given any young woman in any era would be subject to teasing by her family and friends, if she was suspected of having an 'admirer'.

After the discussion, Kilvert wrote he felt *deeply humiliated, low in spirit and sick at heart*. It seems to be this phrase that has led commentators to believe that William Jones Thomas thought Kilvert's social standing too low for his daughter. There is no evidence for this. Kilvert was of good character, hard-working, liked and loved by many, trusted by Mr Venables in his parish work, university-educated, as well-born and as well-connected as the

Thomas family, and following the same vocation. He was very far from being the 'lowly curate' of the internet sites which refer to his relationship with Fanny. He himself had recovered his optimism a few lines further on, when he remembered how fraught with difficulty his parents' courtship was and how *the course of true love never does run smooth*. When Kilvert spoke to Mr and Mrs Venables, *they were much pleased and very hopeful and thought the answer was as favourable as I could have expected at first*. (II/34)

As readers of the *Diary* know, Kilvert's love for Fanny did not end successfully, so what went wrong if it was not his social position?

David Lockwood considered that William Jones Thomas 'sided with hard headed business acumen', whatever his theoretical views on the equality of all before God.¹ John Toman puts it more forcefully: 'If Thomas had been capable of recognising that the suitor for his daughter's hand



The Thomas family of Llanthomas. Fanny (Daisy) is second from right

was a good, loving man and had, on the strength of that recognition, made her an allowance sufficient for them to marry and set up a home, Kilvert would have been a father and Daisy a mother.'²

We are only a couple of generations or so from the time when almost every man expected he would have to provide for his wife and family. One cannot imagine that sensible couple, Mr and Mrs Venables, encouraging Kilvert on his way to see Mr Thomas in the knowledge that he was expecting to sponge on his future father-in-law; the evidence is that Kilvert had no intention of doing so. On 2 July 1870 he records *My Father left us for Langley. At the station....* (I/167) What falls between the two sentences in the full text of the *Diary* is *....we walked to Hay Station across the fields. It was cool and pleasant walking. As we walked we made the Seven Years Convention about Clyro and Langley*.³ The capital letters suggest some agreement of importance. Seven years (a prime number) is significant in religious terms and what comes to mind is the story about Jacob serving his uncle Laban for seven years as a shepherd.⁴ In case the writer be thought fanciful, David Lockwood had the same idea⁵ though he did not follow it through far enough: Jacob was working for the reward of a wife. In the event he was cheated of the wife he wanted and had to work a further seven years to get the right woman, but Kilvert is unlikely to have followed the analogy that far. If the 'Convention' was that Kilvert would serve seven years or so as a curate, when his father would be able to afford to retire in favour of his elder son, then that will have been the 'prospects' Kilvert referred to in his conversation with Mr Venables.

After Kilvert had spoken to Mr and Mrs Venables, (II/34), Kilvert wrote to his father *to tell him of my attachment and ask what my prospects were as far as he knew*. The answer, which arrived three days later, must have been a crushing blow: *They say that if they had inherited their natural share of the Worcester money they might have retired from Langley in my favour, but now that is impossible. They cannot afford it.....I am told by my father I shall*

have one day £2700. (II/35-36) No wonder Kilvert called Aunt Maria's will *most iniquitous*. (I/266) He probably foresaw what a difference it might make to himself.

During a further discussion between Kilvert and Mr Venables at the Vicarage, they decided on what we would call in today's jargon Plan B. *He most kindly promised to write to the Bishop to ask him for a living for me*. (II/36) Plan B was emphatically not to ask the Rev. Jones Thomas what financial support he could offer his daughter and her suitor.

Commentators have assumed that Mr Thomas *had* enough

money but was too close-fisted to use it, but it's not clear that this is the case. The ownership of a large house is proof that you have been able to raise money to buy it (the Victorians knew all about mortgages!), not that you have ample money right now.

It has proved impossible to discover exactly what income Fanny's parents had.

Her father received £202 pa gross as vicar of Llanigon⁶ and £322/14/- in gross rental income from the Llanthomas Estate, with its acreage of just over 188 acres.⁷ By comparison Walter Baskerville's gross rental income was £3,495 from just over 2,904 acres.⁷ William Jones Thomas was the third of the four sons of David Thomas of Welfield, just outside Builth Wells. It looks as if his father died intestate in 1830 at the age of 47, *allegedly after a three day three night drinking bout* according to one of his descendants, Richard Thomas⁸ – or rather, no will has been located in the National Library of Wales wills index. There would have been no need of one if his estate had been settled by his marriage contract or other trusts. At all events, his eldest son, Edward Thomas, established himself at Welfield, with a gross rental income of £1,706 on just over 4,635 acres.⁷ His younger siblings will have been left an appropriate share of the family assets. The youngest son, Evan, did particularly well in the marriage stakes – not that he could have known it at the time – by marrying Ann Elizabeth (Annabet) only child of William Pateshall, 2nd son of Edmund Lechemere Pateshall. When William's eldest brother died childless in 1848, Annabet inherited the Allensmore estate, just outside Hereford and her husband, Evan, took the surname Pateshall. His estate yielded a gross rental income of £2,474 on an acreage of just over 1,562 acres.⁷

The second brother also married well and settled in Carmarthenshire, but his estate's income does not figure in the Returns of the Owners of Land.

William Jones Thomas married Anne Elizabeth Jones, in 1839. She was the daughter of the Rev. John Jones of Hereford and his wife Ann Pateshall, who was a sister of the Pateshall brothers mentioned above. The fact that he added 'Jones' to his name suggests she brought him money by way of her marriage settlement. Richard Thomas calls her an 'heiress' to her father.⁹ Their marriage settlement has not been found in the Herefordshire and Powys Archives, nor in the National Library of Wales,

but Richard Thomas implies that it exists¹⁰, in which case it will have survived in the family papers which, at the time he wrote, were kept at Cefndyrys, as Welfield is now known. Neither have the wills of Ann's parents been found, though they may exist in Herefordshire Archives – the writer quailed at the thought of searching for an unknown number of years for the will of a Jones in an index catalogued only by year, and for obvious reasons decided not to bother!

Richard Thomas states that William Jones Thomas paid £8,000 for Llanthomas in 1858 and its surrounding land, and promptly built a large extension – as one does!¹¹ He may well have over-extended himself. He and his wife had eleven children, with six sons to educate and settle in careers and five daughters to provide with marriage portions. On marriage Fanny might expect to receive her clothes allowance in the form of capital sum to yield a small yearly income, an ample supply of new clothes and small items of furniture, what were often called 'presents' – occasional sums of money to help with bills – and the expectation, as Kilvert himself had, of a more substantial amount of money after the death of the survivor of her parents. She could, at all events, have no more than her fair share without disadvantaging her siblings.

There are two further clues to the family finances. The copy marriage settlement dated 1878 of her brother Henry Evan Pateshall Thomas survives in the Pateshall papers in the Herefordshire Archives¹² as he eventually succeeded to the Allensmore estate, taking the surname Pateshall. This notes that he was entitled to £2,000 in reversion expectant on the death of the survivor of his father and mother upon trust to pay himself an income. If this was an equal share of what his parents left, divided among their nine surviving younger children, as it probably was, this suggests an available capital of £18,000, though this might have to be raised by land sales. As a sum invested by his parents to provide income in 2% (say) Government Bonds, that would add a further £360 to the family. His father didn't leave a will and Letters of Administration were granted to his eldest son William in 1887, his personal assets amounting to £4,873. None was actually needed if capital had already been allocated by settlement and trusts. If so, William, like a number of eldest sons, could have been left in a financially poor position, with an estate and position to keep up and much less income than his parents had had to do so. It looks as if in fact this was the case: in 1885 he became engaged to Louisa Frewen of Brickwall in Northiam in Sussex. Louisa's mother wrote that *he is a most excellent man so I ought to be thankful but I am not feeling so at present as he is a stranger still to me... He is 45 and nothing to recommend him as to exterior, being short and bald... He must inherit from an aunt now nearly 80 a very nice property and place Allensmore Court in Herefordshire, but at present has very little*.¹³ The aunt, alas! lived on till 1910, so the Colonel missed out and therefore lost his chance to marry. The next heir was his younger brother John, who lived a year longer and was childless, and then Henry Thomas, as mentioned above. Both took the additional surname of Pateshall on succeeding to the property.

Without more information, no further conclusions can be drawn as to the financial situation of the Rev. William Jones Thomas. He may have been extravagant in his land purchases – though he was only following the custom of his class and family. Eleven children to establish in life may have been a strain. It may just be there never was going to be enough money to go round. At all events, no-one would have expected him to keep a son-in-law, and Kilvert didn't expect it either.

Two days after the reply from his parents, Mr Venables made

a point of telling Kilvert *he thought he ought to caution me not to think my prospects better than they were and not to do anything precipitate*. (II/40) It doesn't seem likely that a reply had already been received from the Bishop.

Two days after that, on 23 September, Kilvert received a letter from Mr Thomas *kindly expressed and cordial, but bidding me give up all thoughts and hopes of Daisy. It was a great and sudden blow and I felt very sad*. (II/43) Kilvert concluded that *there is nothing to be done but to wait and hope that one day circumstances may be less hard and painful than they appear at present*.

If there was nothing socially amiss with Kilvert, and if the matter of his finances was yet to be settled, then one looks for another reason for the failure of his hopes. There has been speculation that Mr Thomas was a possessive father, who couldn't bear to let go of his daughters. These things do happen, though it presupposes that it is every woman's inevitable vocation to be married.

What has been generally ignored, however, is that marriages in the past have seldom been decided in a dialogue between the prospective groom and the father of the bride. It is no stretch of the imagination to see Mr Thomas going off to consult his wife nor that she took the view that her daughter was too young to be married straight from school, and to a man who might well whisk her away to Wiltshire. Then they would both ask Fanny herself what she thought; there would be no possibility of her being expected to listen to a proposal of marriage she had already decided to refuse. Her father believed she liked Kilvert; Kilvert himself read into every gentle word and glance more than perhaps she intended. When she found out that he wanted to marry her, might she not have shrunk from being married straight from school, with no chance to sample the social life she had been looking forward to with her older sisters and brothers, and all her friends? With responsibilities for a home, a parish and children, a *mere child* as her father called her? Might she not also have wanted to choose a man younger than Kilvert, then in his early thirties, and perhaps livelier? Whatever his goodness and good looks – both debatable – these are not the reasons why people get married, otherwise which of us would ever find our partners in life?

All we know about this relationship is filtered through Kilvert's eyes; it can't be the whole story. For months afterwards he interpreted what she did and said as a sign that she still loved him, but he shows little or no intuition into the emotions of young women and girls (does any man?); he saw what he wanted to see, a reflection of his own needs rather than theirs and, of course, was in no position to sound her out.

Sheila Jones's Alternative View of Kilvert's Courtships will be concluded in the September Journal with her take on the Diarist's affairs with Katherine Heanley and Ettie Meredith Brown

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'I think it will do her good'

Tastes change and ERIC BALL finds he is not an enthusiast for Francis Kilvert's favourite 'improving' book, 'Stepping Heavenward'. But he did finish it and here he reviews a book that is (surprisingly) popular again

SOME months ago I could have written in my diary, as Kilvert did on 8 November 1871, *Finished reading Stepping Heavenward*. I could not, in all honesty, add his comment, *It is a lovely book*. It is a book of its era – puritanical and gloomy.

The author, 'Mrs Prentiss' – Elizabeth Prentiss, used some of her own experiences for material. The book is written in the form of the journal of a woman's life from teenage to motherhood; perhaps this arrangement found favour with the Diarist. I was well into the book before I understood that the story was set in the United States. The holiday in New York mentioned seemed unlikely for even a moderately well off British family at that time! Apart from a few items like alluding to New York and of dollars there were few other parts that could not be read as though the setting was in England. Although it is written so near to the time of the American Civil War, there is no mention of slaves or indeed race; it is not revealed whether the house servants are black or white.

Early in the journal, Katy is celebrating her sixteenth birthday. She is admonished by her mother for coming down late to breakfast and blames a servant for 'hiding my things.' She spurns her mother's advice to wear overshoes to school in the snow and consequently catches a serious cold. A frequent theme in nineteenth century books is of higher class people catching chills through some trivial exposure to the elements often due to a small neglect in wrapping up whereas the lower orders of the time could sturdily survive in harsh conditions. In real life, Kilvert and others like him of a similar class did brave the elements with only occasionally suffering a set back.

At home after the school day, her mother tells how she was given pain by her daughter's self will, ill temper and conceit. Mother looks as though she has been crying; now the daughter runs from the room in tears. (Happy birthday!) The day becomes a little brighter when she finds a present of a new desk and a school friend is invited to join the family for dinner.

There follows a few pages devoted to friendships and jealousies with other girls which seems normal teenage behaviour. Katie's cold has developed but she recovers and the doctor says she might drive out on a mild day. Although the girl is subjected to an austere moral code she is not lacking the opportunity for gracious living like having a carriage at her disposal and when she is going on holiday four new dresses are bought for her.

However, minor downsizing does follow her father's death, the first of many tragic demises in the family although, it must be admitted, none to match the description by Dickens of the death of Little

Nell of which Oscar Wilde said 'One would have to have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without dissolving into tears of laughter.'

At eighteen, Katy begins a decorous courtship with a young man of whom her mother has reservations which turn out to be well founded. When the girl is ill and tuberculosis is suspected the young man takes fright and withdraws from the engagement. She does not contract T.B. and goes on to meet the man who becomes her husband and, although they have some misunderstandings, over the years they come to empathise with each other. They have children from time to time, some die, of course. There is a constant struggle to get themselves and the children to be perfect Christians and fit themselves for heaven. Katy is not quite so strict as her father-in-law who advises her to teach her four-year-old son that he is a sinner, in a state of condemnation. She believes the child will find out soon enough. Of one child's death she wrote that she had given her darling to God and would not recall him if she could. 'I am thankful He has counted me worthy to present Him so costly a gift.'

The book ends with the main character being unable to write her journal through a long illness of seven years. I expected then to read a post script by her husband telling of her death and rise to heaven. Instead, she recovers enough to complete her journal, looking back on her happy last seven years in which she could atone for a sinful, wasted past.

My edition of the book is, unsurprisingly, a Sunday school prize, presented to Annie Balsdon, a scholar at an unknown congregational church, by the superintendent, the Rev. R. Dobbie. The coloured illustrations are signed with Arthur Buckland's ink-flowing signature and the date 1906. They are the nicest part of the book.

Four days after Kilvert wrote *Finished reading 'Stepping Heavenward'* he resolved to give a copy to Gibbins, a servant of the Venableses, commenting *I think it will do her good*. The young woman retainer in the vicar's household had been mentioned a few times in the *Diary*. In September of 1870 and in the same month of 1871, she is recorded helping with the harvest decorations; the Diarist goes into interesting details of the proceedings, listing the helpers' names and their chosen (or allotted) tasks. On Christmas Day 1870, the curate walked to Sunday school with Gibbins when *the road sparkled with millions of rainbows, the seven colours gleaming in every glittering point of hoar frost*. I wonder if Gibbins called for her curate on the way or he for her, or did they simply fall in together on the road?



Mrs. Venables was *terribly bothered about Gibbins' affairs* in October 1871. She wrote to Kilvert on the last day of October asking him to check out on a young man with whom Gibbins was reviving a former attachment. Kilvert took his investigative duty seriously, consulting Evans the schoolmaster and Mrs. Bevan at Hay castle. Kilvert reported his findings – we are not told exactly what they were but we can deduce they counselled caution. On 12 November, Mrs. Venables called at Ashbrook House and the pair *had a long cosy talk together about Daisy, and Gibbins' love affairs*. It was after that evening chat that Kilvert resolved to give the wayward girl the improving book. The young man in question was a tailor in Hay, name of Lewis, probably very respectable and was a suitable match as it turned out: when Kilvert called on Fanny (Gibbins) Lewis on May Day 1876 he saw her *pretty friendly little boy*.

The next person we read of being given *Stepping Heavenward* is Louie Collett at Langley in August 1872. There is no note that this youngster needed enlightenment. Sadly, the next we hear of her a little over a year later is that she has died.

The final recipient of the book mentioned is *sweet Georgie Gale*. It was 1874 in May, the time when lilies of the valley are in bloom. This young girl was living in the lovely village of Biddestone. It seems Kilvert had not been in touch with the Gale family for some while for, as he drew near to their home, he had a premonition that something could be amiss: Georgie could be ill or even dead! Happily, the feeling of foreboding was unfounded, 'the beautiful child stood smiling in the door and all was well.' There was a pleasing response when the book was handed over. *A happy smile came into her bright open face and she looked up with a tender grateful loving light in her beautiful eyes. My own dear child, may it be the story of thy life, 'Stepping Heavenward.'*

After tea, Georgie and Kilvert walked the two miles on steep paths to Hartham woods. When they found the way was barred by a locked gate, they entered the copse through *a shard in the hedge* – Kilvert uses the local dialect word for a gap in the hedge



S.H. "Why, were you wanting to talk, father?" Page 122. L.



Above, the cover of Eric Ball's copy, printed by Collins' Clear-Type Press London & Glasgow. Left, one of the eight illustrations

made by animals or humans. When footsteps and voices were heard approaching, they *stood still listening a minute fearing it might be a keeper*. I find it odd that a collar-wearing clergyman should fear a keeper. It was obvious they were not after game, a premier crime of the age. When they had gathered enough lilies Georgie sat down on a tree stump to arrange them. *'Twas a lovely picture, the beautiful girl seated on the tree with her lap full of lilies and her fair young head bending over the sweet flowers while her little hands quick and busy sorted them and nested them in their smooth cool green leaves.*

Plomer has an affecting footnote added: *Some pressed lilies of the valley are inserted in the MS. at this point.*

Once more we hear of this captivating girl. Kilvert is at an academy exhibition in London a month after the lily gathering. A picture entitled the 'Picture of Health' *was so like Georgie Gale that I could have kissed the blooming face and ruddy lips.*

Francis Kilvert was not as rhapsodic when writing of boys as he was of girls but he did give them more exciting books to read. On 23 March 1872 he gave to two lads books by R.M. Ballantyne, *The Young Fur Trappers* and *The Gorilla Hunters*.

ELIZABETH PRENTISS was born on 26 October 1818, the daughter of a prominent American Congregationalist pastor (*writes the Editor*). She was deeply affected when he died of tuberculosis when she was eight. At 12 she made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ and by 16 was contributing stories and poems to *The Youth's Companion*, a New England religious periodical.

In her mid twenties she married George Lewis Prentiss, who became a pastor. They had six children, four surviving infancy (two dying in three months, one a boy aged four). They went to Europe for a couple of years at the end of the 1850s, for health reasons.

Mrs Prentiss wrote more than two dozen books, with titles like *Six Little Princesses and what they turned into*, *The Little Preacher*, and *Griselda: A Dramatic Poem in Five Acts*. Her most successful was *Stepping Heavenward*, published in instalments by the Chicago Advance in 1869.



She died on 13 August 1878. Her husband published *The Life and Letters of Elizabeth Prentiss* in 1882, quoting in the preface Elizabeth's own words: 'Much of my experience of life has cost me a great price and I wish to use it for strengthening and comforting other souls.'

The portrait of her on the *left* is taken from the frontispiece.

Stepping Heavenward – regularly described as 'the spiritual classic' – has achieved a new popularity in recent decades and many new editions (including online and CD) have come out, and not just in English.

One recent reviewer wrote: 'A book that feels so real it was as if you were peeking into someone's life.'

And another, 'When I finished the last page of this book, I felt almost as if I had lost my best friend. I say almost, because the lessons learned from this friend are valuable, inspiring, personal, and – I hope – lasting.'



Kilvert and politics

Perhaps it is to be expected that diaries – being a personal record – are not so concerned with the wider stage. All the same, Francis Kilvert's distinct lack of interest in politics (except in an election in which he didn't even have a vote) intrigues LAURENCE LE QUESNE

WHEN you come to think of it, there isn't much politics in Kilvert's *Diary*, which is presumably the reason why none of the quite numerous band of writers about the *Diary* since its first publication in 1938, myself included, has ever touched on the subject at all as far as I know. At first hearing, it does seem a little strange that Kilvert should have had so little to say on it. True, Victorian England was certainly not a democracy; but since the First Parliamentary Reform Act in 1832, it did have a Parliament which claimed to be representative, and British public life was punctuated by general elections, held at roughly seven year intervals, which often generated great public excitement and were fully reported in the rapidly expanding daily press.

Moreover, the ten years between 1870 and 1880 – the years of Kilvert's *Diary* – saw the heyday of the greatest political tournament of the century, between the two towering, and strongly contrasted, party leaders, the Conservative Benjamin Disraeli and the Liberal William Gladstone: Gladstone was Prime Minister from 1870 to 1874, Disraeli from 1874 to 1880. You might have expected them to cast some kind of a shadow over the *Diary*: yet there is only one mention of Gladstone, of the most minimal kind (on 16 July 1878, Kilvert attended a meeting of the Charity Commissioners at Staunton-on-Wye, and one of them told him that he had been at Eton with Gladstone: end of story), and no mention whatever of Disraeli.

It's an illusion, then, to suppose that Kilvert lived in a world without politics, and I suspect most Kilvertians, myself included, would say that it is one of the *Diary's* charms that it admits us to what appears to be a green, peaceful, private world of small things, a world unruffled by the noise, turbulence, and terrors of the world in which we live, and which is reflected in the banner headlines of the newspapers and the screens of our TV sets. Yet if, as we have already seen, there were actually plenty of politics in the world in which Kilvert lived, why do we hear so little of it in the *Diary*?

One possible answer might be that it is not that Kilvert took no interest in politics, but that William Plomer didn't, or realised that their absence from the selection of the *Diary* that he was preparing for publication would make it more attractive to the people that he hoped would buy it. Such distortion is a danger for any editor of a selection from a hitherto unpublished manuscript, and perhaps particularly for a document like a diary that is almost always too lengthy to be published in full. But this cannot be the main explanation of the rarity of references to politics in the published *Diary* – partly because *some* contemporary political events are reflected quite vividly in the published *Diary*, as we shall see, and partly because the first three manuscript volumes of the *Diary* still exist and have all been published in full, and they show no more interest in politics than the remainder.

It may be more to the point that Kilvert's diary is, after all, just that, a private diary, and that most private diaries pay very little attention to public events or politics. Obviously private diaries kept by professional politicians, like Harold Nicolson's famous diaries of the 1930s and 1940s, are an exception; but

most private diaries are not like this. They are kept up day by day, and consequently their main concern is with the affairs of the day, most of which are private and petty. A very small minority of such diaries may have such literary merit and such vivid powers of description as to achieve publication, Kilvert's being an outstanding example; but it is not to be expected that public events will bulk very large in them. This does not mean that the author took no interest at all in politics at the time; and it is very relevant to point out that we know that Kilvert took an interest in the national news, and presumably in politics, since we know that he was a regular reader of *The Times*, which was the leading daily paper of the day, and primarily concerned with politics and public events.

Still, I think it *is* true that politics meant less to Kilvert than they do to most of us, and *bothered* him a great deal less; and for that there were at least two good reasons. Politics bothered him less than they do us because he had the good luck to be living in one of the halcyon periods of British history, when fortune smiles upon this country, when – thanks to British sea power – no other country in the world was in a position to pose any serious threat to Great Britain, and the idea of Britain being involved in a major European war seemed out of the question; and moreover a period of prosperity. This was much more obvious for the upper classes than the poor; but even for working men, things seemed to be getting better: wages and standards of living were rising, job opportunities were improving, and the great Victorian faith in progress – the faith that if a man was honest and worked hard, he could be confident that he could make things better for his family, and that his children would be able to raise themselves a rung or two in the social scale – seemed to be justified by experience. There was much poverty in mid-Victorian society, but there was also a very widespread sense of stability and security. There were many evils in it, but on the whole things were changing for the better rather than for the worse, and there was no fear of any kind of violent social upheaval, such as war, or revolution, or famine, or mass unemployment. The future could be trusted.

This security was not achieved by dependence upon the help of the government. It is very hard to realise now how little contact Victorians had with their government – how rarely they met a civil servant other than the postman or the policeman, or filled in an official form, or paid a tax. Income Tax did already exist, but for most of the period of the *Diary* it was levied not at the rate of 20%, as ours is, but at 1¼%, and it was limited to earnings of more than £150 a year – so Kilvert, on his annual salary from Mr Venables of £100, was exempt from it. He was a poor man, but he owed the government nothing, except the very small duties on one or two items of common consumption, notably tea, sugar and alcohol, which he is unlikely to have noticed. And the government paid him no grants at all. There was no state pension, no child benefits (not that Kilvert would have qualified for either), nor any other form of health or welfare benefit – except the work-house, in the very unlikely event of an Anglican parson falling into total destitution.

Politics, in other words, had little interest for Kilvert, because what the government did or didn't do – which is what politics is all about – had very little impact on Kilvert's life, or on the lives of the great majority of his fellow-countrymen. But not only did politics have little direct impact on the lives of most Englishmen: their opinions had only a very slight impact on politics. It may come as a surprise to hear that Kilvert never cast a vote in a Parliamentary election, but it is a fact nevertheless. There were only between two and three million qualified voters, about one in ten of the population. The right to vote depended on the ownership of landed property, land worth £2 a year or a house worth £10; but Kilvert, as an unbeneficed clergyman, owned no land of his own, and no house of his own: he was only Mrs Chaloner's lodger.



Above, Handel Cossham (1824-90), colliery owner, Liberal MP for Bristol East 1885-1890. Right, Sir Gabriel Goldney (1813-1900), created a baronet in 1880, MP for Chippenham.

It is one of the ironies of his tragically premature death in 1879 that it occurred just at the point when he had qualified as a voter, for as the vicar of Bredwardine, the parson's right of freehold brought the right to vote with it. But he never had a chance to exercise it, for he had only acquired the right when he was appointed to St Harmon's, his first parish, in 1876, and there was no general election between then and his death in 1879.

This is not to say that Kilvert ignores elections altogether, for one general election, in 1874, did fall within the period of the *Diary*, and although Kilvert was not qualified to vote in it, he was at that time acting as his father's curate at Langley Burrell, and his diary entries for late January and early February in that year give an interesting picture of the election in Chippenham. In the previous election, in 1868, he was at Clyro, and it is a pity that we have no picture of it to compare with the 1874 election at Chippenham. I suspect that in a remote rural Clyro (where there were probably less than a dozen qualified voters) the general election probably passed almost unnoticed, and very possibly completely unnoticed by Kilvert.

But in Chippenham in 1874 there was considerable excitement. Kilvert, as we have seen, had no vote, but – although Kilvert does not mention the fact – his father undoubtedly had one, and it is clear that Kilvert himself took considerable interest in the election. It is interesting, though hardly surprising, to note that his party sympathies (which I think never appear elsewhere in the *Diary* – it is a sign of how little politics figure in it that the names of the two political parties, Liberal and Conservative, do not figure in the index) are clearly with the Conservatives. The *Diary* entry for 30 January is particularly interesting:

Drove my Father to Chippenham. A Radical Candidate has taken us all by surprise. Handel Cossham was nominated this morning. Before daylight the town had broken out with a bad eruption of poisonous yellow bills. We thought Goldney was going to walk over the

course without opposition. No national party organisation existed, and it was left to Conservative and Liberal enthusiasts in the individual constituencies to find suitable candidates to organise election campaigns, and to pay for them: so it is not surprising that in every general election there were a number of constituencies where one party or the other decided that their chances of



success were so poor that it was not worth putting up a candidate, and the seat was surrendered to the other party without a contest. Chippenham was not so deeply rural an area as Radnorshire – the town was a minor centre of the textile industry – but it was still a rural area, where the influences of the landed gentry would be very strong, and hence at the previous election in 1868 the Conservative candidate, Goldney, had been allowed to hold the seat unopposed, and the local Tory gentry, such as the Kilverts were obviously hoping that he

would be allowed to keep it in 1874 on the same terms.

But it was not to be. In 1867 a second Parliamentary Reform Act had been passed, which for the first time gave the right to vote to some of the better paid skilled workers in the towns, which must have included a number of the textile workers in Chippenham, and now in 1874 it must have occurred to some of the local Radicals (the militant wing of the Liberal party) that this might be enough to give them a chance of winning the seat. So now Goldney would have to fight to keep his seat against the unwelcome intrusion of Cossham: though Cossham had been nominated only three days before the election, and there cannot have been time to organise much of a campaign for him, apart from the election posters that so outraged Kilvert (it is interesting to note that yellow, or orange, was already the Liberal election colour, as it still is today). Kilvert's account of the election itself, on 2 February, is too long for quotation, but it makes fascinating reading, including the rumours that Cossham had recruited a mob of colliers to intimidate the voters and make a riot, and that the nearest Army garrison, in Trowbridge, was being readied to intervene in case of trouble. Victorian local politics could still be a very rough business, and there was no local police force adequate to deal with such a threat. But in fact there was no trouble, and in the evening the Kilverts in Langley Burrell vicarage were delighted to get the news that Goldney had held his seat by a majority of 227 – which sounds like a wafer-thin majority, but was in fact quite a comfortable one, in a small town like Chippenham, in which there were probably less than a thousand qualified to vote. It was of course this small number of votes to be counted that made it possible to announce the result within an hour or two of the close of the poll.

Kilvert adds another interesting comment in this connection

– *this was the first election by ballot ever held in Chippenham. The Radicals have had a fair field and been beaten.* The point of this is that in 1872 Gladstone's Liberal government had passed the Ballot Act, which introduced the modern method of voting by secret ballot: previously voters cast their votes publicly, by announcing their choice of candidate to the returning officer, and it was common practice for lists of how every voter had cast his vote to be published immediately afterwards. This of course made bribery and intimidation easy and hence favoured the wealthy and the powerful, and the Liberals accordingly hoped that the 1874 election would more fairly represent the views of the electorate, and would show a shift of support to the Liberals as a result. In fact this did not happen: the Conservatives not only held on to Chippenham, but won a comfortable national majority which brought them into power under Disraeli. Hence Kilvert's triumphant verdict – *the Radicals have had a fair field* – that is, by the change in the voting system in their favour – *and been beaten.*

Kilvert's account of the 1874 Chippenham election is sufficient to show that he certainly had strong political loyalties, and that these were Conservative – indeed, he would have been a very untypical Anglican clergyman of the period if they had been anything else. But his account of the 1874 election does not suggest a close interest in, or even awareness of, the issues at stake in the election: he makes no reference to what the two parties, or their leaders, stood for (not even that the chief plank of Gladstone's election manifesto was a proposal to abolish the Income Tax – but then we have already noted that that would have had no effect on Kilvert himself); nor does he make any reference to, or any comment on, the replacement of Gladstone by Disraeli as Prime Minister. We come back to the truth of the general impression given by his diary, that he was not much interested in politics – at least not in national, as distinct from local, politics.

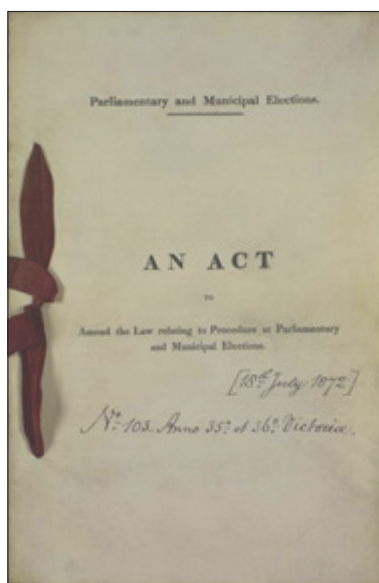
Thus he takes no interest in the current issues that were being debated in Parliament, or to any of the major pieces of legislation that were being enacted in the 1870s. The one exception to this is an interesting one: it occurred on 21 March 1870, when he records that *Evans the schoolmaster very much interested and rather anxious about the Education Bill* – note that it is Mr Evans, not Kilvert himself, who is interested or alarmed. But the Bill referred to is Gladstone's Education Bill, which for the first time brought the state, rather than the Church, into the business of providing primary education, and it is a sign that the state was just beginning to intervene in areas of social service which had previously been left to private individuals and to voluntary institutions like the Church: if you like, when politics began to impinge on private life, as they have been doing increasingly ever since. But there is no indication that Kilvert recognised it as a sign of things to come, though Mr Evans may have done.

It remains to note the one or two exceptional occasions when Kilvert does take notice of public affairs in the world of politics in his diary. In passing, it is worth noting that two categories of news which occupy a great deal of space and time in modern newspapers and broadcasting media, sporting events and major public catastrophes, did interest Kilvert enough to have occasional walk-on parts in his diary. There are two or three references to the Derby and to the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, which

were in a category of their own as sporting events attracting a great deal of interest across the social spectrum, though I doubt if Kilvert ever attended either, or backed a horse in the Derby. As for catastrophes, the Victorians' curiosity about these was insatiable (though certainly no more so than our own – think of the popularity of disaster movies, and the endless series of radio and TV programmes about the loss of the *Titanic*!) and the dangers of the new steam power technologies provided them with a succession of railway accidents and shipwrecks which were eagerly seized upon and described in vivid detail by the rapidly expanding popular press. Kilvert clearly had an eye for the good disaster, and used them as material for his Penny Readings: see his account of his lecture at Langley Burrell on 4 November 1874, at which he *reviewed the events of the last seven months, the funeral of Dr. Livingstone, the visit of the Czar, the Spanish war, the Thorpe railway disaster, the explosion of benzalene and gunpowder on the Regent's Park Canal, the Bengal Famine, shipwrecks and collisions at sea, the Cherson, the Candahar and Kingsbridge, etc* – I like the *etc*! – they must have been there all night. It is easy to imagine how vehemently he would have reacted to the greatest of all Victorian railway accidents, the fall of the Tay Bridge; but it took place just three months after his own death.

There were only two political events during the period of the *Diary* that appealed strongly enough to Kilvert's imagination to have left major marks on the *Diary* – the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, and the Prince of Wales' recovery from typhoid fever in December 1871.

The Franco-Prussian War was the greatest European war of the second half of the nineteenth century, and it is no wonder that Kilvert, like many of his countrymen, was excited by the spectacle of a struggle for supremacy between two of the greatest powers of Europe, both of them with close connections with Britain. It was also the first war to be reported from the actual battlefields by war correspondents using the new electric telegraph, and Kilvert could therefore follow the progress of the war from day to day in the pages of *The Times*. Most British opinion was pro-German in 1870, partly because of the traditional hostility to France as Britain's chief European enemy, and partly because of the close link between the royal families: Queen Victoria's eldest daughter, the Princess Royal, was married to the son and heir of the King of Prussia, who became Emperor of Germany at the end of the war. It is very clear that Kilvert shared this attitude. When the news of the outbreak of war reaches him (on 16 July 1870), his reactions are nothing if not full-blooded – *...war had been declared by France against Prussia, the wickedest, most unjust, most unreasonable war that ever was entered into to gratify the ambition of one man* – he means the French Emperor, Napoleon III. *I side with the Prussians and devoutly hope the French may never push France to the Rhine.* He need not have worried. Within three weeks, the first news of great German victories began to come through: on 3 September he records that Napoleon III himself had been captured. Paris was starved into submission after a three-month siege, and when this was followed by a new revolutionary uprising, Kilvert's reaction makes it clear that his opinion of the French had not been softened by their misfortunes – *Two Generals shot, two more in the hands and tender mercies of the beastly cowardly Paris mob. Those Parisians are the scum of the earth, and Paris is the crater of the*



volcano, France, and a bottomless pit of revolution and anarchy.

For all the strength of Kilvert's feelings, though, as far as Britain was concerned, the Franco-Prussian War was no more than spectator sport. We can only speculate how he would have reacted if Britain had herself been involved in a European war, and from this point of view (as well as others) we can only regret that we do not possess his diaries for 1877, since in that year Disraeli took Britain to the very brink of war against Russia, and Kilvert must surely have had something to say about it; but 1877 was also the year of his abortive engagement to Kathleen Heanley, and it is assumed that it was for this reason that it was one of the periods for which his diary record was apparently destroyed by his widow. In fact the only wars in which Britain came to be involved during the period of the *Diary* were colonial wars fought in remote corners of the rapidly expanding British Empire – not apparently a process that made any great mark on Kilvert's imagination, though one famous episode of it was echoed in one of his last diary entries, on 11 February 1879 – *News came today of the terrible disaster inflicted by the Zulus on the 24th Regiment at Rorke's Drift, S. Africa. Col. Thomas much affected by the news, and obliged to leave the concert room. He knew the officers intimately when the 24th were quartered lately at Brecon.* In fact Kilvert's account is slightly confused, or he had been misinformed. Rorke's Drift was the scene of a heroic and successful stand against enormous odds by a detachment of the 24th – the South Wales Borderers, the local regiment – a day or two after the disaster at Isandhlwana, in which the bulk of their comrades had perished: Colonel Thomas may have taken some comfort for the disaster from the news of the eleven Victoria Crosses that his regiment had won at Rorke's Drift.

The only other public event which roused Kilvert as the revolutionary massacres in Paris was one that has been all but entirely forgotten – the attack of typhoid fever that brought the Prince of Wales – the future Edward VII – to the brink of death in December 1871. Typhoid fever was a terrifying killer for the Victorians. Kilvert's diary entries for the period are full of accounts of the arrival of telegraph bulletins with the latest news of the Prince's condition, and the corresponding fluctuations in the public mood: the electric telegraph, and the possibility of the virtually instantaneous diffusion of news throughout the country were still exciting novelties. The degree of public excitement over the Prince's illness was extraordinary, and what makes it even more remarkable is the fact that the Prince was not a popular figure at the time. Victoria and Albert had accustomed the contemporary public to the assumption that the Royal Family was a model of propriety and decorum, and the increasing notoriety of Edward's involvement in the aristocratic underworld of drink, gambling, and sex scandalised Victorian opinion, especially that of those guardians of national morality, the middle classes and the clergy. And it is clear that Kilvert had shared their reactions to the revelations about the Prince's private life: he had apparently taken particular note of an especially lurid instance of aristocratic depravity in which the Prince had reputedly been involved, the Mordaunt case – see the *Diary* entry for 24 February 1870, and William Plomer's long and very informative note about it. There are no actual expressions of horror at the Prince's moral shortcomings in the printed *Diary*, but they can be in-

ferred from the strength of Kilvert's reaction on 17 December 1871, when the news that the Prince has turned the corner, and is out of danger, comes through – *I love that man now, and always will love him. I will never say a word against him again. God bless him. God bless him and keep him, the Child of England.* And indeed, although there are few references to the Prince in the *Diary* after his recovery, such references as there are are all sympathetic and deeply respectful.

Kilvert's reaction does not seem to have been unusual: there is abundant evidence both of the widespread public criticism of what were seen as the shocking irregularities of the Prince's private life before his illness, and of the equally widespread reaction

in his favour following the news of his recovery. In the *Diary* entry for 3 January 1872, Kilvert quotes a vivid illustration of this which he heard from his brother Perch. *During the most critical days of the Prince's illness a friend of Perch's was present one night amongst a great crowd when an unfavourable bulletin came from Sandringham. The crowd had been patiently waiting some time and when the sad bulletin was posted and read a groan of dismay ran through the people. One man exclaimed, 'Serve him right'. Immediately the infuriated crowd seized him, stripped him naked, knocked him down and kicked him up and down the street like a football till the police burst in and rescued him just before he was killed.*

On the face of it, it seems hard to account for the violent reversal of public opinion from stiff moral disapproval of the Prince's behaviour, to the exuberant outburst of enthusiasm at the news that he was out of danger. Is there some

parallel in the extraordinary outburst of public emotion at the news of Princess Di's death in 1997? I hardly know. On the one hand, it is true that a friend of mine who suggested in his pub one evening that the spectacular demonstrations of public grief were a bit out of proportion found the reaction in the bar so hostile that he thought it best to make a quick exit. But Princess Di was a celebrity and a hugely popular figure, which places her in a very different category from the Prince of Wales in 1871. On the other hand, the Prince of Wales was the heir to the throne, which Princess Di was not, and I think it is here that we should look for an explanation of the alarm at the news of the Prince's illness. What it shows is the far greater status of the Royal Family in the Victorian Age than in our own time, and the extraordinary degree to which it was felt that the wellbeing of the nation was still bound up with the wellbeing of the monarch, and hence of the heir to the throne, whatever his moral shortcomings might be – in fact, is it not possible that the indignation at the impropriety of his private life was due to a feeling that it was a betrayal of his duty to the nation that he was destined to rule? It is interesting, in this connection, that the monarch's role was still seen as crucially important, although the actual shift of power and responsibility from king to Parliament had already taken place nearly two centuries earlier, and although, if the Prince of Wales had died in 1871, it would not have left the country without an heir, for he had three perfectly presentable younger brothers (not to mention five sisters).

But the Prince of Wales was the eldest son and the heir apparent, and the threat of his death was seen by Kilvert and his contemporaries as a national catastrophe – even though they might have found it hard to say exactly what dreadful consequences would flow from it.



Edward Prince of Wales, by GF Watts



Hawkchurch and those wretched bathing drawers!

While on a family holiday on the Dorset/Devon border RICHARD VINE fell among some 'amazingly helpful' people in his quest to retrace the Diarist's footsteps in the little village of Hawchurch. Even the weather played its sweltering part for him, just as it had for Francis Kilvert

SEATON, Thursday, 24 July 1873 *While Dora was sitting on the beach I had a bathe. A boy brought me to the machine door two towels as I thought, but when I came out of the water and began to use them, I found that one of the rags he had given me was a pair of very short red and white striped drawers to cover my nakedness. Unaccustomed to such things and customs, I had in my ignorance, bathed naked.... and scandalized the beach. However some little boys who were looking on at the rude naked man appeared to be much interested in the spectacle, and the young ladies who were strolling near seemed to have no objection.*

What was RFK doing in Seaton? On this occasion visiting his Uncle Will and Aunt Augusta at Hawchurch, a little village on the Devon/Dorset border. This was his second visit, for three days, with his sister Dora, to his uncle and aunt. After tea he and Dora went hunting mushrooms and glow worms ... *stars were just twinkling out in the illimitable blue vault overhead and the white Dorset sheep were moving quiet and ghostly over the hill.*

Kilvert also visited Hawchurch for ten days in August 1871.

But who were his uncle and aunt and where did they live? Last summer we were staying in a little cottage near Chideock on the Dorset coast and found that Hawchurch was only a few miles away, so thought we would try and find out more.

Hawchurch is a village of less than 500 souls a few miles east of the Axminster to Chard road in a deep countryside of small lanes, so well described by Kilvert in the two *Diary* episodes. First stop for us was the church in the middle of the village opposite The Old Inn. Although the church produced no obvious Kilvert names, there are very few country churches that do not reward a visit. Hawchurch is certainly no exception – a pretty setting, low Ham stone tower and inside, some of the finest Norman and Early English sculpture on the capitals and corbels anywhere in Devon. M. Michelin would definitely recommend a detour.

There then followed one of those amazing meetings which make these expeditions such fun. There was a Macmillan coffee morning on in the village hall near the church. We arrived just as the raffle was being drawn and, as obvious 'outsiders', we were approached by a friendly villager, Bill Stead, and after the usual pleasantries, told him of our quest. He knew of RFK's visit to Hawchurch, but no detail. However, he gave us his email address and said he would contact 'someone who would know more'. The modern Kilvertian travels with not only a notebook and map, but also a laptop, so we were able to contact Bill that night. By breakfast the next morning, we had heard

from him as well as a local historian, Julie Baker, who told us she had checked the 1871 census and found William Coleman (of course! ... RFK's mother was a Coleman) and his wife Augusta, living at Pound House on the eastern edge of the Parish. He is described as a clergyman of the Church of England 'without cure of souls' – he aged 48 and she 36 – only four or five years older than RFK.



Our new friend Bill suggested that we met him and other villagers that day at The Old Inn for their lunchtime 'Saturday Club' and Julie Baker joined us there with copies of the 1871 and 1881 census, which she had most kindly printed. Amongst those in the pub were the owners of the Old Rectory who thought that Kilvert had stayed in their house. The *Diary* gives no indication of this and we wondered if the fact that Uncle Will is described as a clergyman, may have confused things. Certainly the Rector of Hawchurch at

the time was a Mr Cay Adams.

Thursday, 10 August 1871 – 'Meteor Day' – *I went to the post and walked in the lime avenue till the postman came. Two wood-pigeons were cooing to each other aloft in the limes. The sheep grazed in the grassy avenue or lay under the trees ... panting in the heat and their white foolish curly horned faces stretched out upon the ground. And the next day, in the afternoon I went to pay a farewell visit to the lime avenue. It looked more like a vast church than ever and the strong low sunlight which came up the green aisle seemed to be pouring through a great distant window. The sunlight streamed between the dark tree trunks, a soft cool breeze rustled the limes overhead and the checquering shadow of the leaves danced and flickered on the rich floor sunny and golden green.*

The lime avenue is still there behind the Old Rectory and we were taken to it by one of the owners after viewing the Old Rectory itself, a large rambling building. The day we visited was hot and cloudless and in the light and shade, the avenue must have looked almost exactly as Kilvert saw it.



On 10 August 1871 the two Misses Barnes came from Tillworth, to spend the afternoon and play croquet. To complete the nice coincidences, the ever helpful Bill and his wife live at Tillworth Farm, which was the home farm of the Barneses at Tillworth House. Julie was able to add from the census that the

Misses Barnes were called Louisa and Jane, both in their twenties; was Aunt Augusta match making? What amazingly helpful people we met in little Hawchurch.

So, off next to Pound House, charmingly thatched and down a

long dusty track. We could look down on the house from the field in which the mushrooms and glow worms were found.

We then explored the lanes around Pound House, so accurately described in the *Diary*. Saturday 26 July 1873: *At the bottom of the hill in the sunny hollow where we crossed a little stream of limpid water clear as crystal, dazzling and gleaming over its yellow pebbles....* We found the little stream and how characteristic of Kilvert to even describe its yellow pebbles which were indeed still there, to this day.

Julie Baker later wrote to tell us of a further interesting connection with her family in that her great-great uncle was Rawlings the gardener at Pound House who appears on the same day (26 July) that *I stole out at the back door to avoid disturbing anyone and I believe Rawlings the gardener thought I was gone mad or going to commit suicide for he ran anxiously out of his shoe house and looked after me to see which way I was going.*

In 1871 Kilvert arrived at Axminster Station to be met by his uncle and aunt with 'Polly' and the dog cart.

The Colemans were certainly determined to entertain their young nephew and Polly took them to Lyme Regis (*there and back 14 miles of hill road in capital style*) three times. On Thursday 3 August 1871, *The first sight of the bold white cliffs and the deep blue sea at their feet was beautiful. The tide ebbed and flowed while we sat at luncheon on the esplanade under a white awning, watching the groups of people and the children on the beach. A large collier lay off the pier, or 'Cob' and two small yachts with white sails flapping, lay at anchor inside the bay. A stone boat stood across the bay with tall dark brown sails.* On the way home after the third visit in the overpowering heat on the 9 August, *As we came home up the long hill, the sweat poured off poor Polly, ran down her legs in streams, and trickled into the road.*

On Monday 7 August they drove to Seaton – *the heat was scorching*. They put up at The Pole Arms (still there, in Fore Street) and went down to the beach which *was thronged, swarming, a gay merry scene, light dresses, parasols, straw hats and pug-gerys, lovers sitting under the shade of boats, unloved girls looking jealously on and girls with shoes, stockings and drawers off, wading in the tide, holding up their clothes, nearly to their waists and naked from the*



Above, the lime avenue behind Hawkchurch Old Rectory; below the beach at Seaton; facing page, the Pound House in Hawkchurch and carvings in the church

paths now and we could see how easily they could reach Lambert's Castle from the house. We followed less energetically by car and found it very similar to Kilvert's description: *A fine fresh air blew from the sea over the high furzy moor* – perhaps not quite so 'furzy' today. There are wonderful views in all directions from the top of this Iron Age hill fort.

So, back to bathing again. 12 June 1874: *At Shanklin one has to adopt the detestable custom of bathing in drawers. If ladies don't like to see men naked why don't they keep away from the sight?*

However, on Thursday 5 September 1872 Kilvert had his own way at Weston-super-Mare: *I was out early before breakfast this morning bathing from the sands. There was a delicious feeling of freedom in stripping in the open air and running down naked to the sea, where the waves were curling white with foam and the red morning sunshine glowing upon the naked limbs of the bathers.*

We were blessed, ourselves, with that wonderful week of exceptional weather at the end of September and beginning of October 2011.

I was tempted into the cool sea at Seatown and Eype (pronounced Eep) both steep shifting shingle beaches as Kilvert discovered at Seaton. My wife ensured I was wearing my bathing drawers and sadly there were no young ladies strolling near, who might have had no objection if I wasn't!





The 'stranger' and the priest

Like all clerics Kilvert brought to his parishes the influence of people and ideas from a wider world. The interaction of the 'outsider' and the 'insiders' of the parish is a timeless dynamic, says JOHN DUNCAN, the former Archdeacon of Birmingham, in this essay based on a paper he gave to the South Northants Clerical Society

THE pages of Kilvert's *Diary* are full of pieces of visionary writing which light on surprise, illuminating words which throw scenes, places, people into fresh light. His literary craft was likely what caught William Plomer's eye as he edited the *Diary* for publication by his employers Jonathan Cape in three volumes in the years 1938, 39 and 40. A more significant underlying matter though concerns the place of natural beauty, of landscape in Kilvert's, and indeed in our, perception of the natural world and any relation of it to God. Kilvert was an Evangelical, but not in the sense of commitment to theological purity and theories of justification, but in the sense of the centrality of 'feeling' in religion in contrast to the dry formality of much religion and worship of the time.

This emphasis on 'feeling' was of a piece with the nineteenth century popularity of William Wordsworth, many of whose poems were of the beauty and grandeur of nature. His direct references to God are few and some regard him a pantheist, yet many have said that for a man of that time to have written like that without an assumption of the reality of God would be unlikely. Francis Kilvert had been much influenced by his uncle, also Francis Kilvert and a priest, into appreciation of the Romantic poets and especially Wordsworth – something of which his father Robert, a stern and Calvinistic Evangelical, disapproved strongly.

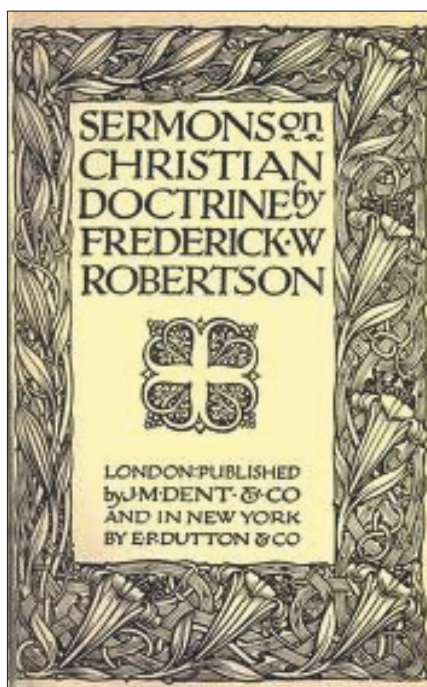
A further influence on Francis, on the liberalising side, was FW, Frederick W Robertson: Kilvert records his loaning of Robertson's Lectures on Corinthians to Miss Drew on 9 February 1870, a characteristic extract: *Went with the Venables to dine at Whitney Court, driving in the mail phaeton and sitting behind with Charlie. Bitterly cold but we were well wrapped up and the hood kept the wind off. Miss Jane from the Rectory at dinner. Lent Miss Drew Robertson's lectures on Corinthians. The Squire and his mother made the rest of the party. A grand night with stars glittering frosty keen and we came home at a rattling pace.* Robertson was a popular preacher in Brighton with some national reputation; he had moved away from his Evangelical origins, embraced social justice and 'broad church', had some association with Charles Kingsley and FD Maurice, and was deeply affected by beauty, particularly of mountains. He wrote, 'I think some pantheists are nearer the truth than most Evangelicals ... the Universe is localised deity, the Universe is the body of which God is the Spirit'. He wrote of the 'invisible loveliness' beyond the visible. For Robertson mountains were of special significance – 'man ought to go to Switzerland', he wrote, 'to feel intensely at least once in his life'. The young Kilvert had visited the Alps in the steps of Robertson, perhaps as a kind of homage: Welsh mountains reflected those Alpine experiences.

On 14 March 1871, ...*the Black Mountains were invisible, being wrapped in clouds, and I saw one very white brilliant dazzling cloud where the mountains ought to have been. This cloud grew more white and dazzling every moment, till a clearer burst of sunlight scattered the clouds and revealed the truth. This brilliant white cloud that I had been looking and wondering at was the mountain in snow. The last cloud and mist rolled away over the mountain tops and the mountains stood up in a clear blue heaven, a long rampart line of dazzling glittering snow so as no fuller on earth can white them. I stood rooted to the ground, struck with amazement and overwhelmed at the extraordinary splendour of this marvellous spectacle. I never saw anything to equal it I think, even among the high Alps. One's first involuntary thought in the presence of these magnificent sights is to*

lift up the heart to God and humbly thank Him for having made the earth so beautiful. An intense glare of primrose light streamed from the west deepening into rose and crimson. There was not a flake of snow anywhere but on the mountains and they stood up, the great white range rising high into the blue sky, while all the rest of the world at their feet lay ruddy, rosy brown. The sudden contrast was tremendous, electrifying. I could have cried with the excitement of the overwhelming spectacle. I wanted someone to admire the sight with me. A man came whistling along the road riding upon a cart horse. I would have stopped him and drawn his attention to the mountains but I thought he would probably consider me mad.

So we step from Kilvert's reflections of natural grandeur and timeless questions of pantheism and the Creator, to a whistling man on a working horse representing a pastor's close observation and love of the people of his parishes and their activities and characters.

There are enough pen portraits of people and situations to keep a novelist going for a lifetime. Here is a snapshot of mid-Victorian rural life on the Welsh marches – the aspect of the *Diary* which perhaps caught Plomer's eye. There is a well-known piece on Kilvert in *The English Spirit*, a collection of essays by AL Rowse, an Oxford luminary of the mid-twentieth century, in which a world of quiet order is summarised. 'What a pleasure it is,' he writes, 'to immerse oneself in that secure Victorian life – archery and croquet on the lawn, tea under the trees, picnics on the unspoiled Cornish coast, grapes and claret on a grassy bank, dinner parties' (and too much claret) 'at Clyro Court, the busy, kindly life centring on the Church'. It is enchanting: it has even been suggested that Plomer, correcting the proofs for the *Diary*'s third volume as he ate mulberries in his father's conservatory in Worthing, saw these scenes as emblematic of a way of life under threat from the Blitz.



Yet it is worth noting that Kilvert was not only caught up in a comfortable rural idyll with comfortable people. His *Diary* is all too aware of poverty – indeed, like Robertson, his preference was for association with the poor, the unsophisticated and uneducated, valuing, like Wordsworth, their simplicity and closeness to nature and deploring, mildly, the arrogance of the comfortable towards them. Friday 29 November 1872: *Miss Mewburn went to the Agricultural Meeting at Chippenham yesterday and came away furious at the patronising way the labourers were preached at and the way in which the poor old people were kept standing during the meeting while 'their betters' (?) were comfortably seated in cushioned chairs.... I very heartily sympathise with her feelings.* His empathy lies with small scale farmers and cottagers in his rather remote parishes, with lone figures in the landscape – another Wordsworthian interest. He is concerned for the invasion of urban values and for the replacing, through enclosure, of small farms and holdings with an agriculture based on the insecurities of a wage economy. His almost nostalgic writing and the very keeping of a diary are reflections of a desire that the old culture and its people should not be forgotten.

So he records the people he meets and to whom he ministers in his *villaging*, as he calls this walking over his parishes covering large distances – 25 miles in a day of pastoral activity, delivering relief such as blankets, giving communion, praying with the sick, elderly and housebound. Monday 5 February 1872: *I went up to Saffron Hill to administer the Sacrament to Thomas Watkins.... After he had received the Sacrament Watkins said, 'I do often ponder when I lie in bed, and last night I was thanking God that the Blessed Sacrament has come down to us through all the broils for eighteen hundred years'.* On 17 February 1870, *Edward Evans better and very thankful for wine and a pair of blankets. Visited Sackville Thomas, Jinny very funny and in good spirits. Polly saying hymns very fast. Sackville sitting hat on by a scorching fire and the venomous east wind blowing full in at the open door.....Market people passing by open door with shawls and handkerchiefs tied over hats and bonnets.* And by contrast with the evening company at dinner at Whitney Court on 9 February 1870, earlier on that day he had gone *up the Cwm to White Ash. Old Sarah Probert groaning and rolling about in bed. Read to her Mark vi and made sure she knew the Lord's Prayer by heart, making her repeat it. Hannah Jones smoking a short black pipe by the fire, and her daughter, a young mother with dark eyes and her hair hanging loose, nursing her baby and displaying her charms liberally.*

In his *villaging* Kilvert was particularly taken with young women and girls – Plomer provides 44 such references. Francis was affected by Robertson's idea of the importance of 'heart speaking to heart' in friendships and was undoubtedly a charismatic and attractive figure who excited love in others, who writes of *wild, sad, sweet trysts*, and whose wife destroyed diary sections related to his courtships. He did have a special link with young children and particularly girls. There are several passages where he idolises the beauty and innocence of girls in imagery

approaching the erotic. He writes of his pleasure in seeing young girls naked, of *romping* with them, being caressed by them. Of bottoms *ripe for whipping!* To our own days many of these sections raise eyebrows, are suggestive of paedophilia. It has, almost incredibly, been noted, however, that in the 1870s these kinds of attitude were fashionable: there was idealisation of the lone, pure child, perhaps reflecting Wordsworth's *Lucy* poems. Kilvert

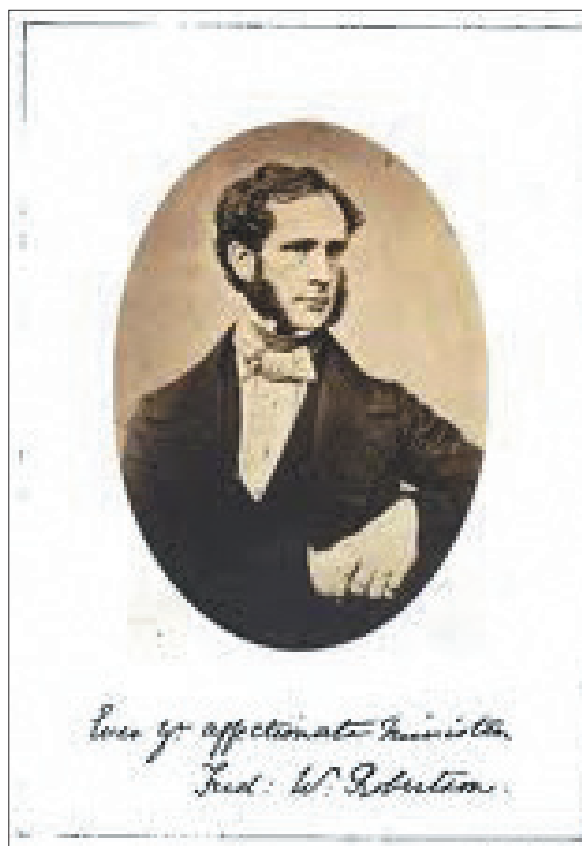
wrote similarly of a child, Emmeline, and there is the well-known instance of Lewis Carroll and Alice. The significance of all this in Kilvert can only be speculative. The prurient middle years of the twentieth century and the editing of the diaries were, it seems, different in such matters from the later nineteenth century, when Kilvert, we read, was able to bathe naked on a public beach. A woman friend of Kilvert's was asked by a clergyman (it would be) whether in the light of his 'inordinate affection' for young girls, he was a really good man. Thoughtfully she replied: 'Yes, he was a good man: if he had not been a good man he would have been a very dangerous man.'

The character of Kilvert's Christian stance, his devotion, piety and viewpoints were much affected by his mother. She had a Quaker and Moravian background. These traditions brought with them the elements of stillness, silence and

solitude, along with convictions of life as a pilgrimage of progression, and of a sacramental view of nature – and an attendant wariness of formal liturgy and sacraments. His mother had read regularly to her children from writers who emphasised these characteristics. She had given her son a copy of *Lyra Apostolica*, a collection of writings by Tractarians, notably by Newman, and also by Keble who wrote *The Christian Year*, an influential book of Victorian piety, of which Kilvert would have been aware. These emphasised the place of nature in Christian understanding – this, rather than Tractarianism, being the reason for the admiration of Kilvert's mother.

Her son's long walking – often in mountains with the solitude he loved – was in keeping with a developing middle class, Victorian fashion for recreational walking which had hitherto been a mark of poverty. For him, his walking became a mark of fellowship with the poor and with those Wordsworthian lone figures as he *villaged* in his parishes. It was also a sign to him of his pilgrimage – on one occasion he arrives at St Davids which he calls *the object of his pilgrimage*. From his walking and meeting in his Wiltshire and border parishes he developed a strong feeling of affinity with the Welsh and the Celts. He is conscious, in those days, of a swathe of land running from Wiltshire, west into Wales which is marked by a Celtic race, standing against invasions from the East. Stonehenge, Old Sarum and the barrows of Salisbury Plain had a fascination for him.

With all this Kilvert had a strong sense of the passing nature of things and the fragility of human identity which could seem alternately hopeful and melancholy, and perhaps in tune with a





The Hall of Wadham College, Oxford, photographed by John Hockin on the Society's visit in 1991.

Returning on a visit to his old college in May 1874 Francis Kilvert wrote: The familiar friendly faces had all vanished I felt like a spirit revisiting the scene of its earthly existence and finding itself strange, unfamiliar, unwanted.

Victorian fascination with the dark and funerary. Thursday 24 September 1874: *Two wood pigeons were pouring out their hearts and their tale of love from elm to elm.... The Chippenham Clock struck eight with sweet musical sound.... Two boys came from the village laughing merrily. And in the midst of all this freshness and beauty, a black shadow stole over the scene, a hearse with plumes and a mourning coach rumbled along the road from Chippenham and across the bright Common. So 'sin entered into the world and death by sin'. Perhaps the best instance of his expressing the vigour, yet ultimately vulnerable character, of life is in an elegiac passage about a ruined farmhouse, Whitehall, on Tuesday 3 May 1870. Poor Whitehall, sad, silent and lonely, with its great black yew in the hedge of the tangled waste grass-grown garden.... I walked round ... and pushed open a door.... Here were held the Quarterly Dances. What fun. What merry makings, the young people coming in couples and parties from the country round to dance in the long room. What laughing, flirting, joking and kissing behind the door or in the dark garden among the young folks.... Now how all is changed, song and dance still, mirth fled away. Only the weird sighing through the broken roof and crazy doors, the quick feet, busy hands, saucy eyes, strong limbs all mouldered into dust, the laughing voices silent.*

At some points, the passing of time and of others taking their predecessors' places is a source of disturbance to Kilvert who emphasises the need to be 'remembered' to feel he exists. A visit to his old Oxford college, Wadham, on 21 May 1874, is particularly striking: *The familiar friendly faces had all vanished.... I felt like a spirit revisiting the scene of its earthly existence and finding itself strange, unfamiliar, unwanted.* More orthodox are his reflections on Easter Day 1876 at Langley Burrell, which reflects many of his characteristics – the skilled capturing of a scene, punctuated by mundane observation, his fascination with pretty girls, his solitude, a touch of paganism, his pastoral heart, a tinge of egalitarianism under mother nature, mortality and the hope of Easter. The passage, reflecting Grey's less specifically Christian poem, has been called 'Kilvert's Elegy.' *The Church was fairly lively this bright, beautiful Easter morning.... Twenty-three graves were dressed with flowers ... from the Chapel window I could see the pretty girls with their fresh sweet rosy faces and their new bright Easter dresses moving about over the Churchyard turf ... and looking at the flowering of the graves. There was a large congregation this morning ... 41 Communicants beside the parson and clerk.... The alms*

were £1.3.10. It was a great happiness ... to me to see at the rails the two bright sweet fair young faces which I had so earnestly longed and hoped and prayed might be there, Katie Collett and Celia Bryant.

When all the people had left the church and no one remained but the Clerk putting away the sacred vessels, I walked alone, around the silent sunny peaceful churchyard and visited the graves of my sleeping friends Jane Hathwell, Mary Jefferies, Anne Hawkins, John Jefferies, George Bryant, Emily Banks, John Hatherell, Limpedy Buckland, the gipsy girl, and many more. There they lay, the squire and the peasant, the landlord and the labourer, young men and maidens, old men and children, the infant of days beside the patriarch of nearly five score years, sister, brother, by the same mother, all in her breast their heads did lay and crumble to their common clay. And over all she lovingly lay her soft mantle of green and gold, the greensward and buttercups, daisies and primroses. There they lay all sleeping well and peacefully after life's fitful fevers and waiting for the Great Spring morning and the General Resurrection of the dead. John Hatherell, the good old sawyer, now sleeps in the same God's acre to which he helped to carry the gipsy girl, Limpedy Buckland, to her burial more than sixty years ago.'

Like all people, Francis Kilvert was a man of his times, serving the church with the particular characteristics of those years, affected by the fashions and foibles of the time. By the twenty-first century many things have changed – perhaps most significantly, through World Wars, transport and education, the closely cohesive local community which narrowed horizons and protected centuries' old cultures. Like all clerics, Kilvert brought to a series of parishes and people his own particular strengths and weaknesses – charismatic, sociable, melancholy, amorous, vigorous to note a few. He also brought the influence of people and ideas, from a wider world beyond his cures, who had affected him. The interaction of the priest, an outsider – Kilvert refers to himself as a 'stranger' – with the people of the parishes, insiders, is a dynamic which is timeless, even if its currency changes. Superficially things may change – we live in a car-borne world, Kilvert walked, and wrote of wedding carriages with three grey horses and postillions in red uniforms – but mortality, beauty, the mystery of God, human need, the Gospel are for all seasons, in the grist of ministry and the location of God's purpose.

The author gratefully acknowledges his debt to the published work of John Toman

Letters to the Editor

SIR,

I would like to suggest a new type of regular feature for the *Journal*, which I think would add greatly to its interest. It has always seemed to me that the *Diary* sadly lacks a commentary: Plomer made no attempt to provide one, and nor have any of Kilvert's biographers. There are numerous entries in the *Diary* which would benefit from some comments or explanations – explaining references which would have been obvious to Kilvert's contemporaries, but are obscure to readers a hundred and fifty years later, clarifying obscure passages or the itineraries of Kilvert's walks, supplying further information about people mentioned in the *Diary*, or perhaps about descendants of theirs still living in the area, pointing to incidents and aspects of Kilvert's life which would reward further investigation, and so on. Many such points that deserve comment have of course already been dealt with by later writers on Kilvert, and in these cases the commentary would only need to give a reference to them, but a very large number have not.

A commentary of this sort would be a very serious contribution indeed to students, and an encouragement to research; and it would add greatly to the authority of the *Journal*, by making it something more than a merely occasional magazine.

I recognise that this suggestion raises a large number of unanswered questions, but I am very serious about it, and would be pleased to suggest answers to such questions, or otherwise to help with the scheme.

I look forward with interest to your reaction!

LAURENCE LE QUESNE,
Shrewsbury
21 October 2011

Coincidentally with receiving that letter I had asked Val Dixon to type up the inspiring address that Laurence gave to the Kilvert Symposium held at Attingham Park in 1975 on 'Suggestions for Further

Suggestions for Further Research

Laurence Le Quesne's 2,000 word address to the Kilvert Symposium held in 1975 still rewards close study. While much research has been done since he spoke there are many facets of the Diarist's life still to be explored. As he says, 'The possibilities for useful research in the field of Kilvert studies are many, varied, potentially very rewarding, and of great interest. All that is needed is time, enthusiasm, and moderate intelligence; and surely, among the growing number of admirers of the Diary, these will not be lacking?' Below is a taste of his manifesto.

THERE is also the matter of the three gaps in the *Diary* (I assume here that, as seems likely, it originally ran up till shortly before his death). It is well known that these are apparently due to Kilvert's widow removing volumes whose contents she regarded as too personal to be revealed even to other members of the family. The first of these gaps, from September, 1875, to March, 1876, seems to represent the period of Kilvert's romance with Ettie Meredith-Brown, an episode about which we would dearly like to know more: it seems to have been a much less staid and more desperate affair than his much better documented affair with Daisy Thomas, as one would gather both from retrospective references to it in later volumes of the *Diary* and from the very fact that Mrs. Kilvert removed the volume dealing with it but saw no need to do the same with the volume describing the earlier romance.

The reason for the second gap, between June, 1876 and December, 1877, which covers the whole of Kilvert's brief stay at St. Harmon's and his move to Bredwardine – again both matters about which we should like to know more – is more mysterious. It is generally explained as due to the fact that the missing volumes covered Kilvert's first meeting with Elizabeth Rowland,

Research' (partially reprinted below). In reply to Laurence, I expressed enthusiasm for his idea of a commentary, telling him it would be discussed at the committee meeting on February 15. EDITOR.

He replied (in part):

I'm glad that you're attracted by my suggestion of publishing a serial commentary on the *Diary* in the *Journal*. For several years I was also a member of the Woodforde Society, and found it very interesting to compare their newsletter, and other publications, with ours. The parallels between Woodforde's *Journal* and Kilvert's *Diary* are so obvious that it's very interesting to compare them. I've always felt that the Woodforde Society contributed to a rather larger quantity of serious research on their diarist than we did for ours and that it should be possible to do something to redress the balance.

Failing the publication of the whole text of the *Diary* (the three surviving volumes and the other fragments that have come to light from time to time) with proper annotations, then the idea of a separately published commentary could be a very acceptable, though very imperfect, substitute. Publication in serial form in the *Journal* might I think, give the *Journal* a backbone of serious research, comment, and discussion that would strengthen its own *raison d'être*, and add greatly to the enjoyment of both old and new readers of the *Diary*.

Although it would be absurd to put such a project forward unless I was prepared to play a part in putting it into effect, I most emphatically would not want to dominate it – for several good reasons, including my remoteness from both Clyro and Langley Burrell and my lack of close contact with them for forty years, and also the fact that I am 83, and that I do not expect to be around long enough to see the project come anywhere near completion.

At this point, I will leave the ball in your court.

LAURENCE LE QUESNE
6 January 2012

his bride to be – according to tradition, in Paris – and, presumably, the development of their romance, for there are at least two, more probably three, volumes missing here, whereas if only their first meeting was described, only one volume would be likely to be involved. Did it, perhaps come just at the end of one volume and the start of the next? But the mystery, in any case, remains, for we have the *Diary* from December, 1877, to March 1879, and it makes no reference to Elizabeth Rowland at all, which scarcely suggests that anything very intimate can have occurred in the interval. It is true that the unpublished portions of the *Diary* may, for all we know, have mentioned her; but it seems unlikely that William Plomer, in making his selection, would have omitted any but the most passing references to Kilvert's future wife, especially as he specifically says, in his original introduction to vol. 3, that he had no information about her at all.

The third 'gap' from March 1879, to the diarist's death six months later, is of course hypothetical, since there is no evidence that the *Diary* ever covered this period; but it is easily accounted for if it did, since it must have described the circumstances of their engagement, the wedding, and their very brief married life.

To buy a copy of A Kilvert Symposium, see inside back cover

Letters to the Editor

SIR,

I have been reading again the KS booklet *Looking Backwards* and on page 17 there is the description of RFK by a cousin on Addie Cholmeley's side. He wrote to the KS in 1946 in response to an article on RFK in *The Listener*.

As a boy he encountered Kilvert when he visited Croft, and particularly mentions his visit following the Findon wedding (which was in August 1874) about which Kilvert had written a 'sentimental poem'. He dates the visit at 'about 1875'. The interesting point is that he says, 'The portrait of Frank in *The Listener* is exactly as I remember him, very sleek and glossy and gentle...rather like a nice Newfoundland dog.' This portrait was presumably the well known one, so it would seem that it shows us how RFK looked in 1875. He does look sleek and glossy, doesn't he? This is at odds with the mystery photo, where the subject's ears and the lie of his hair clinched it for me when I saw the photo in the album at Croft that it was Kilvert.

I still think it could be...but when? Because by the time of Dora's wedding in July 1879 his beard is short again (see photos in D. Lockwood's biography) and the resemblance to the traditional portrait is clear. If only someone had written on the back!

MARGARET COLLINS

Penge

SIR,

I find the photo of a priest, who is seen as a possible one of Kilvert, very interesting, and the response of some members equally so. There is some resemblance, but what makes it clear that it is of another person is the forehead. Kilvert's forehead is erect, the forehead in the photograph is quite clearly sloping. Also the setting of the eyebrows are quite different.

RONALD DURDEY

Chester



SIR,

I was surprised to see that *The Portrait of Smith* in *Journal* 32 is described as a portrait of Kilvert's brother in law. This depicts a man of 20-30ish and the style of his hair, jacket and cravat all look to me to be typical of the period between 1800 and 1830, before Rev. William Smith was born. These styles were outmoded by 1850 to 60 when the Rev was a young man.

Could this actually be the father of William Robins Smith? This might explain why the portrait (presumably donated by Perceval Smith) is described 'Smith' as opposed to 'Reverend Smith' or 'father'.

I have made a study of the history of dress since I was a child of 10 and this picture just jarred with me. So I look forward to hearing more discussion about this.

HESTER CASEY

Caversham

Hester makes the point very well. Others have also commented that the portrait, left, is more likely to be that of Thomas Furley Smith, the father of the Rev. William Robins Smith, and the label on the portrait at the Radnorshire Museum has been changed to reflect this. EDITOR

The Evelyn Madigan Collection

Jeff Marshall writes: In August 2011 I received a large package sent by one of our New Zealand members, Lyndall Hancock. Lyndall lives in Dunedin and through a shared interest in Kilvert became a friend of Evelyn Madigan, whose collection of Kilvertiana was contained in this package.

Evelyn died at the age of 95 in July 2010. Her obituary appeared in *Journal* 31.

She began her Kilvert collection shortly after joining the Society as a life member in 1980. Its principal interest lies in two large loose-leaf files which contain accounts of her visits to Kilvert Country, interspersed with many fascinating photographs of people and places, in particular of Ron and Joan Watts with whom she seems to have been especially friendly. Evelyn visited Britain every other year between 1981 and 1991, but in 1998 she made a special effort to be in Hereford for the Society's fiftieth anniversary celebrations.

Also in the package were Society publications and various guides, to Colva, Gladestry, Llanthony etc, some by our late member Ken Clew. The Society's archive already has copies of these, of course, so Evelyn's copies will be offered for sale to members. In addition there was a box of slides containing, alas, only a few of Kilvert interest, and some cassettes, notably of the BBC radio talk of September 1988 of Timothy Davies reading from the *Diary*.

Lyndall had already done a great deal of preparatory work on the files, for which I am very grateful, placing the contents in chronological order, numbering the pages and adding an index.

How Evelyn came to the Kilvert Society is best told in her own words:

It was in 1979 that my friend Margaret Groom of Royston, Herts, introduced me to the Rev. Francis Kilvert. I take notice of what Margaret tells me, as she is a very wise person – but I did not take quite enough notice of that occasion, because 1979 was the hundredth anniversary of Kilvert's death!

I returned home to New Zealand and in 1980 the Kilvert series was shown on television. Another friend,



Dorothy, also very wise about books and the spoken word, asked if she could come and share in my viewing of the Kilvert episodes. She had read the three volumes of the *Diary* and knew the story of each instalment – we watched enthralled.

Later that year I bought the Penguin edition of the *Diary* and about the same time my Royston friend, Margaret, sent me the children's edition of the *Diary* illustrated by Edward Ardizzone.

At about this time and by accident I was looking through some old copies of a magazine I receive from England and there I found an article on Kilvert – previously it had meant nothing to me, but now it did!

The article mentioned the existence of a Kilvert Society with an address. I wrote and received a reply from Edward West telling me a little about the Society – and I joined! So it was that in 1981 I decided to visit Britain again and to see a little of Kilvert Country.

By way of an introduction to the Evelyn Madigan Collection, Lyndall Hancock writes:

The Society gave Evelyn such a lot of pleasure – the *Diary*, the friends she made, the places she visited, and Edward West through his care for faraway members. Evelyn didn't drive, but she was a good walker and thoroughly enjoyed Kilvert Society walks and outings, to which other members kindly transported her. She was honoured to be asked to read the lessons at several Commemorative Services through the years.

Evelyn kept a rough log-book and later rewrote entries and put them with photos into these two albums. Evelyn is remarkably non-critical in her comments on Society happenings – except for her dislike of dogs and of people who talked too much. And she was always a good little trencherwoman, so food figures largely. Basically she enjoyed everything very much.

Her albums are returned to the Society at the suggestion of Jeff Marshall, the former Editor of the *Journal*, in case photos or accounts of various events may be of some archival use in the future.



Left, Evelyn Madigan reads the lesson at the Commemorative Service at Betws in July 1985. Above, in the same year she is pictured in The Granary, Hay-on-Wye, with Edward West and, right, Ron Watts – two of the rare archive photos in the Evelyn Madigan Collection

Notes, Reviews, Obituaries

Welcome

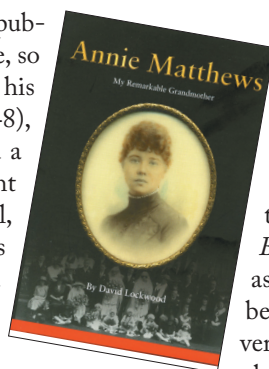
The Society extends a very warm welcome to the following new members:

Mr Peter Bailey, of Christian Malford, Wiltshire;
Mr and Mrs A R Crane, of Pontypool, Torfaen;
Mr Geoffrey Browne, of Windsor, Victoria, Australia;
Mrs Beatrice Major, of Belfast, Co. Antrim;
Mrs Eva Morgan, of Peterchurch, Herefordshire;
Mrs Marilyn Price, of Sarn, Powys; and
Mr Peter Turner, of Shepherd's Bush, London.



OUR late President David Lockwood has published another book – from beyond the grave, so to speak. David wrote the book, the story of his grandmother, Annie Matthews (1862-1948), many years ago but had been unable to find a publisher. Now his widow Willy has brought his project to fruition. 'I am very grateful, guided by God step by step, to fulfil David's heart's desire at last,' she wrote to the *Journal*.

Members of the Society, including our former chairman Michael Sharp and his wife Sue and Michael Reynolds, attended the



launch last August in St Mary's Church, Brecon. The book of nearly 700 pages describes the life of Annie Matthews from her childhood in Yorkshire, her education in Holland and work as a governess in The Hague and Cologne, through to her hotel business in Scarborough and her last days in Winchester.

Typeset and designed by Graficas Design, *Annie Matthews: My Remarkable Grandmother* is available from Dr Wilhemina Lockwood, at 61A Camden Road,

Brecon LD3 7RT, tel 01874 622 554 (price £9.99). Willy is pictured at the launch with her daughter, Diana, a leading expert on leprosy at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



MANY families in the Hereford area have cause to be supportive of St Michael's Hospice at Bartestree and its newsletter has a wide circulation. So it was pleasing to read in last autumn's issue (sent to the *Journal* by Richard Weston) the CEO Nicky West using her column to quote Francis Kilvert.

Under the heading 'Autumn's sweet peace and happy stillness', she says, "Many poets and writers speak of melancholy sadness when they describe this time of the year" and she quotes Matthew Arnold's lines, "Coldly, sadly descends / The autumn-evening. The field / Strewn with its dank yellow drifts / Of wither'd leaves, and the elms, / Fade into dimness apace. Silent:—"

In contrast, says Nicky, 'Francis Kilvert reminds us that au-

tumn can also be a magical and beautiful time in which nature dies to renew itself to bring promise and hope in the coming year.' She quotes (at impressive length) the passage for 24 September 1874 describing a walk over to Kington St. Michael by Langley Burrell Church, *a day of exceeding and almost unmatched beauty.... A warm delicious calm and sweet peace brooded breathless over the mellow sunny autumn afternoon and happy stillness was broken only by the voices of children blackberry gathering in an adjoining meadow and the sweet solitary singing of a robin.*

'It would be easy to sense an utter deep silence and despair,' writes Nicky, 'but I hope that through the Hospice . . . people can sense the hope, love, peace and "happy stillness" that is there when you can reach it.'



A BOOK with the intriguing title of Tretower to Clyro might tempt members but they might be disappointed to find it has very little about the Diarist.

The book is a collection of essays and reviews, ranging far and wide, intellectually and geographically, by the former editor of the *The Listener* and founder of the *London Review of Books*, Karl Miller. Of interest to us he quotes our President's assertion that 'it is man's rightful place to live in Nature and be a part of it', whereas 'city life fragments a man'. As for Kilvert, he appears in the first essay in the book, 'Country Writers', where he rubs shoulders with Henry Vaughan, Raymond Williams, DH Lawrence, Seamus Heaney among others. (Thanks to Jeff Marshall for alerting us to this book.)



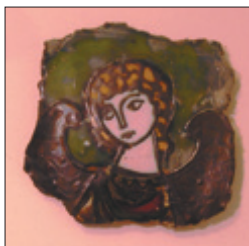
FOR many years a well-known feature of Clyro was the pottery of Adam (strictly, Adaš) Dworski. There is now a house on its site, but it used to be behind the bus shelter in the vicarage garden.



Adam, pictured, died last March aged 93. He was a Croatian who married an English woman, Patricia (known as Paddy) in 1954 and moved to Clyro. They set up the Wye Pottery in 1956 and were soon part of the local scene. It ran for forty years.

'Much of his work was painted with rich colour, distinguishing his works from the major trends in ceramics at that time,' said the *Times* obituary.

His daughter Marijana Dworska wrote in *The Guardian*. "This was an era of innovation in studio pottery and his work became collectable. Nearly half a life spent in Wales meant that he produced plaques depicting sheep-dotted hills in greens and browns, the familiar form of the Brecon Beacons, the tiny churches in



hidden Radnorshire valleys. His spiritual home remained the mountains and forests of inland Croatia; by extension he adopted the Welsh mountains as his sanctuary.' Michael Anthony, the historian of Clyro, has warm memories of him. 'Lovely man he was, very friendly,' he told the *Journal*.

In later life, Adam and Paddy moved to France, eventually settling in Burgundy, near their sons, Adam and Mark.

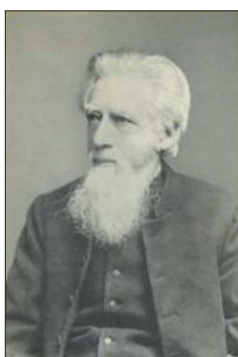
Paddy died just six weeks after her husband.

Marijana lives near Dorstone. Her partner, John Milsom, helps organise the annual Kilvert Walk from Newchurch.'



THE article, 'Hearts in Hiding: two Victorian priests', by Gerald Roberts in the last *Journal*, on the parallels between Francis Kilvert and Gerard Manley Hopkins, had a special interest for our archivist, Colin Dixon, for it referred to his two-times great uncle the Rev. Richard Watson Dixon (1833-1900), *right*, the poet and a canon in the Church of England. He was described by Roberts as one of Hopkins's greatest friends.

Val Dixon wrote: 'Colin has his History of the Church of England (six volumes) and several of his poetry books and also the book of correspondence between Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon. Dixon was also on the fringe of the Pre-Raphaelites. He went to school with Burne-Jones, met William Morris at Oxford and became life-long friends, also Rossetti, who tried to teach him to paint (but failed), but he did help Morris to paint the sunflowers in the Oxford Union debating chamber.'



KILVERT connections turn up in the most unlikely places. Jeff Marshall was in the Brookside Garden Centre at Poynton in Cheshire when he came face to face with the station sign for St Harmons.

'You never know where or when you are going to come across a Kilvert connection,' he wrote to the *Journal* (enclosing his snap of the sign), and musing '— could Frank himself have gazed upon this sign?! It's a typical GWR board, such as I remember from



my train-spotting days and from summer vacation jobs as a railway worker.' The garden centre makes a theme of old 'railwayabilia', with 'station name-boards galore from all over Britain [and] enamel advertising panels', not to mention a miniature railway loved by grandchildren (and, no doubt, their granddad).



READERS of the *Church Times* are lucky to enjoy a regular column by our President. Last 16 September, in his 'Word from Wormingford' (the Suffolk village where he lives), Ronald Blythe drew parallels between his quest in his orchard for unpecked, or ungnawed pears and Kilvert's *Diary* entry for 6 September 1870: *We went into the green orchard where beautiful waxen-looking August apples lay in the grass, under the heavily loaded trees.*

Mr Blythe goes on to say: 'It was probably on New Year's Day 1870 that Kilvert, Curate of Clyro, walked to Hay-on-Wye to purchase his first notebook at Horden's, the stationer's, thus to create one of the most brilliant records of the rural Church of England. Even now, all these years later no country parish should be without it. It greens the Incumbents Board and sets the registers alive.'

The *Journal* was sent a copy of his column by our member, Dr Bernard Palmer, who in his time as editor of the *Church Times* (1968-89) reviewed a number of books on Kilvert. 'I am myself an acquaintance of Ronald Blythe,' he told the *Journal* of his fellow East Anglian, 'and have often heard him in conversation wax eloquent about the diarist.'



An apology is owed to Carol Beddall, for not crediting her with the superb tea we enjoyed when we visited the Old Rectory at Dorstone last June as the guests of Michael and Mary Hession.



OUR successful archive appeal is being formally wound up (see page 132). At last year's annual meeting Alan Brimson paid tribute to those who had contributed financially to the success of the appeal and also to those who had 'gone the extra mile'. In the case of Colin Dixon and Richard Weston (and Alan should well have included himself in this category), this meant some serious travelling to and from Aberystwyth, where the conservators are based in a hub around the National Library of Wales. He had praise for, and thanks to, Heather Pegg, latterly Curator of the Radnorshire Museum in Llandrindod Wells, who had 'raised the alarm' about the deteriorating condition of the archive.

Mention has been made in previous *Journals* of Kate Newton, the paper conservator (of whom Alan said, 'Kate made my life very easy') and of Jenny Williamson, the easel paintings conservator, but not of the bookbinder, Julian Thomas, *pictured below*, who was responsible for superbly restoring the two albums of watercolours. So take a bow, Julian.





Picture of Chain Alley, Hay-on-Wye is reproduced courtesy of the Brecknock Museum

CHAIN ALLEY in Hay, *above*, had a particular fascination for Francis Kilvert. It was a dangerous terrible neighbourhood for young Marianne Price to be brought up in.

After calling on the Bridges at Pont Faen Kilvert would pass it on his walk back in to town to cross the Wye and return to Clyro. The *Diary* has several mentions:

March Eve, 1870: *In Chain Alley, Hay, at Prissy Prosser's door, saw Marianne Price grown tall and slight, her dark large eyes as beautiful and pure as ever.*

Thurs 7 April 1870: *Coming back up Chain Alley turned into Prissy Prosser's to see Marianne. The child said she liked her book very much that I gave her last. (The book was *Alone in London*, by Hesba Stretton, 1832-1911, published in 1869)*

Tuesday 11 October 1870: *Going down towards Chain Alley I saw a pair of dark beautiful eyes looking softly and lovingly through the dusk, earnest and eager to be recognized, and the slight delicate girlish figure of the Flower of the Border*

stood within her grandmother's door, her round olive cheeks shaded by her clusters of dark curls. A happy smile broke over her beautiful face, as she looked up shyly and spoke. When I came back a little before midnight the house was dark, but as I passed I heard the child's voice speaking in the bedroom. Chain Alley is a dangerous terrible neighbourhood for a beautiful girl to be reared in. God keep thee my child.

The caption accompanying the Brecknock Museum picture of Chain Alley says: 'A long gone location in Hay once known locally as Chain Alley, after the chains strung between the posts which separated the sunken row of cottages from the roadway above.... Francis Kilvert referred in his diaries to visiting residents of Chain Alley, which was demolished in 1883.'

Recent works in the area have provided the opportunity for a 'dig' by the leading archaeologist Stephen Clarke MBE. He has uncovered evidence of significant industrial activity, including a large amount of slag. Sadly the slag is not chain-making bloomery; it appears to be from the old gas works near by.



Chain Alley appears to have been in the area now called Wye Ford (or Wyeford) Road, just by the old Water Gate or Nypport Gate (demolished in the late 18th c). Just above the top edge of the map is where the railway station was. The middle picture shows footings of buildings, possibly of Chain Alley (demolished in 1883), and, right, gas works slag.

PICTURES COURTESY OF STEPHEN CLARKE

Obituaries

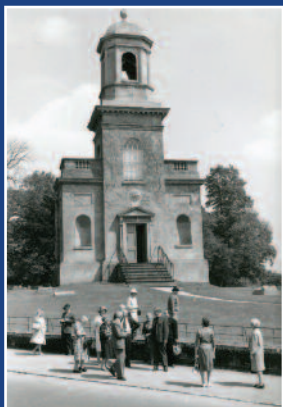
It is with regret that we record the death of the following Members

Marjorie Rose Darby, of Abbeyfields, Newton Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, died on 21 January.

Miss Darby had been a member since July 1986.

Helga Fisher, of Newchurch, Radnorshire, the wife of the Rev Dr Humphrey Fisher, died on 5 February.

Helga had been a member of the Society since 2000. A full obituary will appear in the September *Journal*.



1841

Lang	Robert	Robert	Kilvert	Harden:	Clerk	Robert
3 rd	Francis	Thornthwaite		husk		Kilvert
No. 110.	Son of					Rever.