

THE  
*Journal*  
OF  
THE KILVERT SOCIETY



JAMES ATLAY

*Hereford's Forgotten Bishop, 1868-1894*

# 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](http://www.thekilvertsociety.org.uk)

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

## Hon. Secretary Mr A. BRIMSON

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

## Vice-Chairman Mr M. G. SHARP

The Old Forge, Kinnersley, Herefordshire HR3 6QB.

## Hon Treasurer Mr R. G. V. WESTON

35 Harold Street, Hereford HR1 2QU.

## Hon Membership Secretary Mrs S. ROSE

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

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

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

## Hon Editor of the *Journal* CHARLES BOASE

Vauxhall House, Monmouth NP25 3AX. Tel: 01600 715 076.  
email: [charles.boase@gmail.com](mailto:charles.boase@gmail.com)

*Contributions are welcome for the September Journal – in  
words or pictures – by post or email by 17 July 2013, please*

**Website:** [www.thekilvertsociety.org.uk](http://www.thekilvertsociety.org.uk) (for additions or  
corrections, please email the Editor of the *Journal*). If you have  
mislaid the password for the Archive section of the website,  
please email the Editor, who will send it to you.

## Dates for your diary

### 2013

#### Wednesday 6 March

A visit to Oxford, including the Diarist's college, Wadham

#### Friday 26 April

AGM at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford 7pm.  
Afterwards, Mr Gordon Wood will speak on 'Kilvert and the  
Railways'

#### Saturday 27 April

Radnorshire Arms Hotel, Presteigne.  
10.30am Seminar  
6.30pm for 7pm. Same venue  
The Kilvert Society Annual Dinner.  
The booking form for this weekend's events accompany this  
edition of the *Journal*.

#### Saturday 29 June

12 noon. Meet at Tintern for a pre booked lunch (to be  
confirmed), a visit to Tintern Abbey with a short walk after-  
wards.

#### Sunday 30 June

3pm. A commemoration service at Glascwm.

#### Saturday 28 September

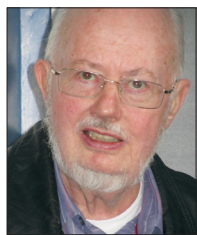
A visit to Lacock, Wiltshire, which will include lunch and  
Lacock Abbey, the home of Fox Talbot the founder of mod-  
ern photography (all to be confirmed).

**PLEASE HELP THE SOCIETY CUT POSTAGE COSTS:** The Society would like to send all relevant communications to members by email, where possible, to reduce our postage costs. If you are on email, please tell the Secretary at [jeanbrimson@hotmail.com](mailto:jeanbrimson@hotmail.com). Otherwise mailings will be sent to you by post as usual. The *Journal* will continue to be printed and posted.

**Front Cover** James Atlay is known as the 'Forgotten Bishop' of Hereford, but no longer since Karl Showler produced his impressive biography, reviewed by Michael Sharp on pages 220-21. Our picture is from the cover of Karl's book and it reproduces the portrait that hangs in the room at the Bishop's Palace where we take refreshments after the Society's AGM

**Back cover** Scenes from our visit to Clifford last September. For Michael Tod's report, see pages 208-09

## From the Chairman



I WAS recently reading Volume 2 of the *Diary* and was particularly taken by the entry for Tuesday 9 January 1872 in which Kilvert meets a boy named George Wells.

*He was going to beg a bit of bread from a woman who lived at the corner of the Common under the Three Firs. He said he did not know the name of the woman but she knew his mother and often gave him a bit of bread when he was hungry. His mother was a cripple and had no parish relief, sold cabbage nets and had nothing to give him for dinner.*

*The boy's face looked pale, pinched and hungry.*

I often forget that the *Diary* contains entries reporting on the crushing poverty experienced by the rural poor in the second half of the nineteenth century. This passage reminds us that Kilvert reported on social and economic problems as well as passages on the 'rural idyll'. Although the Corn Laws had been abolished in 1846, economic conditions had worsened due to opening the markets to intense foreign competition. A series of natural disasters (wet seasons and livestock diseases) also contributed to the agricultural depression.

The huge disparity in wealth in Victorian society can be graphically illustrated by the example of a collection of cigars belonging to the late 3rd Earl of Yarborough. They sold for £850 in 1875, and according to A N Wilson in *The Victorians* this figure represented eighteen years income for one agricultural labourer on his estate.

## 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 26 April 2013.**

**Any two members may nominate one or more members for election to the Committee. Such nominations and any items for any other business must be received by the Secretary by 25 March 2013.**

Another year of Kilvert Society activities lie ahead of us and by the time you are able to read this our first event will already be behind us with our visit in March to Oxford and Wadham College, in the wake of Francis Kilvert.

I do hope you will support the events arranged for this year wherever possible. Please return the booking form for the AGM and Annual Dinner as soon as possible, cheques will not be banked until 22 April.

As you are all aware the Society purchased, at great cost, The Kilvert Family Photograph Album last year. John Toman has since worked feverishly and has researched each and every one of the images featured and has produced a wonderful book, a story of not only of who they were but also their life stories and how they fit into the Kilvert Family (see p218).

The Kilvert Society is very pleased to announce we will be publishing this book. It will be fully illustrated with each image reproduced along with the individual biographies of everyone featured.

John tells a fascinating tale, as the story unfolds in a very readable fashion. This opens up to us the greater Kilvert Family and their friends, the like of which has never been revealed before. It's essential reading for anyone who has an interest in Francis Kilvert, his life and *Diary*, and is a unique opportunity to add to your Kilvert collection in your bookcase.

Please support your Society's endeavours by ordering your copy, by completing and returning the enclosed order form.

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# Annual General Meeting of the Kilvert Society 2013

The Annual General Meeting of the Kilvert Society will be held in the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, on Friday 26 April 2013 at 7pm

## Agenda

1. Welcome to Members
2. Secretary's Announcements
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of AGM of 25 April 2012
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 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

(Mrs E. Rowe has decided to stand down from the Committee.)

### 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 AGM.

10. Any Other Business previously notified to the Secretary.

**End of AGM.**

## INTERVAL

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

Mr Gordon Wood will give a talk on 'Kilvert and the Railways'.

### 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 31st December 2012

INCOME	2012	2011
Appeal Donations	£286.24	£1,025.20
Subscriptions	£3,894.00	£3,994.00
Donations	£354.00	£400.50
Gift Aid	£919.95	£1,126.28
AGM Income	£270.00	£239.00
Publication Sales	£566.00	£622.84
Events	£1,518.20	£805.05
Interest	£1.79	£4.86
Transfers	£3,000.00	£1,145.21
	<b>£10,810.18</b>	<b>£9,362.94</b>

## EXPENDITURE

Grants & Subscriptions	£490.00	£465.00
Monuments & Collections		
	£1,235.00	£18,056.24
Postage, Stationery & Phone		
	£855.90	£607.83
Printing	£98.16	-
Journal Printing & Postage		
	£2,915.84	£2,630.68
Insurance	£152.00	£152.00
Events	£1,783.20	£803.66
AGM Expenses	£895.25	£595.36
Transfer	£3,000.00	£1,145.21
Website	£240.48	£1,199.99
Unpaid Cheque	-	£12.00
	<b>£11,665.83</b>	<b>£25,667.97</b>

## ASSETS

Balance Lloyds	£508.16	£4,651.84
Balance Lloyds Appeal Fund		
	£1,564.14	£1,277.33
Nationwide Building Society		
	£14,915.43	£11,914.21
	<b>£16,987.73</b>	<b>£17,843.38</b>
Excess Expenditure over Income		<b>£855.65</b>
		<b>£16,987.73</b>

*Richard Weston, Hon 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, Hon Auditor*

# Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting of the Kilvert Society

MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting of the Kilvert Society held at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, on Friday, 27 April 2012 at 7pm

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, especially Eva Morgan, a descendant of the Watkins family. He also welcomed Bill Cainan, the Curator of the Royal Welsh Regimental Museum at Brecon, who would be giving a talk later in the evening.

## APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from the following people: Sally Fury (Abergavenny), Dudley Green (Clitheroe), Jim Hall (Chippenham), Gill Lawson (Eardisley) and Dr Wilhelmina Lockwood (Brecon)

## SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alan said that the seminar would be held at the Radnorshire Arms Hotel, Presteigne, at 10 for 10.30am on Saturday. Talks would be given by David Harrison on Capel-y-ffin and John Toman on Perch, Kilvert's Brother Edward. Saturday afternoon would be free and the Dinner that evening, also at the Radnorshire Arms, would be at 6.30 for 7pm. Alan mentioned that the Museum in Llandrindod Wells would be open on Saturday afternoon should anyone wish to go and see the restored archives.

He told members that Bredwardine would be holding a Kilvert Weekend 25-27 May to raise funds to improve the facilities at the church and he urged members to support it. He said there would be lunch in the Rectory at Monnington on Saturday 23 June followed by walk and asked members to send in their reply slips if they required lunch. Details of the September event at Clifford would appear in the June *Newsletter*.

He told members that the Society had acquired a Kilvert photograph album and that they could see it during the interval if they wished. It would probably be displayed eventually at the Chippenham Museum where preparation for a Kilvert display was being undertaken. Alan said he had been given a book by Father Baggeley. The book was given by Uncle Francis to his wife Sophia on the 5 August 1843 as a birthday present and

subsequently given to Addie Cholmeley in 1862. He then asked that everyone sign the attendance book which was being passed round.

## MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 15 April



*Bill Cainan, Curator of the Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh at Brecon, lived the part as he gave his talk after last year's AGM on Rorke's Drift and the Zulu Wars*

2011, having been printed in the March *Journal*, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record. There were no matters arising.

## OBITUARIES

The secretary read out the names of those members whose

deaths had been notified since last year's AGM (copy with minutes) and members stood in silence as a tribute to their memory.

## CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman said he felt it had been a successful year which would not have been possible without the hard work of all the members of the committee.

The society had also been blessed by excellent weather for their visits to Snodhill, the old rectory at Dorstone and Langley Burrell.

The visit to Bath in March had proved very interesting and although the weather started wet it did clear by about 11am and remained dry for the rest of the day. David thanked all those concerned with the arrangements.

He said the conservation project had now been completed and thanked those involved for their dedicated work.

He said everyone on the committee had made their own contribution to the success of the past year and he thanked them on behalf of the Society.

He then advised the meeting that the committee were in the process of drawing up a list of graves and monuments which it was felt the Society should maintain. Money would then be allocated each year to carry out work as necessary to keep them in repair.

David thanked Alan again for his dedicated hard work on behalf of the Society.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

A report detailing the year's accounts was circulated to those present.

### INCOME:

Richard pointed out that donations to the Appeal Fund were smaller and had now virtually finished. Subscriptions were much the same and donations were slightly up on last year. Gift aid was down due to the lower Appeal Fund donations, but Richard asked members to reconsider and fill in a form to give Gift Aid if they had not already done so. The publications sales were less as the 2010 figures had been boosted by the sale of the *Who's Who*. The Events section was far lower, the 2010 figure having covered the trip to Skegness.

### EXPENDITURE

Richard explained that the Monuments & Collections figure was mostly accounted for by the Appeals Fund and the rebuilding of the seat at Bredwardine. The costs for the *Journal* were down due to the extra preparation work undertaken by the Editor. The expenditure on the website was a new feature and it was felt this was already attracting more interest in Kilvert.

### ASSETS:

Richard said that the accounts stood as follows:

Balance Lloyds	£4,651.84
Balance Lloyds Appeal Fund	£1,277.33
Nationwide Building Society	£11,914.21

## APPEAL FUND

Richard then referred members to the accounts for the Appeal Fund (copy with minutes) and read a report, both of which had been circulated, which had been circulated (copy with minutes).

SUBSCRIPTIONS Richard finished by explaining to

members that it had been eight years since subscriptions had increased.

The committee now felt that in view of increasing expenditure on postage and the upkeep of monuments, etc. subs should be raised.

It was suggested that the price for a single membership should be raised to £15 and the price for a joint membership raised to £18.

This was proposed, seconded and carried. The change to come into effect in January 2013.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

David said 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
Chairman	Mr D. Elvins
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

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 Mr. Bill Cainan, the Curator of the Royal Welsh Regiment's Museum in Brecon, gave a talk on Rorke's Drift.

For information only (correct at time of 2012 AGM)

President  
Dr Ronald Blythe FRSL

Vice-Presidents.  
Mrs S. Hooper, Mr A.L. Le Quesne,  
The Rev. Canon D.T.W. Price

Hon Life Members  
Miss M.R. Mumford, Mrs Hurlbutt, Mrs. T. Williams,  
The Rev. Dr P.J. Gomes, Mr J. Palmer,  
Dr.W. Mom Lockwood, Mr J Hughes-Hallett

# Kilvert in St Harmon: A Reconstruction of ‘the Missing Year’<sup>1</sup>

*If one gets only a partial picture of Kilvert's life from the Diary, that is so much truer for a period (1876-77) when the Diaries are missing. Here, SHEILA JONES writes that Kilvert was actually quite busy during his comparatively short stay in a deepest Radnorshire that, for him, must have been – with its nonconformist, partly Welsh-speaking way of life – something of an alien world*

READERS of this *Journal* will know that there are no published *Diary* entries for the period when Francis Kilvert served as Vicar of St Harmon, because there were no surviving original notebooks for the editor, William Plomer, to draw from. It is, however, possible to discover much of what he did during this time from other sources, though what he thought or felt is a matter for conjecture.

On Monday 17 April 1876, Easter Monday, the Rev Jonah Bowen Evans, Vicar of St Harmon, died at his home, Bwlch Gwyn Isaf, on the banks of the River Wye. He was 70 years old and had been suffering from asthma for the past two years and from bronchitis for the past week. The annual Easter Vestry was due to be held that day, but it was adjourned for two weeks.<sup>2</sup> Two days later Kilvert travelled by train to Monnington to spend a week's holiday at the Rectory with Thersie and William Smith, his sister and brother-in-law. On the same day as Jonah Bowen Evans was buried, he caught the train to Whitney to spend the day with his friends the Dews at the Court. (iii/262) Though the *Diary* entry as published doesn't say so, Mr Venables was a guest too.<sup>3</sup> That was a Friday.

On the following Monday Kilvert received a letter from Mr Venables asking him whether he would be interested in becoming Vicar of St Harmon should the Bishop of St Davids offer him the Living. It looks very much as if the letter put on a formal footing something that had been discussed between them at Whitney. A week or so later he went to stay at Llysdymanor for a few days in order to look around St Harmon and its parish. The landscape was at its shining best under the spring sunshine, the people he met were friendly and courteous; the only drawback appeared to be the state of the church itself. When the Bishop's formal offer of the Living arrived on 11 June, Kilvert decided to accept it (iii/327), after which he gradually broke his links with Langley Burrell as curate. The last entry in this section before a long break occurs on 27 June; Kilvert was at that time in Kent but gives no indication as to his immediate plans. (iii/337) He seems to be in a holiday mood.

On Monday 17 July Kilvert came on a short visit to Llysdymanor, accompanied by his sister Dora. On the following day the two Kilverts went by train to St Harmon. The line through the parish had been opened for passenger traffic in mid-September 1864 with just two stations: Pantyrdwr, at the summit, which had a passing loop, and Tylwch, built to serve the mines.<sup>4</sup> Kilvert calls St Harmon station a *little by-station.....kept by a handsome pleasant-faced woman, very stout, who lives in a cottage on the line.* (iii/288) It was officially opened for passengers in September 1879 after much local lobbying. It only ever had a platform, a bench-seat and a running-in board, and no station building. Later in the century a signal-box was installed to control the level-crossing and the siding; up till that time, the signals were controlled manually by a box alongside the track. In 1904 six trains travelled each way between Llanidloes and Rhayader, with one service each way on Sundays but there was only one stopping train a day each way; otherwise passengers had to tell the Guard

at the preceding stopping station if they wanted to alight, and to signal to the driver to be picked up when he slowed down to 10mph for the level crossing.<sup>6</sup> It is probable that passengers were getting on and off at St Harmon several years before the station was opened, especially if a platform had already been built for the convenience of workmen doing maintenance work to the line and the level crossing. We may take it that Kilvert walked to and from and around his parish whenever he could, as this was an activity he thoroughly enjoyed.

Kilvert had looked round the church on his earlier visit and had found the exterior simply hideous and the interior *bare cold squalid....* (iii/289) The church we see today is not the one he served in, which was largely rebuilt in 1908. There has been some dispute as to whether it was actually in as bad a state as he claims. For example, Jonathan Pugh informed Mr Sid Wright in around 1948 that the building was rather barn-like but otherwise in sound order<sup>7</sup>, and the churchwardens' accounts in the Visitation Returns for 1848, 1860 and 1869 claim that the church building was in good repair.<sup>8</sup> His predecessor was known as a conscientious, hard-working cleric; maybe his poor health during the previous two years had meant that the upkeep on the church had not been carried out regularly. Kilvert never managed to get rid of the box pews, which went in the 1908 rebuilding, but he probably had the roof repaired and the interior cleaned and tidied, and what was broken mended or replaced, as he put a priority on a church being well looked-after.

Kilvert called at the school-house on this visit,<sup>9</sup> probably in the afternoon, as Mr Venables records that Dora returned at lunch-time but Kilvert not until early evening. The teacher now was Edward Arnold, Mr Fanshaw, whom Kilvert had met on 4 May having left for a school in Northamptonshire. (iii/289) Kilvert called again two days later. Mr Arnold expressed in the log-book his disappointment that even children of prosperous farmers were being kept away from school to do work on the farms; poor attendance was a continual issue. It had been opened as a Church school in the autumn of 1873 after years of lobbying by the Rev Jonah Bowen Evans, with stone walls and a slate roof, and still in existence today, though now as a dwelling. It had a school-master's house with three bedrooms attached.<sup>10</sup>

Friday 21 July was the day when Kilvert travelled by train for his Institution at Abergwili, a village on the outskirts of Carmarthen where the bishops of St Davids had had their palace since 1542.

This ceremony gave Kilvert the ‘cure of souls’ of St Harmon in the form of a document bearing the episcopal seal. He returned to Llysdymanor on the same day. He and his sister left on the following day but not together: Kilvert at 9am for Builth Road Junction, his destination not stated, and Dora at 11.20, heading for Whitney Rectory.

On Saturday 19 August Kilvert made public his forthcoming engagement at an event to mark his leaving Langley Burrell. All the gifts presented to him were suitable for an engagement, so the announcement cannot have been any surprise. The



*The east window at St Harmon's, before the 1908 restoration. In the foreground, above the box pews, is the delicate brass chandelier which survived from the church before Kilvert's time and which the church still possesses*

PICTURE: LLYFRGELL GENEDLAETHOL CYMRU/THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES ©

identity of the woman has not been established.

Three days later he was back in Wales, on a visit to Llysdinam. On the 23rd he conducted a burial at St Harmon<sup>12</sup> and returned to Llysdinam on the 25th.

By this time he must have discovered that there was no vicarage attached to the Living, and never had been, a not uncommon state of affairs in rural Wales at this time.<sup>13</sup> Both his predecessor and successor in the parish constantly nagged the diocesan authorities to build a vicarage, on the grounds that there were no suitable houses to rent in the parish, let alone ones that were close to the church. Kilvert probably did not know this; he also probably assumed that his promised stipend of *between £300 and £400 a year when the lease on one or two old lives falls in* (iii/265) would be ample to enable him to rent a good-sized house in a select location. The reality was very different.

This is an extremely complicated matter but, in brief, the commuted rectorial tithes of St Harmon had been granted in 1830 by a previous incumbent by means of a three-life lease to his son and two others, none of whom had any connection with the parish. Commuted tithes (ie the supposed cash value of titheable farm produce) had for hundreds of years been considered a profitable investment; they were even sold by auction in inns in Aberystwyth! None of these 'lives' had yet died, the last of them not until 1886. The whole sorry story can be read in 'Before and after Kilvert' by Roger L. Brown, reprinted following this article.<sup>14 15</sup> Brown records Kilvert's declaration to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners that his gross

income had been £218/4/8, but there would have been many 'stoppages', reducing it to perhaps around £161, which is about what Jonah Bowen Evans had received net. The latter had got into severe financial difficulties, being declared bankrupt at one stage, and had borrowed huge sums from his parish clerk<sup>16</sup>, while Kilvert's successor had avoided debt by living in a small way in a cottage in the north of the parish because he could not afford to rent a house. Neither course would have commended itself to Kilvert, who was used to a more ample style of living. There was no alternative, therefore, but to go into 'rooms' and wait for circumstances to alter. Marriage was, for the moment, out of the question.

Mr Hastings Smith, Kilvert's nephew, visited Rhayader and St Harmon, probably in the early 1930s, to see if he could find out anything further about Kilvert.<sup>17</sup> He had a conversation with Tom Preece, a retired shoemaker, in the bar of the Crown Inn in Rhayader. Tom Preece may not be an entirely reliable witness, as he was remembering events that had occurred some fifty years earlier, and he was being plied with ale so long as he continued to talk. He said that Kilvert had rented rooms in Old Bank House in Rhayader. This may be an assumption he made on the basis that he knew this to have been a respectable lodging-house for a clergyman to have rooms in, and no-one was in a position to contradict him! Bank House was, and is, on East Street, the widest of the four streets, that meet at the cross-roads in the centre of Rhayader. In the Census for 1881 it is listed as occupied by a 58-year-old widow born in Oban and living



*The west window showing the gallery and organ*

PICTURE: LLYFRGELL GENEDLAETHOL CYMRU/THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES ©

on her investments.<sup>18</sup> Her occupation is not given as a lodging-house keeper, though it was in 1891.<sup>19</sup> This may not mean she was not one ten years earlier, only that she chose not to disclose it. If this was where Kilvert lodged, it was rebuilt in 1921 and is now named 'Rhayader Market Hall'. Wherever Kilvert lived, he would have rented a sitting-room and bedroom, probably at around £31 pa, which is what he was paying Mrs Chaloner at Ashbrook House in Clyro. For this he would have received his meals but may have been charged extra for his laundry.

He may also have provided his own linen and plate.<sup>20</sup> He probably brought with him in a trunk some if not all of his books and prints, perhaps his Diary notebooks, his travelling desk and inkstand, given him as presents when he left Clyro, and other personal possessions to make his rooms more like a home, as well as his clothes and footwear in a suit-case or carpet-bag. Rhayader station is still in existence, though used now by Powys County Council; it is easy to imagine Kilvert's baggage being trundled along the streets by a porter with a barrow or trolley.

Tuesday 5 September was an important day, the day of Kilvert's induction into the parish, which took place in the morning. Archdeacon de Winton might have performed the ceremony under the authority of the Bishop, or possibly the Vicar of Rhayader, as happened in the case of Kilvert's predecessor, Mr Bowen Evans. This put the incumbent in possession of his church, often symbolised by placing his hand on the key or door-handle and saying the appropriate words.

Mr Price Jones, the long-standing Parish Clerk (iii/288/290), told Mr Jonathan Pugh that this *was the best induction service*

*held in St Harmon's Church in his time*, and he had seen five Vicars inducted, though Mr Pugh admitted he didn't know whether he meant the most impressive or the best attended.<sup>21</sup> After the service there was a public lunch in the school-room, with 120 people attending, as Mr Venables recorded. This is unlikely to have been a head-count; no doubt the Sun Inn provided the food on this occasion, as it had done for similar numbers on previous public occasions in the parish, out of funds raised from local landowners and well-to-do farmers and tradesmen. There was a School Feast in the evening, given to the children by some of the inhabitants to mark the end of the summer holidays, perhaps utilising food left over from the lunch. Forty children attended. Kilvert himself signed the entry in the log-book. He records helping out with the School Feast at Clyro on 30 August 1871, putting up swings, joining in with the making of jumping poles and the adults joining in the fun and playing with the children. (ii/23-24) Perhaps something similar took place on this occasion.

On Thursday 7 September the school officially opened for the new term, with 20 children present. Kilvert signed the entry in the log-book. Thereafter he visited the school on ninety-odd days during his time in St Harmon, as recorded in the school log-book. He almost certainly said prayers during his visits, read the Bible and told Bible stories because that is what Anglican clergymen normally did, perhaps still do, in Church schools. He may also have made sure the older children knew the Ten Commandments and the Catechism. He *gave the upper standards questions on paper on the Catechism* at Bredwardine school and *taught the higher standards the history of Hezekiah's illness*. (iii/359)



On 23 March in the following year Mr Arnold records that he took the First Class in Geography; this may have been a one-off or something Kilvert did so regularly that Mr Arnold didn't bother to mention other occasions. Kilvert refers to *my reading class* at Clyro in terms which suggest this was a regular teaching duty; this would involve hearing each child read aloud a set amount from the class book. (i/168) He may also have heard the pupils 'say their tables' and helped them with drawing maps and botany specimens, whatever would occupy some of the children in the one classroom while Mr Arnold was teaching the others.

On Friday 15 September Kilvert conducted a marriage after visiting the school in the morning.

In the early evening of 18 September, Kilvert came to dinner at Llysdyman by the same train as Rowland Venables, Mr Venables's much younger cousin, born in 1846, an Oxford graduate and member of the Inner Temple. He stayed overnight, leaving at around lunch-time on the following day to attend the Harvest Festival at Boughrood, where Archdeacon Henry de Winton was Vicar. At a guess, he had been invited to preach the sermon. He returned that evening and left the following afternoon. Harvest Festivals were, and still are, important in rural areas. Kilvert describes one he attended at Whitney in 1874, at which he preached the sermon. The service had been followed by dinner and tea on the Rectory lawn, a football match for the men and then supper. (iii/81-82) A concluding football match might have been a tradition only at Whitney but not in other parishes. (ii/50) The dressing of the church at Clyro, described in detail, gives a good idea of what might be attempted. (i/227-8) It would be odd if there were not a Harvest Festival at St Harmon on one Tuesday in September or October, when Kilvert would

undoubtedly have aimed to beautify the church with greenery, flowers and the fruits of the earth.

On the afternoon of Friday 22 September in the following week, Kilvert visited the school in the company of Mrs Sladen. She was 39 years old, and had inherited Rhydoldog, in the parish of Cwmdaiddwr, the parish on the far side of the Wye from Rhayader, where she and her family lived.<sup>22</sup> She was married to retired Major-General John Ramsey Sladen, and owned several farms in the parish of St Harmon.<sup>23</sup> No doubt they were jointly inspecting either the buildings or the standard of work in the school. Kilvert also visited in the morning on the 29th.

On 3 October Kilvert was again at Llysdyman, arriving just after mid-day. Mr Venables's younger brother George was there; the three men went for a walk around by Llanfihangel Brynpabuan, on the Newbridge to Beulah road, and Porthlloyd.

On 13 October, a Friday, Mr Venables visited Kilvert at his lodging in Rhayader after a Book Club meeting in the afternoon. On 17 October he performed two burials, and a baptism on the 22nd. Kilvert visited the school on the 16, 19 and 20 October and on every morning of the following week except Thursday.

On 30 October HM Inspector of Schools, E. W. Colt Williams, visited the school. He noted that the standard of attainment was very low because of poor attendance, but that the teacher had made a good start. A big effort was clearly needed, so Kilvert visited the school on four days on the following week, every day the week after, and every day the week after that. Prior to an official inspection in Clyro, Kilvert wrote *we are working double tides to push the children on and I am going to the school 3 times every day*. (i/371) The inspection procedure is described a few days later. (i/374) The good result Clyro school achieved meant a

*Left, the outside of St Harmon's church before 1908, when it was largely rebuilt – it had already been completely rebuilt in 1821*

PICTURE:  
Llyfrgell  
Genedlaethol  
Cymru/  
The  
National Library  
of Wales ©

*Right, the church as it is today*



grant of £36/10/0, the highest grant Clyro has ever had. (1/386) It is unlikely St Harmon was able to do as well but any extra money was well worth the effort.

Kilvert visited the school each day from 30 October to 2 November, and every day the week after. His next visit was on the 17th and then it was every day of the week after that. On the 25th he performed a burial.

Sunday 26 November was the 1st Sunday in Advent, the beginning of the Christian year. 3 December was Kilvert's birthday. Previous entries note the generosity and thoughtfulness of his friends and family: (ii/91-91, ii/391, iii/116) It is not likely he was less remembered on this birthday. He didn't go to Llysdimam, but he could have celebrated at the Vicarage, where he was on friendly terms with the Vicar, the Rev Thomas Laugharne, a man of means who had been born and had lived in Bath.

On 18 December Kilvert went to Llysdimam; he and Mr Venables walked round one of the plantations. They took a walk on the following day, a big circuit of 9¾ miles measured by a pedometer – it sounds like a new toy! Kilvert left in the early afternoon.

On Christmas Day itself, as well as the usual service, Kilvert performed a burial. He had visited the school during the last two days before the Christmas break. Did he maybe take some presents along for the children?

1877

On 1 January Mr Venables drove his wife and Kilvert to Nantmel, probably to the Middleton-Evanses at Llwynbarried. No 'visit' is noted in the *Diary*, so perhaps they picked up Kilvert in Rhayader. It was very cold on their way back.

He was at the school on the 2, 3 and 4 January, a week culminating in a school inspection on the 5th. He was also there on the 8th, 9th and 10th, and on the 15th, 16th and 17th, with a committee meeting held in the school on the Tuesday morning, which Kilvert attended, but what committee Mr Arnold omitted to state; perhaps it was one to consider the likely result of the inspection. He visited the school again on the 22nd and 23rd; the average attendance this week was 34. On 23 January he performed a burial.

On Friday 12th Kilvert had gone over to Llysdimam in the middle of the day, and left the following day so as to be ready

for the church service on the Sunday. He paid a longer visit on Monday 29 January, staying till 1 February. He and Mr Venables walked to Disserth on the 30th, and to Pontyrithon on the 31st. He returned on the 2nd, and left again mid-afternoon on the following day; the 4th was a Sunday so he needed to get back.

The 14 February was Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. This was usually marked by the Communion Service, the denouncement of God's anger and judgement against sinners. (i/46)

Maybe Kilvert used the same sermon in 1877 as he preached every year. He visited the school on the 15 and 16 February, perhaps to speak seriously to the pupils about Lent and its meaning. He was also there on the 22nd.

At the end of February/beginning of March, he visited the school every single day. He was away for a fortnight after that, as Mr Arnold recorded in the log-book, in Lincolnshire for at least part of the time, as he visited Croft School in the company of the Vicar of Croft and his wife.<sup>24</sup> He was back in the parish by the 17th at the latest, and visited the school on four days of the following week, taking the First Class in Geography on the Friday afternoon.

Sunday 25 March was Palm Sunday. Kilvert visited the school on three days of the following week. There was a School Holiday on Good Friday, which *has now become a holiday & mere day of pleasure.* (i/89)

Saturday was Easter Eve. It was the custom in Clyro to decorate the graves in the churchyard with flowers. (i/92-93) Was it also the custom in St Harmon? If not, this was likely to have been done on the previous Sunday.

Sunday 1 April was Easter Sunday ....*they have here an immense reverence for Easter Sunday.* The young people were accustomed to attend church in new clothes. (i/98) There was a Ratepayers' Meeting in the church on the following day, at which Kilvert presided and signed the Minutes. Two Vicar's Wardens were nominated and approved and one parish Church Warden.<sup>25</sup> He visited the school every day during the following week, as he did the week after that. On Thursday 26th a Ratepayers' Meeting was held in the school; Kilvert again presided and signed the Minutes. This was the equivalent of the annual Easter Vestry Meeting, as the Church Wardens' Accounts to the end of Easter 1877 were audited and passed as correct. Mr Arnold tells us that



*St Harmon's church choir with the Rev Richard Bevan, vicar from 1909 to 1928*

the meeting started at 3.30, and that the weather was cold, with a north-east wind, and that one of the items on the agenda was to consider the amount of Voluntary Rate required to carry on the two schools. There was not, as far as is known, a second school in the parish, but a night school was started at the same time as the day school; perhaps this is what is referred to here. There is a gap in the Ratepayers' Minutes until Easter the following year, so it is not known what further meetings were held.

Kilvert did not visit the school at all in May. He might also have missed Ascension Day on 10 May and would certainly have missed Whit Sunday on the 20th, but local clergymen would have filled in for him, as was always the case when incumbents were away. For part of this time he was on holiday in France, as Mr Venables received a postcard from him on the 25th posted from Venables in Normandy. The Rev Laugharne conducted a burial on his behalf at St Harmon. He was back in the parish by the 28th, as he visited the school then, going to Llysdinam on the 30th, and staying over till at least the following day, which was Katy Venables's seventh birthday. George Venables was there too; the three men walked around the Llysdinam estate on the 30th, and again on the 31st.

On the 4 June Mr Arnold was notified of a visit by the Diocesan Inspector on the 20th; Kilvert visited the school on four days this week. During the week of the Inspection he visited each day. The Inspector *seemed satisfied*, Mr Arnold notes. On the day after the Inspection, the school closed for the Midsummer holidays. Kilvert *addressed the children before leaving the School Room*. It sounds very formal.

The *Aberystwyth Observer* in both the 30 June and 7 July editions lists Kilvert's parents, his sister Dora and himself as being among the dozens of visitors staying in the town.<sup>26</sup> Unless Kilvert made a quick trip back to St Harmon, he was probably

not on holiday in Aberystwyth during the second week, as he performed three baptisms on 1 July.

School re-opened on Tuesday 10 July, but Kilvert was at Llysdinam from 11th to the 14th, so he may not have attended the Choral Festival held at the school on the Thursday and Friday of that week. There is no further information about this event; one assumes it was similar to a school eisteddfod, still regularly held in Wales. He performed another baptism on the 22nd.

He visited the school two days in the middle of the following week and again on the following Friday, when the written Diocesan Report was received. Mr Arnold notes that there was scarlet fever in the parish.

Kilvert visited the school on three days during the week beginning 30 July. At the end of the following week Mr Arnold made a list of children between the ages of 5 and 14 for Kilvert who, together with two other residents, had been appointed to the local committee for the parish by the School Attendance Committee of the Rhayader Union. Kilvert paid a visit to Llysdinam on 7 August, staying till early evening the following day.

There was a school holiday on 1 September, but Kilvert visited on all but one of the remaining weekdays, three days in the following week, and twice during the week after that. He also visited on the 2 and 3 October.

On Saturday 8 September, the Rev John Houseman, Vicar of Bredwardine and Rector of Brobury, died suddenly of apoplexy. (iii/416-7) The Living was in the gift of Miss Newton of Bredwardine, the patron. Whom would she appoint?

Three weeks later, on 3 October, Mr Venables went over to Bredwardine to see Miss Newton. There she told him she had offered the Living to Kilvert. This seems to have come as a surprise to him as he says he 'found' what she had decided. Some

lobbying must have occurred on Kilvert's behalf, but it would seem not to have come from Mr Venables, and if Thersie and William Smith, who dined at Llysdyman on 26 September, were among those who did, they don't appear to have confided in Mr and Mrs Venables. Two days later, he and others paid a visit to Miss Newton, where they found Kilvert too, who made a point of coming over to talk to Mr Venables. While the rest of the party went down to the Bridge, Mr Venables walked back with Kilvert to the middle of Moccas Park. It is rather doubtful that Kilvert was walking back to St Harmon from here; perhaps he was staying in Hay or Clyro. Or maybe the two men just wanted a place to continue their private discussion. On 9 October Kilvert came to Llysdyman on a visit. On 13 October he was in a position to tell Mr Arnold he had been appointed to another Living.

The three Trustees of the Advowson, Mr C. Evans, Mr F. Bayley and Mr Venables, now had to consent jointly and officially to the nomination. Mr Evans wrote to Mr Bayley on 17 October, agreeing to join with him and Mr Venables in doing so, while Mr Bayley and Mr Evans wrote to ask Mr Venables to tell Kilvert of their joint agreement.<sup>27</sup>

Kilvert visited the school on 15 October and also on 2 November in the company of E. H. Jones, Esq. There was a school inspection. Mr Arnold notes that there was scarlet fever again. 1 November was All Saints' Day.

On 16 November there was a burial and marriage at St Harmon conducted by an officiating minister, not Kilvert, though Kilvert performed a burial on the 22nd. On the 30th he became officially Vicar of Bredwardine and Rector of Brobury.

There is no mystery as to why Kilvert should have changed parishes. Bredwardine was in many respects a 'plum': it had a large, elegant vicarage set in its own grounds, the two Livings were valued at £412 gross, £375 net, which Kilvert was careful to check was correct, (iii/359), had the congenial social life he had been used to in Langley and Clyro, and was close to his sister and brother-in-law at Monnington and to his friends in Clyro and Hay. He had secured the financial and social position which would enable him to marry. He would have been mad to have turned down such an opportunity.

There were disadvantages, of course. He was in the same relationship to Miss Newton as the Kilvert family were to Squire Ashe, which he had found occasionally irksome, as was his responsibility as one of the Trustees of the Jarvis Charity. His predecessor, Mr Houseman, had held the Living *until Arthur Newton comes of age* (ii/30), or so Kilvert understood. Arthur Newton, b. 1853, had not entered Holy Orders.<sup>28</sup> Was his tenure also liable to termination on other grounds if Miss Newton so chose? One wonders whether the term 'that woman' used by Fanny Kilvert in a letter to Mrs Venables just after Kilvert's death referred to her? She was certainly in a position to make Kilvert's life uncomfortable.<sup>29</sup>

There has been some perception that, because there are no *Diary* entries covering Kilvert's time at St Harmon he was, as it were, a free agent, able to come and go as he pleased. Yet the evidence from the *Diary* is that he was a conscientious clergyman and a hard worker, within the limits of what would be expected of someone in his position. Some of the gaps in the records of his visits to the school and Llysdyman can logically be filled by visits to his family, whether at Langley or Monnington, to friends at Clyro and Hay, and to University friends. Given the poverty in the parish, he could well have helped run a blanket and clothing club, as he did at Clyro but there would probably have been no Penny Readings as he was unlikely to have had help to hold

them. He obviously did a lot of parish visiting, and not just to his Anglican congregation. He paid return visits to St Harmon, (iii/pp 389-391, 425, 434) where he records affection and friendship towards and from his parishioners, even the numerous Nonconformists. Jonathan Pugh's family had fond memories of him, calling him a 'friendly likable man'.<sup>30</sup> It looks as if he had put his heart and soul into making a success of his incumbency. After he had decided to accept the St Harmon Living he wrote: *I have not sought this or any other preferment.....it has so come to me without my wishing or seeking of my own.* (iii/327)

Perhaps this was true also of Bredwardine; he was appreciated for his excellent qualities such that others, perhaps more worldly, were themselves ready to advance his career.

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- 4 'Tylwch on the Montgomeryshire-Radnorshire Border' by Edmund Heaton. *KS Journal* September 2005, pp13-14.
- 5 *The Mid-Wales Railway* by R. W. Kidner, pub by the Oakwood Press, 2nd ed 2003, p55. This has photographs of many of the stations known to Kilvert.
- 6 *Cambrian Railways timetable for July/August/September 1904*, Oxford Publishing Co facsimile. Reprint 1977. No time-table closer in date to 1876 has been located.
- 7 'St Harmon' in *Looking Backwards: a Kilvert Miscellanea*. Pub by Kilvert Society, 2nd ed 1979, p21.
- 8 David H. Williams, op cit p69. His ref is to NLW SD/QA/200, 215,225.
- 9 Powys Archives, Llandrindod Wells Record Office. School log-book for St Harmon. RKE/PS/45/1/1. All subsequent references to the school or Mr Arnold are taken from this.
- 10 David H. Williams, op cit pp126-127.
- 11 Kilvert Society *Newsletter* for February 1983.
- 12 Parish Registers for St Harmon for this and all subsequent Births, Marriages and Death. Kilvert carried out roughly the same number per year as other clergy did in this parish.
- 13 'Reminiscences of Llandrindod and Neighbourhood' by Canon W. E. T. Morgan, in *Radnorshire Society Transactions* Vol 7, 1937, p3. As curate of Newbridge from 1871, he must have known Kilvert well but never mentions him, writing as he did before the Diaries were published. A missed opportunity!
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- 17 'Looking Backwards op cit p. 19.
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## St Harmon before and after Kilvert

*Is it any wonder that Kilvert left St Harmon, asks the Rev Dr ROGER L. BROWN in this article reprinted with kind permission from the 1993 Transactions of the Radnorshire Society. Quite apart from its profound isolation and rough ways the parish was a financial nightmare*

LITTLE is known of Francis Kilvert's very short incumbency of the parish of St Harmon in Radnorshire. It appears that his diary for that period of his life was subsequently destroyed by his wife.

Kilvert had been 'sounded out' for the parish by the archdeacon of Brecon via his former vicar, Mr Venables of Clyro. If he noted optimistically that its income would be between three and four hundred pounds after a lease had fallen in, he was not, as David Lockwood observes<sup>1</sup>, particularly enthusiastic about it. Having met the archdeacon at Clyro, Kilvert travelled by train to inspect the parish. The church dismayed him. Its bare cold and squalid interior with its high ugly square box pews, three decker pulpit, singing gallery with a broken organ, and a roof needing repair, was barely equalled by the complaining schoolmaster of the church school. Even the wife of the parish clerk, though given to hospitality and chatter, told him that there might be another candidate, Walter Vaughan, vicar of Llandegley, who had property in the parish.<sup>2</sup>

The bishop of St Davids, in whose gift was the living, waited another month before offering it to Kilvert. The offer came by the Sunday post of 1 June, and Kilvert accepted it with a sense of wilful resignation: though its would be hard to leave Langley and his friends, especially his father, "But at my age I feel that I cannot throw away a chance of life and our tenure of this living (Langley) is a very precarious one. It is 'the warm nest on the rotten bough'<sup>3</sup> He was collated to the living on the 21 July 1876. The entry is missing. He was probably inducted by the rural dean in the presence of a few friends and a couple of bemused villagers.

There was no vicarage available for Kilvert at St Harmon. Instead he lived at Old Bank House in Rhaeadr. On weekdays he went up by train to his parish. The halt erected in 1873 was not far from the church, but unlike the Sunday post there were no Sunday trains, so that on that day he either had to walk or be driven to his duties. Fourteen months after his collation, in September 1877, he was offered the parish of Bredwardine, then in private patronage, and accepted, although his letter announcing his move and indicating the name of his successor to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners was not written until 2 May 1878. If remote St Harmon, without a vicarage, possibly more Welsh speaking than English, a population almost twice the size of Bredwardine (475 to 924) and an income less than half (£163 to £400), was a chance he could not throw away, then the same would apply with even more force to Bredwardine. Fifty years later, though, he was still remembered in St Harmon. 'A friendly, likeable man' is how they described him.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the solitude was worth the compliment?

What was the parish of St Harmon like? It is in fact possible to describe it through the eyes of Kilvert's two immediate predecessors and his successor in the letters written by them to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Kilvert's own connection with the

commissioners whilst he was vicar here was minimal, one letter noted above, and a signature to a return of its income obviously written by someone else. This returned the income as £218 4s 2d and was dated July 1876. It was the gross income. The deductions would be many and various.

The Ecclesiastical Commission had been formed in 1835 in an attempt to regulate the finances and administration of the Church of England. It took over episcopal and capitular estates and equalised their incomes, using the surplus incomes from the latter to provide financial help for the populous and industrial parishes of the realm. It took many years for this assistance to reach its full potential, for leases and life interests had to be respected in that age of property rights. St Harmon's would have had little dealing with the commissioners in the ordinary turn of events were it not that they held five-sixths of the reversionary interest in the rectorial tithes. As we note later, these tithes were held by the prebend stall of St Harmon in the collegiate church at Brecon.

The existence of this place with its collection of sinecures aroused the anger of, amongst others, Sir Benjamin Hall, and became a source of some embarrassment to the Church itself. But that is another story. What we need to note is that these revenues eventually passed into the custody of the Ecclesiastical Commission, and as such entitled St Harmon to establish a 'local claim' against the commissioners. This meant that they acted as good landlords in relation to the church, and in cases of rectorial tithes, they also took care to safeguard and protect the chancels of the church building. This was a duty which went with the rectorial tithes and had done so from time immemorial.

A parliamentary enquiry took place in 1832 as to the circumstances of each parish within the Established Church. From this and other enquiries derived the impetus to establish the Ecclesiastical Commission. The questions for St Harmon were answered by the Revd Thomas Thoresby, as he also answered for his other parishes of Llanwrthwl in Breconshire and Crasswall in Herefordshire. In 1842 he was living in Hay, presumably a central point for these three parishes. The bishop of St Davids had appointed him to St Harmon and Llanwrthwl in 1827, to which Crasswall had been added in 1830. As one might expect Thoresby returned that he was a non-resident at St Harmon, but employed a curate there to whom he paid forty-five pounds per annum and the surplice fees. His curate undertook both morning and evening duty on Sundays. The 1842 Clergy List notes that William Jones was curate at both this parish and Llanwrthwl and lived in Rhaeadr. He was probably only able to do single duty at both. Thoresby returned also that there was no parsonage house and that he had to pay twenty-five pounds rent instead, almost implying that he lived locally.

The population was 828, the church was said to seat 400, and the income was £179 gross. This was made up of tithes at £145, and £31 from Queen Anne's Bounty. The latter came from a

grant of £800 which was awarded by 'lot' to St Harmon in 1815 out of the parliamentary grants voted the Bounty in that year.<sup>7</sup> The rectory of the parish, Thoresby declared, belonged to the prebendal stall of St Harmon in the collegiate church of Brecon. Half of the tithes of the parish belonged to the rectory, and they had been leased for two years when this 1832 return was made.

The lease had been granted on 31 July 1830 by the Revd William Alleyne Barker, MA, prebendary of St Harmon, to his son, the Revd Alleyne Higgs Barker, then of Bishop Monkton, Devon, for three lives, namely his own, the Revd William Henry Gorton of Checkhall, Dorset, and James Tullidge, a yeoman, of Abbotsbury, Dorset. In 1878 it was calculated that their ages were 71, 73 and 68, and the lease ended, of course, on the death of the last survivor. It required the lessee to keep in good repair that side of the chancel which belonged to the prebend, and to pay to the prebendary of St Harmon the sum of fourteen pounds, or one sixth of the then rental, which in 1849 was said to worth £90 per annum, although it had been commuted at £159. Barker had in fact enriched his family at the expense of his successors in title, who had to wait for the lease to end before they could receive the stipend attached to that sinecure position.

In 1845 Thoresby became perpetual curate of Llandrindod Wells, and vacated St Harmon. In his place Jonah Bowen Evans was collated, remaining there until his death in 1876, Kilvert being his successor.

Hailing from Breconshire farming stock, educated at St David's College, Lampeter and made deacon in 1829, he served a number of curacies before his appointment to this parish. He was to continue this practice thereafter as a means of increasing his meagre parochial income and caring for the needs of his large family. For a time, too, he continued his curacies at Llan-ddew and Talachddu, so that he seems to have been an absentee incumbent at St Harmon for a number of years.<sup>8</sup>

Writing to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners on 11 December 1849 he noted the circumstances of himself and his parish. The parish was nine miles by seven in extent, ten thousand acres, with a scattered population of eight hundred plus. He had a large family himself, with small means, and could obtain no house in the parish and so had to take a cottage outside its confines. David

Williams, in an article on Evans, had identified this cottage as Baily-bedw in the parish of Nantmel, in reality a smallholding, which Evans farmed. His letter was an appeal for the commissioners to assist, as he put it, the moral condition of the poor and illiterate inhabitants of his parish. He had procured a cottage near the church and obtained the services of an efficient schoolmaster.

Though he could ill afford to do so he proposed now to establish another school in a different part of his parish, four miles away. He could not hope to obtain a subscription of even five pounds from his people 'who are so badly off in every respect'. But his hopes were centred on the commissioners. Because of the elevation of Dr Ollivant to the see of Llandaff, the prebend of St Harmon was now vacant, and would lapse to the commissioners, who, while retaining life interests, had determined on the extinction of the collegiate church at Brecon in its existing form.

Hence a sum of fourteen pounds would be released. And this money came, as Evans so graphically pointed out, from the tithes of his parish of St Harmon.

His first suggestion appears to have been that this money could be used for the needs of these schools, but subsequent letters made it clear that he really wished this sum to augment his stipend, which he declared to be a rather exact £84 1s 10d per annum. This is probably his net sum after deducting the rental for his small-holding and his contribution to the school, as well as the amounts paid in rates and taxes. His parishioners, he repeated once more, were poor.

He had no resident landowners or people of wealth or education in his parish. Poor cottagers and paupers comprises nine-tenths of his population. And, as he wrote much later in June 1859, such a population meant a heavy tax in the way of private charity. His parishioners, possibly at his prompting, responded with a petition to the commissioners. He had probably written it himself. 'Yet under difficulties the most discouraging,' it read, 'the Rev Mr Bowen Evans, the present vicar, has, by perseverance, effected much that is good; particularly in his visitation of the sick and the needy, and in the establishment of Sunday and Day Schools, of which his parishioners have not neglected to avail themselves.' The petition prayed that the commissioners would assist him by increasing his stipend 'which our straitened means will not enable us to do.' For, it added, without such assistance, 'the usefulness of a minister in a parish so poor and so extensive as that of St Harmons, must be almost inefficacious.' There were



*The 11th/12thC font from the original church on the site, the mother church of the district in early medieval times. The church is dedicated to St Garmon (Harmon is derived from a mutation in the Welsh)*

three similar petitions, one of which was signed by fifty-six people, almost half by mark. Here was clear evidence of the need for education in these remote parts. The commissioners offered ten pounds, arguing they could not exceed the reserved rent under the subsisting beneficial lease. What that meant Evans probably did not know, except that it served to prevent the commissioners giving him the full sum requested.

During June 1859 Evans asserted that the lessee of the rectorial tithes, A. H. Barker, had been staying in the neighbourhood of his parish for some part of that year, and was sufficiently impressed to offer to part with interest on very reasonable terms. He hoped, therefore, that the commissioners would redeem the lease so that he might benefit accordingly, as would his parish 'amongst whom he has been struggling in the course of the year.' His parishioners were a church-going people in principle, but, he added by way of an under-statement, in practice they were given to dissent, notwithstanding their poverty. This was chiefly because they felt deprived of the benefit of that one half of the tithe payments which they paid and which had been intended for the support of the local church and its minister. This was a naive over-simplification, no doubt, and if Evans believed that if the tithe was returned to the parish the dissenters would come back to the church, he was grossly under-estimating the causes and power of dissent.

Nevertheless Evans continued by saying that if this additional income was secured for his parish it would enable him to do much good by permitting him to open and support weekday schools there again. Prospectors were opening mines in his parish, and a new population might develop. And, though he did not say it, a new population would require some educational provision at least. It appears that his earlier schools had closed down, but David Williams notes that Evans had a great interest in education, and was eventually successful in building a school towards the end of his ministry in the parish.

It is hardly surprising that the commissioners were sceptical. Pointing out that even if the existing lease was surrendered their reversionary interest in it would continue, they made clear they had no intention of appropriating any money from it until the lease had run its full course. On the other hand if the lessee was willing to surrender his interest and annex it to the living, then the commissioners might make a grant of the reversion of the lease to the parish. Mr Barker had to offer his lease free of charge, for the commissioners were not willing to bargain with him for a surrender value. Evans had been over-optimistic.

No surrender was ever made.

In December 1859 Evans was writing to enquire about the possibilities of building a parsonage house. The commissioners required him to give an account of the financial state of the living. Its gross value, he noted, was £199, made up of £5 worth of glebe land, the tithe-rent charge of £152, the Bounty grant of £31 and the commissioners augmentation of £10, together with surplice fees of seven shillings.

From this income he had to pay out £47 5s in rates (six shillings in the pound on his tithe income), another £10 was required for collecting the tithe, and his house rent was £25. In addition he had to keep a horse, although that was not allowed as a valid deduction. His net income was therefore £113. The income, he moaned, had declined since the new marriage legislation which allowed nonconformists to marry in their own chapels, while in a parish with such poor cottagers and paupers and with all the principal landowners non-resident, the poor rates were particularly heavy. Because of the absence of a suitable house, there had not been a resident clergyman in the parish for the past century,

with the exception of one incumbent who lived on his own small farm.

For some unspecified reason, Evans believed that the bishop of St Davids, Thirlwall, had promised him £400 towards the building of this house. He persisted in this belief for many years. He therefore offered this money as an augmentation to the commissioners in the expectation of being allowed a grant of an equal sum from them on it. Possibly knowing that the bishop was a generous benefactor to clergy who wished to build parsonage houses, the commissioners may have accepted Evans' contention, but they eventually thought it prudent to check on this claim. Thirlwall's reply on 19 November 1863 stated that he had paid £400 for a house at St Harmon's which was now occupied by the incumbent, and he had had the house conveyed to the trustees of his fund in order that if it seemed advisable it could be sold and another residence provided.

There had been no promise of money whatsoever. The incumbent was mistaken. The commissioners accordingly closed their file.<sup>9</sup>

There was a sequel to this story. Bishop Thirlwall died the year before Evans, and a letter written by the bishop's nephew and executor, John Thirlwall, from 49 Pulteney Street, Bath, on 7 January 1876 survives. His late Uncle had left as part of his estate a house which had been occupied by the incumbent of St Harmon, which he had purchased in 1861. Did the commissioners wish to purchase it, for if not, he proposed to sell it by auction. In their reply the commissioners pointed out that they could not act on any local claim until the expiry of the existing lease, for it was only on the grounds of such a local claim they could purchase such a property as a parsonage house. But, pointing out the previous correspondence with the bishop of 1863, they asked if the executors were sure that the house was the bishop's absolute property, as he had distinctly stated it would be held in trust. There is no further correspondence. The house was obviously sold. One wonders if Thirlwall had been neglectful or his nephews had exercised economy in the truth of their statements. But the result was that the poor parson of St Harmon was deprived of his house. As Evans died on 17 April 1876 one assumes that he continued to occupy the old house, but it was certainly not available to his successor, Francis Kilvert.

Daniel Williams was Kilvert's successor. Born in 1843, the son of an itinerant tailor and landlord of the George Inn, Llansawel, Carmarthenshire, he was educated at St Aidan's College, Birkenhead, a college much used by those aspiring for ordination without having to undergo the rigours of the more substantial Lampeter course. Between his ordination in 1865 and his admission to St Harmon's he served a number of curacies in Breconshire, Cheshire and Gwent.<sup>10</sup>

Writing from Cwmbach Vicarage, Builth, soon after his appointment, he pointed out to the commissioners that he had no parsonage house and there was no house available within three miles of the church where a clergyman could reside with any decency. The roads were also extremely bad. This deficiency was a great drawback to the parish. Indeed, without a residence little good could be done in the parish.

A convenient site was to be had on the glebe land but there were no sources of financial assistance available in the parish. His income was £161 gross. The commissioners replied, acting on a hint, that they thought the lease might have two or three more years to run, and they would consider his request when it had lapsed.

Williams repeated his request in 1884. His income was returned at almost the same amount as that given by Evans in

1859, although the deductions were less at only £28, though in this he did not include the rental of a house. He was now living six miles from the church at the extreme edge of the parish. Alas, the commissioners maintained they could only meet his request for assistance if he was able to provide a benefaction. They could then offer a grant based on its amount.

Williams in his reply stressed that this was impossible. His population was poor and any help they could give had to be reserved for the improvement of the fabric of the church, especially since a storm of last Saturday had made it clear that a restoration was required rather than repairs. There was no case in the whole of the diocese of St Davids more deserving than his.

Clearly, Williams believed the commissioners needed some idea of the difficulties he faced in his parochial work. His Sunday services, he wrote, commenced at 9.30am. This meant that he had to leave his house two hours earlier, at 7.30am, winter and summer, and walk six miles over a bleak road. His homeward journey would be made in the dark.

Nothing could be done until the lease expired, replied the commissioners, presumably remembering the local claims. Thankfully it did on the death of the last life on 17 October 1886. A local commission appointed to investigate the circumstances of the parish reported a population of 832, but that only one person now worked in the mines because of the cessation of that work. The vicar, it added, was forced to live in a small cottage on the borders of the parish, and as he could not afford a house, the Sunday duty was hard and fatiguing. The commissioners in London, duly impressed, awarded the living an annual grant of £75, based on its local claim.<sup>11</sup>

Williams died on 27 December 1908, still in possession of the living and residing in a rented house. In 1899 this was at Tywch near Llanidloes. By 1906 a curate, paid at the rate of £ 130 per annum, cared for the parish, so it seems that Williams had used this method of taking an unofficial retirement, living on the balance of about the same sum.

His daughter, a Miss P. A. W. Williams, then living at the Town Hall Hotel, Llanidloes, notified his death to the commissioners.

Is it any wonder that Kilvert left St Harmon's? His problems may not have been financial or even that of non-residence so much as a profound isolation. Kilvert was used to the ways of a polite society, and found 'cottaging' an interesting parochial diversion. But here was no polite or learned society. A university

man, the rough and homespun talk of the St Harmon folk must have been alien to him. The ways of an English Church of England man would have been far removed from the local nonconformist and Welsh culture. Possibly only men nurtured in that kind of society, with a rough and rugged sense of fortitude, could minister successfully in these hostile surroundings.

It might well be concluded in that Kilvert's gentility and sensitivity were too profound for such a parish. It may well have been his achievement to have recognised this and sought for pastures new.



*St Harmon's church as it is today. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, in its survey of the church, notes: 'The 1907 Specification indicates that a flue stack/turret at the west end was to be pulled down, the floors were to be taken up, a new chancel, sanctuary and vestry were to be added together with all windows and door openings, the west gallery taken out, and heating grilles were to be inserted.'*

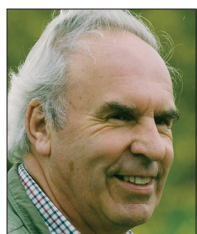
## REFERENCES

- 1 *Kilvert's Diary*, edited by William Plomer (London 1961) iii/265; David Lockwood, *Francis Kilvert* (Bridgend 1990) p131. Lockwood is incorrect that the leases related to pensions for clergy who had retired from the parish. They refer to the lease on the rectorial tithes as explained in this article.
- 2 *Diary*, iii/288-90. The church had been rebuilt in 1766 (*Arch Camb*, 1919 pp216-7).
- 3 *Diary*, iii/327.
- 4 Frederick Grice, *Francis Kilvert and his World* (Horsesham 1982) p120.
- 5 These records of the Ecclesiastical Commission now belong to the Representative Body of the Church in Wales, and are used by kind permission of the Secretary General. References not given in these footnotes refer to the St Harmon file of this archive.
- 6 Grice, *Kilvert*, p122.
- 7 T. W. Barker, *Diocese of St Davids: Particulars of Endowments* (Carmarthen 1907) IV 210f.
- 8 David H. Williams, 'A neglected Radnorshire Cleric: The Revd Jonah Bowen Evans, BD, ('Cattwg')', *Journal of Welsh Religious History*, volume 1 (1993), 81-111, *in passim*.
- 9 Barker, *Diocese of St Davids*, pp210-11, notes that Alleyne Higgs Barker gave ten pounds for the purpose of building a parsonage. This was lodged in a special account in the North and South Wales Bank at Llanidloes. David Williams suggests Sir Charles Donville bought this house, Lower Bwlchgwyn, which was three and a half miles from the church, and leased it to Evans together with ten acres of land at £12 per annum from 1853. Possibly Thirlwall purchased this property from Donville: 'Jonah Bowen Evans', pp88-9.
- 10 Roger L. Brown, *The Followers of Jeroboam* (Cardiff 1983) pp20f.
- 11 Barker, *Diocese of St Davids*, p211.

*The author, a canon of St Asaph, was vicar of Welshpool 1993-2007. In 2008 he received a DLitt degree from the University of Bangor.*

*DR BROWN WRITES: Daniel Williams, who followed Kilvert in the living, had a brother who was my wife's grandfather's father. Four of his wife's brothers and her two sons were all ordained, forming one of the clerical dynasties that was typical of many Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire families.*

*The Editor is grateful to Dr Brown for his assistance in preparing his 1993 article for reprinting.*



## Of Helen of Troy and Fair Rosamund

*Loss was in the air when we visited Clifford – the Haigh Allens' house is gone, so is the railway, and the castle was inaccessible. But still the Diary brought it to life again. MICHAEL TOD takes up the story*

SOME two dozen members and three dogs met for our September outing at noon near the Church of Saint Mary at Clifford, on the hill opposite the village of Clyro where Francis Kilvert was the curate for so many years. Once again Uncle Francis had put in a word for us with the 'Powers That Be' and the weather was bright and clear although a chilly wind was blowing out of Wales across the River Wye.

We retired into the church to eat our packed lunches. The church was in good repair having been restored in 1888 but is believed to have originally been built by the monks of the nearby Clifford Priory in the 13th century. The priory itself has completely disappeared although the farm to the south of the church is still called Priory Farm and a wood to the west – Priory Wood.

On the other side of the road was a splendid 19th century vicarage mentioned by F.K. in his diary for 7 July 1870. Here David Elvins our Chairman, who was leading our party that day, read from the diary:

*At 5.30 started to walk to Clifford Priory to dinner, going to Hay across the fields. I arrived before any of the other guests and in the dark cool drawing room I found Mr. Allen, his brother Major Allen, and Major Allen's two bewitching pretty little girls, Geraldine and Edith. Fair Helen of Troy prettier than ever followed with her sister from Hardwick Vicarage, Henry Dew and Emily, Pope and Mr. Allen, Llanthomas, Mary and Grace. I took Lucy Allen in to dinner but was forcibly separated from her and sat opposite by Louisa Wyatt who talked Switzerland and saved me the trouble in finding conversation. It was a very nice pleasant dinner. No constraint, plenty of ice. Good champagne and the first salmon I have tasted this year, a nice curry, and the Riflemen strawberries quite magnificent. Everyone in good spirits and tempers and full of talk. A sheep dog was espied devastating the flower beds on the lawn and it was proposed to shoot him with a bow.*

*Clifford Priory is certainly one of the nicest most comfortable houses in this part of the country. The furnished hall is very charming. The evening was exquisite and the party wandered out into the garden promiscuously after dinner under the bright moon which shone alone in the unclouded sky. The flower beds in the lawn were beautiful, but most brilliant and dazzling were the riband borders by the gate. When the party re-assembled in the drawing room there was music, and meanwhile I had a long talk in the recessed window and moonlight with Helen of Troy. She and her sister were dressed prettily in blue, the most elegant and tasteful dresses I have seen this year. Old times were revived and particularly one moonlight night at Hardwick Vicarage in the observatory, the same night I saw the light of the Great Meteor.*

*Mrs. Allen asked me to a croquet party here next Tuesday, and Mr. Allen asked me to luncheon at Oakfield on Monday when the Foresters are coming to his house. He brought me as far as Hay in the rumble of his most antiquated most comfortable old yellow chariot on C springs, very large and broad and heavy and able to carry 7 people. We had 6 on board, Mrs. Allen, Thomas and Pope inside, I preferred the night air and the tramping of the fast mare. Going up the hills we had before us the antiquated figure of the old coachman against the sky and amongst the stars. So we steadily rumbled in to Hay and there was a great light in the North shewing where the sun was travelling along below the horizon, and only just below.*

Isn't it a joy to hear Francis' words coming to us again over all those years! After the reading we turned down a long hill to the Hay road admiring the views to the Brecon Beacons far to the west. We passed Upper Court and Lower Court Farms supposedly built from stone taken from Clifford Castle, which was across a field and a lane to the north of the road. I peered through the hedge at the farms trying to spot a large conservatory I had designed some twenty years ago when that was my profession but the substantial farm buildings blocked the view.

We went down a lane towards the castle to try to get permission for a visit but we were brusquely informed that the lane was private and the owners of the castle do not allow visitors. That was a pity as I had personally been allowed to explore the ruins when I was doing the design work for the Clifford farm conservatory. The castle stands on a mound immediately above a bend in the River Wye, the remaining walls still romantically covered in ivy, never having been sterilized by The National Trust or English Heritage.

It is most famous for being the birthplace and original home of Fair Rosamund, the mistress of Henry II.

We ambled along the road eastwards to a junction where a stream poured into a horse-trough and heard another reading. This was an entry of 18 November 1870 and, in view of the current controversy regarding badger culling, was a timely reminder of how badgers were treated in Kilvert's day:

*Old Sackville related his reminiscences of a badger-baiting at Clifford Court that he had been at when a young man. He said Clifford Woods swarmed with badgers and their holes, where young badgers might be seen 8 or 10 in a nest, little things 'spotted and spangled' like a litter of young pigs. The men made a long hole from the badger and sent the dogs in to draw him out one after the other. Eliza was much scandalized when her father came to the following reminiscence, 'So the badger did get his backside up in a corner and did snap at the dogs and grin'. 'Well, Father,' said Eliza, 'I wonder at you.' Eventually after 6 or 8 dogs had failed, the*



Members view the Haigh Allen memorial



Gravestone in the churchyard at Clifford

*poor badger was drawn by Sackville's lurcher which turned him over on his back, seized him by the throat and dragged him out and shook him and worried him to death.*

The road leading up towards the church was long and steep but we paused where the dismantled railway passed beneath and looked for some evidence to confirm this had been the site of Clifford Station, reputed to have been one of the finest rural stations in the area. Now nothing remains as the lines were taken up and building materials sold off many years ago.

Further up the hill, we paused for another reading on the road outside Priory Wood Chapel – soon to become a dwelling house. We were told that until recently the sagging building had been supported by rails from the original horse-drawn

tramroad before it had been replaced by the railway. These historic artifacts had now been sold for scrap and taken away!

The reading here was from the entry from 12 July 1870:

*Walked to Clifford Priory across the fields with Crichton and Barton. Bevan and Morrell walked on faster and got there before us. I had some pleasant talk with Barton, who is a clever well-read man, about Tennyson, Wordsworth, Mr Monkhouse, the Holy Grail, and at last we got to Clifford Priory, very hot, a few people out in the sun on the lawn, and Lucy Allen came to meet us. A crowd in the drawing room drinking claret cup iced and eating enormous strawberries. Gradually people turned out on the lawn. Pretty Geraldine and bewitching Edith Allen, I am sorry to say, were gone. Colonel Balmaine and his niece Miss Baldwin were there from Middlewood where he has lately come to live. The rest were the usual set that one meets and knows so well. Dews, Thomases, Webbs, Wyatts, Bridges, Oswalds, Trumplers, &c. No Baskervilles, no Bevans, Mary and Alice being away at Four Ashes. Everyone here is so pleasant and friendly that we meet almost like brothers and sisters. (Rather like members of the Kilvert Society.)*

*Great fun on the lawn, 6 cross games of croquet and balls flying in all directions. High tea at 7.30 and croquet given up. A young gentleman caused some amusement by appearing on the lawn in full evening dress, tail coat, white tie and all. It proved to be the Miss Wyatts' brother come with the Webbs. I took Miss Barton in to tea and saw she had plenty to eat and drink. More than 40 people sat down. Plenty of iced claret cup, and unlimited fruit, very fine, especially the strawberries.*

*After tea we all strolled out into the garden and stood on the high terrace to see the eclipse. It had just begun. The shadow was slowly steadily stretching over the large bright moon and had eaten away a small piece at the lower left side. It was very strange and solemn to see the shadow stealing gradually on till half the moon was obscured. As the eclipse went on the bright fragment of the moon seemed to change colour and redden. We were well placed for seeing the eclipse and the night was beautiful, and most favourable, not a cloud in the sky. We watched the eclipse till all that was left of the moon was a point of brightness like a large three-cornered star. Then it vanished altogether. Some people said they could discern the features of the moon's face through the black shadow.*

*Meantime we strolled about in different groups and William Thomas and Crichton ran a race up the steep slippery terrace bank. The ladies' light dresses looked ghostly in the dusk and at a little distance it was almost impossible to tell which was a lady in a white dress and which was a clump of tall white lilies. Mr. and Miss Bridge and Miss Oswald in almost white dresses walked about together arm in arm covered with one scarlet shawl and Jack Dew called them 'the three angels'. When they heard this they said they believed that in reality he had called them 'the three demons'. We wandered up into the twilight garden and there among the strawberries fastened to a little kennel by a collar and light chain to keep the birds away was a most dear delightful white pussy, very like Polar. He was so delighted to see us that he walked round us purring loudly with his tail erect, rubbing himself against our legs, and he climbed up my leg as if it had been a tree. Three more cats were chained to kennels near the back door.*

After the reading we went in single file down an overgrown path to fields overlooking the site of the long gone Priory and across other fields to a gate at the lower corner of the churchyard. The three dogs took the opportunity to race around the fields whilst we weary humans trudged behind. However, we were soon on our way to a splendid and most welcome tea at the Parish Room in Hay's Lion Street.

Here a presentation was made to Elizabeth Rowe, a long serving member of the committee who had organised such teas for the Society for many years. She was leaving Hay to live near her daughter at Bradford-on-Avon and was thanked by the Chairman for her work for the Society, both when she lived in Clyro and later when she had moved to Hay-on-Wye.

After our tea we drifted away and headed home having had yet another enjoyable Kilvert experience.



## A place for my grave...'

*The distant burial place of Francis Kilvert's widow speaks volumes for MARGARET COLLINS whose long reflection on the subject has brought her a long way from the view held in an early Kilvert Society publication, that Elizabeth could not be laid to rest beside her beloved husband because the space had been 'given in error to someone else'*

THE Bredwardine weekend last May gave me another opportunity to wander in the churchyard and contemplate once more the graves of Kilvert, his widow Elizabeth and those of Miss Julia Newton (1811-86) and her sister Catherine (1812-96).

The location of Kilvert's grave, on the north side of the church near the tower, had always seemed to be at odds with the place he chose on 13 February 1877: *...walked in the churchyard at sunset to choose a place for my grave. I fixed upon a place close by the stile leading on to the Castle Green beside the path by which the people come to Church.* The map near where cars now park shows Castle Green to be on the south side of the church, beyond an old farm gate leading into the churchyard. Weathered grave-stones are on either side of what was clearly once a path to the church from this point. It is sad to think that Kilvert was not buried next to his wife of a few short weeks, nor was he buried in the place he had chosen. It is likely that when he died no-one was aware of the place he had identified for his grave as those thoughts were hidden within the pages of his *Diary*. Kilvert left no will to clarify his wishes. Letters of Administration were granted to Elizabeth Kilvert on 18 November 1879

(Kilvert's estate amounted to under £450). The sudden onset of what was to be his final illness came at a time of great personal happiness and, at the age of only 38, he surely hoped to recover and was not thinking of his burial. It is of course entirely possible that he had changed his mind about the site for his grave during the intervening eighteen months prior to his death and maybe recorded this in a lost section of the *Diary*. It would have been appropriate for his widow and the Kilvert family to be consulted on the matter. It can be assumed that Miss Newton, always so

influential in church affairs, would have had a say in this decision too.

It was interesting to read the inscriptions on the Miss Newtons' headstones where the sisters lie right close up on either side of Kilvert as if guarding him. The lettering had been difficult to read in the past due to moss and lichen but this had been cleaned off. Julia Newton's has the words 'He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be' and Catherine's bears the inscription 'O that I had wings like a dove for then would I fly away and be ever at rest'.

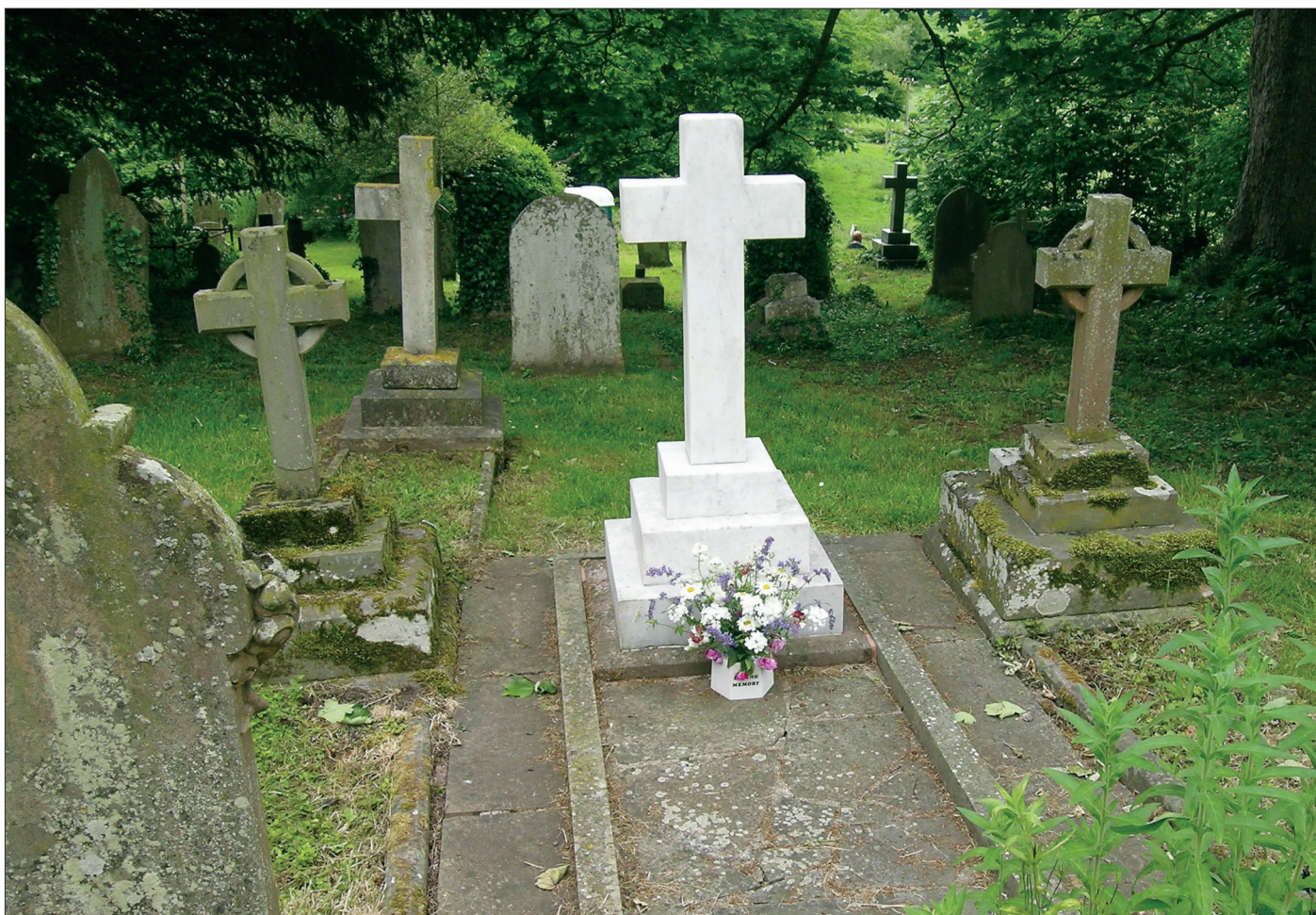
I was able to study the dates of the other graves in the churchyard annexe, where Elizabeth Kilvert's grave lies in the far corner diagonally opposite the gate. The line of graves immediately to the right of, and in line with, the entrance gate by the perimeter hedge begins at the far end of a slight incline with a grave for 1908. There are seven graves in that line. The last one, right by the entrance gate, is for April 1911. The rest of the annexe contains later graves up to recent times. All things being equal, Elizabeth's burial in January 1911 should have been in that line by the gate with others of the time. The fact that her grave stood alone in the far



*Views both ways of the Castle Green entrance path*

PICTURES: CHRIS AND SHEILA BORROWS

corner for several years (I believe the date of the grave adjacent to Elizabeth's is 1925) seems to confirm my suggestion that she was indeed making a powerful statement (*Journal* 34). She wished to be as far away as possible from the Newton sisters and their unseemly scramble to be buried either side of her late husband in the place that should surely have been hers. There was always the possibility that Elizabeth too could have succumbed to illness and died young, predeceasing the Newton sisters. Where then would she have been buried?



*Francis Kilvert's grave (1879) at Bredwardine lies between those of the Newton sisters (1886 and 1896). Elizabeth Kilvert died in 1911*

In *Looking Backwards* (KS Publications, p25) Elizabeth's niece says of her aunt's burial: 'She was taken to Bredwardine Churchyard, and lies in the new part, as the space she had requested to be reserved for her by her husband's grave was unfortunately – and to her great grief – allowed to be used for someone else.' The Newton sisters would have known of this request and chose to ignore it, perhaps hoping that Elizabeth would remarry. Yet they knew very well that this gentle widow made an annual Eastertide 'pilgrimage' to flower her husband's grave with primroses and, devoted to his memory, was unlikely to remarry. Miss Rowland, writing in 1940, confirms this view of her late aunt saying: '...she and Uncle Frank were devoted to each other. His sudden and unexpected illness and death was a shock from which I think she never fully recovered'. I feel sure Elizabeth wore some small token of mourning for the rest of her life. Miss Rowland says that Elizabeth made her pilgrimage each year 'as long as her health permitted'. By the time Catherine Newton died in 1896 Elizabeth was aged 50 and would still be making her springtime journey to Bredwardine from Eastbourne, for it was to be another 15 years before her own death in 1911. Yet it is clear that Catherine Newton, throughout the 17 years following Kilvert's death, did not feel moved to reconsider her burial plans.

In the earlier (1977) KS *Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary* the entry for Mrs R F Kilvert ends: 'She was buried in Bredwardine churchyard, but not beside her husband, the space having been given in error to someone else. Kilvert Society Records; Bath Reference Library etc'. All one can say is 'Error?...Twice?' That the siting of the graves of two women of the social standing of Julia and Catherine Newton was simply the result of an 'error' defies belief. It would seem that the gravediggers and

stonemasons were instructed to leave not the slightest sliver of earth between the graves of the Newton sisters and that of their late vicar. Did none of the professionals involved in the Newtons' funeral arrangements suggest to the sisters that Elizabeth's request should be upheld? Miss Rowland's letter makes it clear that a formal request had certainly been made by her aunt. How did the sisters' brother Sir Charles Newton and their other family and friends view this request? And what of those surviving members of Kilvert's own family to whom Elizabeth was close? We do know that if any pleas were made on Elizabeth's behalf to Julia and Catherine Newton over the years – and it is highly probable that at least some people felt able to voice their disquiet – any such appeals fell on deaf ears.

The presiding clergyman, the Newton relatives, undertakers, local gentry and others who gathered around the gravesides of the sisters in 1886 and 1896 could not fail to be uncomfortably aware that the small area of Bredwardine churchyard where they were standing was dominated by the Rev Robert Francis Kilvert's grave and monument. We can only wonder what was going through these mourners' minds as, unavoidably, their gaze rested on the quietly compelling words on his grave, 'He being dead yet speaketh'.

In the late afternoon sunshine I bade farewell to the graves of Francis and Elizabeth Kilvert and Julia and Catherine Newton. As I left Bredwardine churchyard to its undisturbed sleep of years, I recalled Kilvert's own phrase as he pondered his romance with Daisy: '...when the fires have gone out and the ashes grown cold. The story of how those four graves came to be where they are bears witness to an untold drama which, along with the dramatis personae, has passed from living memory. All that survives is a whispered echo of passions long since laid to rest.



## A Malvern Tragedy

*JOHN DIXON brings his local knowledge to bear on the tragic death of the death of Major Ambrose Valintine the day after his marriage to Thersie*

READERS may recall the strange and rather shocking tale that appeared in the last *Journal*. Painstaking research by Teresa Williams revealed not only the true identity of 'Mrs Valintine' (sic) as mentioned in the will of Kilvert's wife, Elizabeth, but also the details of the marriage of Thermuthis Smith, Kilvert's elder sister, (generally known as Thersie) to Major Ambrose Valintine on 15 November 1894. An even more dramatic discovery was that the very next morning Ambrose Valintine committed suicide.

Teresa Williams's determined search through marriage and death records and her careful scrutiny of *The Leamington Advertiser and Warwickshire Observer* enabled her to put together this tragic story. I found her article particularly intriguing, not only because of its macabre content, but also because of the locations of the events, which are well known to me personally. I was brought up in Leamington, where Valintine lived, and I now live in Malvern, where he died. I felt the urge to do a little more local research

In 1894 Ambrose Valintine, son of a Sussex clergyman, was a 69-year-old ex-soldier. He had had a colourful career. When he was 23 he went off to join the Austrian army. (Was this unusual for a young Englishman in 1848?) He fought with distinction for the Emperor in several battles and retired after 26 years' service with the rank of major. He came back to England and settled with his wife, Catherine, in the fashionable spa town of Leamington. According to his obituary in the *Leamington Advertiser*, his 'genial presence and soldierly figure' made him one of the town's 'best known residents'. Heath Terrace, where he lived, was a very respectable area and he attended the fine new church of St Mark, Milverton, where the congregation was generally very well-to-do. However, in October, 1893 his wife died and this was a severe blow to him. He now suffered from bouts of 'nervous depression, particularly in the early parts of the day' and his general health seemed to deteriorate.

In 1894, Kilvert's sister, Thersie, was a 55-year-old widow. Her husband, the Rev William Smith, had died five years before and she now lived in Cheltenham. How she and Major Valintine became acquainted is not known, but one of the newspaper reports said 'They had known each other almost from childhood'. Since Thersie could have been no more than nine years old when the 23-year-old Ambrose went to join the Austrian army, it is difficult to see how this could have been so. However, at some point their paths crossed and Valintine proposed to her. Thersie, it seems, wanted to go ahead with the marriage 'as she was aware of Valintine's state of mind and desired to look after him'. The wedding day was fixed for 15 November, 1894 in Cheltenham Parish Church.

A week or two before this, Valintine was not feeling well and his doctor suggested he should go away for a change of air. This is where the Malvern dimension enters the story. Valintine went to stay with his brother-in-law, John Severn Burrow, who lived at St James's House, St James's Road, Malvern.

*Top, the window from which Ambrose Valintine threw himself to his death is on the top floor on the right. (The lower door and porch are recent additions.) At the base of the wall the present owner removed a rough rockery before he started his renovation*

*Below, the window Valintine opened and threw himself from*





Left, St James's House, St James's Road, Malvern, the residence of John Severn Burrow, the brother-in-law of Ambrose Valintine. It was at this house on 16 November 1894, on the morning after his marriage to Kilvert's sister, Thersie, that Major Valintine committed suicide  
Above, the gate pier of St James's House

The house still exists (although at present it is undergoing major renovation) and is a substantial Victorian villa. It was an appropriate residence for one of the town's leading figures. John Severn Burrow was married to the sister of Valintine's first wife, Catherine. He was identified as 'Wine Merchant' in the inquest report, but in fact his business interests were far more extensive than this. His family firm was one of the main suppliers of bottled Malvern water and in the 1891 census he gave his other commercial activities as 'optician and fine art dealer'. He played a prominent part in town affairs as a Town Commissioner and public benefactor. According to one inquest report, he had some misgivings about the marriage, but he and his wife accompanied Valintine to Cheltenham for the wedding and he was one of the witnesses who signed the marriage register. They all returned to St James's House afterwards and everyone commented that Valintine seemed 'bright and happy' that evening in the company of his new wife.

The story then moves swiftly towards tragedy. The following morning Mrs Valintine came down to breakfast, believing that her husband would soon join her. When he did not appear, Valintine's 20-year-old daughter went up to their bedroom and found that 'the towel horse had been moved and the window was open. She looked out and saw her father lying on his face in the garden, 20-30 feet below'. A doctor was called, who pronounced that Valintine was dead, having broken his neck on the rockery below.

The dramatic impact of this shocking event on Thersie and the rest of the household can be imagined.

I visited the house recently and, with the help of Russ Putland, the present owner, who was not at all fazed to discover that his home had been the scene of a suicide, we were able to identify the most likely bedroom and the very window from which Valintine had jumped.

The report in the *Malvern Advertiser* on 24 November 1894, was, very similar to the report quoted by Teresa Williams in the *Leamington Advertiser*, but the Malvern account adds one or two more explicit details to the circumstances of Valintine's death. In particular, it mentioned his first rather desperate attempt to kill himself: 'When the body was moved into the house it was noticed that there was a knotted handkerchief around the deceased's neck, he having evidently tried to strangle himself' before throwing himself out of the window. He was obviously in a very disturbed state of mind and the inquest jury had no difficulty in returning a verdict of 'suicide during temporary insanity'.

There is no indication of how Thersie reacted to this tragedy, or what happened to her afterwards. Perhaps other Society members will be able to fill this gap.

She lived for another 28 years before dying in London in 1922, aged 82. Yet at her death Valintine clearly still meant something to her, for she was identified in an obituary announcement as 'Thermuthis Mary, widow of Major Ambrose Valintine'.



## The brave Major Valintine and his fields of battle *ADRIAN HARVEY offers some suggestions to topographical riddles thrown up by the 'difficult orthography' of the memoir of the major's father, and muses on how three sons of an Anglican vicar came to choose military service in the army of a Catholic power*

I WAS fascinated to read in *Journal 35* of the researches undertaken by Teresa Williams into the strange and tragic circumstances attendant on the second marriage of Kilvert's sister Thermusis.

The details have prompted me to speculate on the curious fact of three sons of a 19th century English clergymen becoming officers in the army of a Catholic power.

It is true that before 1778 Roman Catholics from Britain who wished to follow a military career had to enlist in foreign armies, but by the middle of the 19th century such disabilities had long disappeared; in any case, I assume that Major Valintine and his

brothers, as sons of an Anglican clergyman, were also Anglicans. Is there a further dimension to this intriguing story?

As to the gaps in the transcription of the memoir by the Rev Thomas Valintine, occasioned by its difficult orthography, I make the following suggestions. The battle at which the future Major gained the great Gold Medal for Bravery may have been either Custoza (24-25 July 1848) or Novara (23 March 1849). General Karl Gorzkowski commanded the Austrian force that besieged Venice in 1849 and the following year, after its surrender, he became its civil and military governor, a post he held until his death in 1858.



## When a bicycle highwayman robbed Perch's wife

*Police and court records can shed an unexpected light on what might otherwise be thought to be safe, comfortable, even humdrum middle-class lives. TERESA WILLIAMS reveals just such a story involving the wife of Francis Kilvert's brother Edward*

From: *THE TIMES*, 23 December 1908, p17

### A BICYCLE HIGHWAYMAN:

At the South Western Police Court, Harold Arthur LESLIE, a young man giving an address at Jefferies Road, Clapham, was charged with robbing two ladies, Mrs Eleanor KILVERT, residing at Criffel Avenue, Streatham and Mrs Mariana NOELLER of Christchurch Road, Streatham, of their handbags. There had been many similar robberies by a man known as 'The Bicycle Highwayman.'

Mrs Kilvert stated, in evidence, that she was walking in Streatham on Monday evening at about seven o'clock and when in the act of crossing the road, heard a bicycle bell behind her. She hesitated and looked round. The prisoner who was on a bicycle then snatched her handbag and rode quickly off. He was, however, stopped and arrested.

Detective BAKER, having said that there would be other charges, Mr de GREY ordered a remand.

From: *THE SOUTH LONDON PRESS*, Friday 1 January 1909

### THE ALLEGED BICYCLE HIGHWAYMAN:

Sent for Trial on Three Charges of Theft

At the South Western Police Court on Tuesday 29th December 1908, Harold Arthur LESLIE, living at 82 Jefferies Road, Clapham was charged, on remand, with robbing two ladies, Mrs Eleanor KILVERT of 24 Criffel Avenue, Streatham Hill, and Mrs Mariana NOELLER of 31 Christchurch Road, Streatham, of their handbags, containing valuable property.

It is suggested that the prisoner is known as 'The Bicycle Highwayman' and had carried out many robberies. He would, it is alleged, approach ladies on his bicycle and disconcert their attention by ringing his bell. Before the ladies had time realise their position, the man would snatch their handbags and make off.

On this occasion a third charge was being prepared against the prisoner for robbing another lady, Miss Ellen Constance HAYDEN of 16 Russell Avenue, Streatham, who was deprived of her handbag in similar circumstances.

An incident in the case is that the prisoner made a present of two watches from Mrs Noeller and Miss Hayden to his sweetheart, Miss Elizabeth SIMPKINS, a domestic in service at 'The Rough,' Rodway Road, Roehampton, Putney.

So disturbed was Miss Simpkins by the arrest of the prisoner that she on Saturday last made an attempt on her life by jumping into the pond at Clapham Common. She was pulled out by Mr W B GEORGE, an artist of 3 Ballingdon Lodge, Broomwood Road, who was commended by the Magistrate for his conduct. She was charged before him on the Monday, but her mistress, Mrs RICHARDSON, having consented to look after her, she was discharged. She now appears in the witness box as a witness. She stated that she had known the prisoner for five years, and he gave her the two watches a few months ago.

Detective Sergeant HAWKINS mentioned that 15 other cases could be gone into and that in two of them it could be proved that the prisoner struck the ladies he succeeded in robbing. The prisoner, offering no defence, was committed for trial.

From: *THE TIMES*, Thursday 14 January 1909, page 3

### THEFTS BY A BICYCLE RIDER:

Harold Arthur LESLIE aged 20 years, a labourer, pleaded Guilty to stealing handbags and their contents from Eleanor KILVERT of Criffel Avenue, Streatham-hill on Monday 21st December 1908: from Mariana NOELLER of Christchurch Road, Streatham-hill on 29th October 1908 and from Ellen Constance HAYDEN of Roskell Street (sic) Streatham-hill on 10th October 1908.

Mr H M FINCH was for the prosecution. The Counsel stated that there were 21 cases against the prisoner, and one of them was accompanied by violence.

Detective Inspector WARD said that the Police had been inundated with complaints from Brixton, Balham and Streatham. Ladies were in terror, and policemen in plain clothes were sent out on cycles to attempt to find the thief. Eventually 50 policemen, in plain clothes, were posted at fixed points, and this led to the prisoner's arrest.

Mr WALLACE sentenced the prisoner to 18 months' imprisonment with Hard Labour.

*On the following day, Friday 15 January 1909, the South London Press published an account of the trial with headlines of*

## BRIXTON and CLAPHAM LADIES TERRORISED:

MAN HUNTED by FIFTY POLICEMEN.

*Much of the information was similar to the previous account in The Times, but it was revealed that the prisoner's real name was HAWKINS and that he lived with his father who was a most respectable man.*

*The trial was held at Newington Sessions before Mr WALLACE K.C.*

Counsel for the prosecution said that the prisoner's methods were novel and resembled those of an up-to-date Highwayman.

Since August 1908, the prisoner had cycled about Brixton, Clapham and Streatham and whenever he saw an opportunity he would ride up to a lady crossing a road or standing at the corner of a street.

He would startle them by violently ringing his bell and before she could realise anything he had snatched her handbag and ridden off as quickly as possible.

All the Police efforts to catch the thief had been in vain until 50 men were put on special duties in plain clothes at fixed points in the affected districts, and eventually this strategy had led to the prisoner's arrest.

During a search at the prisoner's home, a cupboard in his bedroom was found to contain property which identified him with other cases, and a Bank book in his possession showed such payments in as ten shillings on October 19th 1908: October 30th 1908, ten shillings: November 3rd, 1908, ten shillings: November 16th 1908, fifteen shillings: and November 30th 1908, another sum of fifteen shillings.

The Inspector said that he considered the prisoner was 'A clever and dangerous thief.'

Before the sentence was pronounced the prisoner handed the Judge a list of 'Characters' who would speak for him.

Mr WALLACE, K.C., said, 'What is the use of men saying that they find you honest? It only shows that you have succeeded in deceiving these people.'

NOTE: During the trial thirteen of the other victims were named.



## Marking the centenary of 'Perch' *Edward Kilvert, the 'baby' brother for whom Francis had an almost avuncular concern, died 100 years ago this February, records* TERESA WILLIAMS

IT WAS recently the centenary of the death of Edward Newton Kilvert' ('Perch'), *pictured above*.

Edward was only 63 when he died on 3 February 1913 and his death certificate gives the cause of death as 'Arterio Sclerosis and a Cerebral Haemorrhage'.

His occupation was given as retired Civil Service Clerk, Estate Duty Office.

Edward's daughter, Thermuthis Marion Kilvert (born 5 April 1879) registered his death the following day. His address was 24 Criffel Avenue, Streatham-hill. His probated Estate was in the region of £300, Thermuthis being his Executrix.

The 90th anniversary of the death of Robert Edgar Kilvert, Edward and Eleanor's son is on 28 March this year.

He was a Naval Officer serving off Gibraltar in 1923 when he was taken ill of a fever and landed on the Island, where he died in the hospital there. He was just 42 years of age

His wife was Hilda Stephanie (nee Malon).

Robert Edgar and Thermuthis Marion were both born at 37 Nicoll Road, Harlesden, NW, as is already known. I have copies of Edward's Birth, Marriage and Death certificates and the Birth certificate for Thermuthis Marion. Looking at the Marriage certificate it is nice to see the Diarist's signature as one of the witnesses.

I have been looking at the 1891 and onwards Census indices on [www.freecen.org.uk](http://www.freecen.org.uk) and after about an hour of trying variants of the name of Kilvert, I found Edward R (sic) in the 1891 census aged 41 living at Wandsworth Admin. area and Civil Parish of Streatham. The age is correct. Both Eleanor and Edward came up for 1911 under Streatham with correct ages. It is obvious that the name of Kilvert has been wrongly transcribed at some time, but I am sure the 1891 entry is correct. Perhaps the death of Mrs Robert Kilvert in 1889 prompted a move away from Harlesden.

There is one other link with Edward Newton which lasted into the 21st century, that of Muriel Kilvert, his granddaughter, and a founder Member of our Society, whose obituary appeared in *Journal* 29. Her mother was Hilda Stephanie and father, Robert Edgar. Muriel was aged four or five when he died.

## Bow down then sweet cherry tree: Kilvert and wassailing

*The Diarist's fascination for the age-old ways of country people is vividly illustrated by the delightful tale of how he recorded the words of the song the wassailers sang. In doing so he was ahead of the game. As SHEILA JONES writes, only about 40 years later the great collector Alfred Williams knew he was already too late to have access to a living tradition*

PICTURE the scene. Kilvert found John Cozens/Couzens the elder, a sixty-nine-year-old agricultural labourer,<sup>1</sup> *at work covering down one of the old flower beds, the one near the Deodar, between it and the limes.* (ii/312) The date was 23rd January 1873. *He fulfilled his promise of reciting to me the old Christmas Carol which the Wassailers and he as chief singer used to sing with the Wassailing song at Christmas.* The promise had been made on 2nd January, when John was carrying Kilvert's carpet-bag to the station and entertained him *with reminiscences of the time when he was the chief singer in Langley Burrell and the head of the Wassailers.* (ii/303)

Kilvert records that John *leaned on his spade and I took this carol down word for word from his mouth.* His own role was easy: he wrote down the words in pencil in his pocket-book, perhaps resting it on a garden table or tablet of wood. Anyone who has ever tried knows that John's role was really hard: he had to say the words of a song he was used to *singing* and with no fellow singers to support him, at a speed which would allow someone else to transcribe them, perhaps repeating words or whole lines where the Kilvert had not quite caught up.

The song he passed on is recognisably The Cherry Tree Carol. It was first noted down in the 17th century, so was probably being sung somewhat earlier, and tells the apocryphal story of the Virgin travelling to Bethlehem with Joseph before Jesus had been born, and asking Joseph to pick cherries for her. As is the case with folk-songs, there are several variants of the words and additional ones too. The last two lines are very reminiscent of The First Nowell – maybe John Cozens had lost concentration and drifted off into that carol.

*John said ...he thought this Christmas Carol was as good as any of the hymns sung in Church if it were sung in any form. But it depended on the form it was sung in.* (ii/304) Maybe by "form" he meant what tune was used, as in folk-singing any tune can be used which will, or can be made to, fit the words, according to the preference of the singer/s.

On the following day, *in a shower of cold rain*, Kilvert took down from John Cozens variant words of what is often referred to as the Gloucestershire Wassailing Song or the Thames Head Wassailers' Song. He must have had an umbrella on this occasion to keep his paper dry or else he and John removed themselves to a shed or stable to get under cover. When he came to transcribe from his pocket-book to his *Diary*, Kilvert did not exercise his intelligence. For instance, the first five words should be "wassail and wassail", as also in the 7th verse where "wassail" should be substituted for "sail". There seems also to be a breakdown in the ballad metre in verses 3-6; perhaps John's memory of the familiar words was not so good at this point.

Alfred Williams, the great collector of Wiltshire folksongs, transcribed from informants several versions of this song. It is

good to know that John Cozens's/Couzen's version of both this and the Cherry Tree Carol are now also on the Wiltshire Community Arts website, with his name given as "informant" and Rev. R. F. Kilvert's as "transcriber", with appropriate excerpts from the *Diary* and a link to the census information on John Cozens/Couzens.<sup>2</sup> The whole site is worth exploring for those living in Wiltshire or from outside who are interested in the past.

It's to be hoped that Kilvert tipped John Cozens generously for standing in the rain having his digging of the flower bed delayed.

The bowl which John presented to Kilvert, as promised, was in a very sad state – not surprising, perhaps, since John had been using it to feed his chickens! It was made of elm and about 50 years old *and very much worm eaten.* (ii/314) It had once had iron bands *arched over the top dressed with evergreens and ribbon.* It had replaced an earlier bowl, which had been *broken up* at the same time as the former group of wassailers had been disbanded on the grounds of their drunkenness and *keeping all the money they got* – which the writer actually thought was one of the points of walking from farm to farm singing wassail songs! Who else were more suitable recipients of charity than the singers themselves?

This ceremony may once have been more elaborate than is supposed, for Alfred Williams reports the wassailing which took place at Cricklade at Christmas: 'There was a recognised company of wassailers at Cricklade, trained to conduct the ceremony. They had an effigy of an ox, made of a withy frame with a cured skin stretched over it. The head, horns and tail were intact. The breast and foreparts were stuffed with straw; and they fitted two small red lamps into the eye sockets.

'At Christmas time, while the mummers and carol singers were going their rounds, the wassailers paraded in procession. Two of the sturdiest crept inside the framework of the effigy and carried it along on their backs, imitating the swaying motion of the beast. The chief wassailer walked before, carrying the wooden bowl that was decorated with ribbons and mistletoe. The remainder of the company followed behind dressed in fancy costumes ornamented with coloured ribbons.

'At every farmhouse, or dwelling of the better class people, they sang their merry song; and the mistress of the house, or the maid, brought out warm spiced ale, or hot punch, with toast and roasted apples, and replenished the bowl. They also pinned new ribbons to the dresses of the wassailers, which were treasured as trophies.'

His informant was Old 'Wassail' Harvey, who had been born in 1826. He told Alfred Williams that 'there used to be many other things connected with the Cricklade practice in the time of his father and grandfather, but they had fallen into disuse.'<sup>3</sup>

Kilvert does not mention ever having heard these songs sung,

*'Maybe Kilvert  
had in mind  
a project  
to collect  
Wiltshire  
folk-songs'*

not even as a child, nor the traditions associated with them. Maybe he never had.

What was his purpose in collecting them? Maybe he had in mind a project to collect Wiltshire folk-songs. If so, it would have been a very valuable enterprise as Alfred Williams, collecting at around the time of the First World War, was conscious that he was already too late to have access to a living tradition. If this was the case, either Kilvert abandoned it for lack of time or opportunity, or his collection has been lost.

On 18 December that same year *some boys came wassailing from Chippenham, and sang the Wassail Song, Old Jeff and Nellie Ray.* (ii/398) The latter is a Plantation Song not a wassail song. It would seem to be the broadside ballad of Old Jeff, published 1880 to 1900, otherwise known as Poor Old Jeff and Good Old Jeff. Whatever the title, the words are the same in each case. If this is the song Kilvert heard, then it must have been in circulation several years before it was published. No doubt the Chippenham wassailers were right up-to-date with their material.

The punctuation, only a comma between the titles of the two songs, suggests that this is only a part of a longer entry which has been omitted from the published *Diary* – Kilvert's grammar and

punctuation are normally reliable. Staff at the Local History Society at Chippenham kindly checked the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* to see if there was any mention of any other songs the Chippenham wassailers might have sung. There was an edition on Christmas Eve and another on 1 January but nothing was found.

## REFERENCES

1. 1971 census for Langley Burrell, ref. RG10/piece 1899/fol77/p.29. John Cozens' eldest son John is on the same page.
2. <http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/folkintro.php> This link takes you to the John Cozens'/Couzens' versions of the two songs, census data on him from 1841 on, and the relevant sections of the Diary, with full publication details. This data has been entered by Chris Wildridge, who is responsible for the content on folk-song section of the website and was very interested to hear of another variant of the Wassailers Song – he had already transcribed three taken down by Alfred Williams. <http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/> is a link to parish and community histories; there is an excellent one on Langley Burrell, with early maps, a history of the parish and its inhabitants and some extracts from the *Diary*.
3. The article by Alfred Williams appeared in *The Wiltshire Gazette* dated 2 December 1926, p3, which was transcribed by Chris Wildridge and sent to the writer. She is very grateful to Chris for permission to use it in this article and for his other suggestions and advice.

## The Thames Head Wassailers Song

The collector Alfred Williams wrote 'I have named the *Thames Head Wassailers Song* because I have not heard it except around the Thames' source. It has been called the 'Gloucestershire Wassailing song' though it seems to have been quite as popular in north Wiltshire as in Gloucestershire. The bowl is variously said to have been made of a sycamore, maplin and maypole-ing tree.' We are grateful for this version of the Wassailers Song to the [history.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk) – see the address in the References above

*Wassail, wassail, all over the town,  
Our toast is white and our ale is brown,  
Our bowl it is made of a maplin tree,  
And so is good beer of the best barley.*

### Verse 2

*Here's to the ox, and to his long horn;  
May God send our maester a good crap o' corn!  
A good crap o' corn, and another o' hay,  
To pass the cold wintry winds away.*

### Verse 3

*Here's to the ox, and to his right ear;  
May God send our maester a happy New Year!  
A happy New Year, as we all may see,  
With our wassailing bowl we drink unto thee.*

### Verse 4

*Here's to old Jerry, and to her right eye;  
May God send our mistress a good Christmas pie!  
A good Christmas pie, as we all may see,  
And a wassailing bowl we will drink unto thee.*

### Verse 5

*Here's to old Boxer, and to his long tail;  
I hope that our maester'll hae ner a 'oss vail!  
Ner a 'oss vail, as we all may see,  
And a wassailing bowl we will drink unto thee.*

### Verse 6

*Come, pretty maidens – I suppose there are some!  
Never let us poor young men stand on the cold stone;  
The stones they are cold, and our shoes they are thin,  
The fairest maid in the house let us come in!  
Let us come in, and see how you do.*

### Maid

*Yes, if you will, and welcome, too!*

### Verse 7

*Here's to the maid, and the rosemary tree,  
The ribbons are wanted, and that you can see;  
The ribbons are wanted, and that you can see,  
With our wassailing bowl we will drink unto thee.*

### Verse 8

*Now, boteler, come, fill us a bowl o' the best,  
And we hope that thy soul in heaven may rest;  
But if you do bring us a bowl o' the small,  
Then down shall go boteler, bowl and all,  
Bowl and all, bowl and all;  
Then down shall go boteler, bowl and all.*

### Verse 9

*Now, master and mistress, if you are within,  
Send down some of your merry, merry men,  
That we may eat and drink before the clock strikes ten,  
Our jolly wassail;  
When joy comes unto our jolly wassail.*



## The Kilvert Album book will be a must-have for Members

*The Kilvert family album – the most important archival resource acquired by the Society since the discovery of the Diary itself – is being reprinted for sale to Members. JOHN TOMAN promises his accompanying text will give us an entirely new dimension to our appreciation of Kilvert's circle*

AN article in *Journal* 35 told how the album of Kilvert family photographs dating from mid-Victorian times was acquired on the Society's behalf. I explained in the article that the subjects of the photographs were the sons / daughters, their spouses and friends of Dr John Kilvert, the Diarist's uncle. I added: 'We know very little of this dimension of the *Diary* except that Kilvert recorded the death of one of Dr John's sons and that Kilvert performed the marriage ceremonies for two others of Dr John's children'.

Inevitably when reading a diary which is only two thirds of the length of the original, the picture we have of what its author experienced, thought, cared about is limited. All readers of it became aware of events and relationships only sketched in that probably had deeper, more complex, more important implications. Stories are begun but are not continued, characters are introduced but never reappear, what appear to have been serious preoccupations and concerns crop up but receive little or no further development.

This is the iceberg nature of the *Diary*: one third lies above the surface, two thirds remaining hidden below. The result can be maddening for a reader, who always wants to know more.

Yet at the same time it is part of the *Diary's* fascination because there is the perennial hint of untold depths, of secrets kept hidden, of the existence of even more bounteous riches than those which it does yield. Of course, even if we had all of the *Diary*, at least some of this awareness of stories only partially told, of subjects avoided or merely touched on, would remain. Kilvert was a human being and like other human beings in not wanting, frank though he was in name and nature, to reveal everything about himself and the people he knew. Furthermore, the conventions of the time meant that restraint had to be exercised, proprieties observed, when writing autobiography.

The 'story' of the Kilvert family photograph album (henceforth the Kilvert Album) provides many insights into aspects of

the *Diary* which have remained puzzling and mysterious. This is particularly the case with regard to the relationship between Kilvert's own people and the family of Dr John.

There is not one reference to Dr John in the entire *Diary*, which is itself of some significance. He had died in 1861 so he could

not have made an appearance in it as a living character, but for him to warrant no mention at all seems odd. (He could of course have received a mention in the missing two thirds.) Kilvert mentions his other uncles, both of whom had died before the *Diary* was begun. There are several references to uncle Francis (died 1863) and two references to uncle Edward (died 1867). Kilvert six times mentioned Dr John's widow Marianne and seemed friendly with her. He visited her and once stayed overnight at her home at 12 Darlington Street, Bath. However, no *Diary* entry shows her visiting the Kilvert home.

None of this would have significance were it not for the statement by Emily Kilvert (in her *Rambling Recollections*): 'I don't know why we never went to stay at 12 Darlington St., but we never did.' She added that though her mother was 'very fond of Dr John, I don't think she cared much for Aunt Marianne.' Emily offered no explanation for Mrs Kilvert's antipathy.

Is it possible that the Kilvert Album throws any light on this mystery? Can one construct a 'story' from its photos and can that 'story' render the mystery less mysterious?

It appears that the compiler of the Album was one of Dr John's daughters, Anna Maria, the Mrs Gwatkin of the *Diary*, who is mentioned several times. Kilvert can be seen in these entries making particular efforts to establish a friendship with her. To understand the antipathy between her mother and Kilverts, we have to learn what kind of people Dr John's family were. In so doing, we can also learn more about Kilvert's family.

Telling the Album story has involved paying attention to the subjects of its photos, to the question of who comes first or early in it or near its end, and to the positioning of photos next to others. I have noted which people are included in the Album and which are not, who might have been. A photo of Emily Kilvert is there and one of her sisters, Thersie, and of Kilvert himself. No



*Kilvert's sister Thersie (Thermuthis, Mrs W. R. Smith)*

other member of Kilvert's family has found a place in it; notably absent are his parents. Can we interpret this in the light of Mrs Kilvert's dislike of Aunt Marianne? What importance, if any, can we attach to absences from the Album? There happens also to be no photo of Dr John himself, nor of Marianne (although her photo once appeared because a space for it exists plus a caption – 'Mamma').

The problematic nature of the relationship between Kilvert's father's branch of the family and that of Dr John's is reflected too in another area covered by Album subjects.

Early in the Album come photos of two of Dr John's children: Eliza and Fred. Kilvert wrote accounts (iii/121-130, 71) of their weddings, whose ceremonies he performed. Both entries contain a mysterious element: the weddings had been kept very secret. Kilvert commented explicitly on this fact because he was disappointed and even angry. Readers can't have failed to notice his reaction yet, since he offers no explanation for the secrecy, the entries remain mysterious. In the story I tell of the Album, I offer some explanation.

The Album's story takes us not only into the arena of close family relations but also into the society of Bath and Chippenham, in which those relations were embedded. Most of the Album subjects had connections with Bath and researching their lives has enabled me to fill out the picture of the Bath that Kilvert and his family knew. It has even proved possible to gain additional insight into what went on in the heads of at least some Album people.

The families of Album characters are families very much like Kilvert's own: they had similar origins, education, careers, interests, fears, aspirations. This fact alone means that our understanding of Kilvert's family is enhanced by the Album story. The story also provides an expansion and a deepening of some of the *Diary's* main concerns – one may call them themes: the challenges of gaining an education and building a career, religious and racial prejudice, fear of financial ruin, leisure pursuits, the importance, especially for women, of getting married. The Album story is therefore one which helps us to understand what it meant to be a mid-Victorian, middle-class person.

A reader of Kilvert's *Diary* is bound to notice its frequent references to India, many of them occasioned by the fact that Emily Kilvert was married to a surgeon in the Indian Army, and spent large periods of her life there after her marriage. However, is that reader aware of the extent of Kilvert's anxiety for her safety while there and of what fuelled his anxiety? Is the reader aware of the

pervasive concern in the *Diary* with India and all things Indian? One aspect of it is the sheer number of people of Kilvert's acquaintance who either lived in India or had strong links to it.

The Album story is very much a story about India and what it meant to Victorians. Well over a third of the Album characters had some involvement in it. Again, it is their story which deepens our understanding of Kilvert's own story.

In telling the Album story, I have frequently seized opportunities to link the lives and activities of its characters to *Diary* entries, expanding them and making more clear what they are about. The result, I hope, is that *Diary* readers will be moved to return to it, armed with fresh insights, able to see more in it and to enjoy it more fully.

The Kilvert Society is to be commended for its initiative in securing what is the greatest addition to our archival sources since the discovery of the *Diary* itself, and it is also to be commended for making the Album photographs available to all members by publishing them in this new book.

This historic publication indicates to the world that the Society is alive and that its mission statement – 'to foster an interest in the Reverend Francis Kilvert, his work, his *Diary*' – is serious. The Album story is a fascinating one and I believe that my telling of it can, as I have argued, give *Diary* readers a new dimension in their approach to it.



Kilvert's sister Emmie (Emily, Mrs S. J. Wyndowe)





### Much more to 'Kilvert's Bishop' than 'poor Pope'

*Karl Showler has celebrated his eightieth birthday with a fine biography of James Atlay, 'Hereford's Forgotten Bishop'. While Francis Kilvert is never complimentary about him Atlay did much to modernise the deeply rural diocese known in clerical circles as The Dead See. This book comes highly recommended by MICHAEL SHARP for its thorough research and beautiful writing*

BISHOP Atlay – ah, yes! the Whitney confirmation and poor Pope. Beyond that, few Kilvertians would, I suspect, be able to volunteer much information. Some, of course, will have seen his portrait in the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace during our AGM.

You have no further excuse! Our member Karl Showler has written a magnificent biography of James Atlay. I have known Karl for many years, though the friendship does not extend much beyond the odd chat over his front gate in Newport Street in Hay-on-Wye (before his recent move to Brecon) or at his bookstall in Hay Market and sometimes at a Society event tea in Hay. But I know that Karl is a bee man. I love bees and I know that you don't get far with them unless you are patient, gentle and compassionate. All of these qualities come across in *James Atlay, Hereford's Forgotten Bishop 1868-1894*.

This is a splendidly handsome volume, well illustrated, including a good number of colour photographs, and well indexed with a full bibliography. Karl's style of prose appeals to me – elegant and eminently readable. He gains an immediate attention by dealing with Kilvert in Chapter One. All the references are dealt with in full. I thought I would probably read the Kilvert bits and

then lose interest. Not a bit of it. Chapter Two deals with James Atlay's family history and then I was away! I was hooked and couldn't put the book down.

There are 21 chapters, averaging around eight pages each and these are broken down into headed or titled sections, about four to a page, which I felt made for easy reading and back-checking references.

After education at The King's School, Grantham, and St John's College, Cambridge, James took Holy Orders in 1842 at the age of 25. He served his title as curate of St Peter and St Paul's, Warsop, Rutland. His rector was the Rev Samuel Martin, and he stayed at Worsop for four years.

In 1859 he married the Rev Martin's 19-year-old granddaughter, Frances Martin, at Milverton, near Leamington Spa. She described James as 'the most beloved friend of my whole life'.

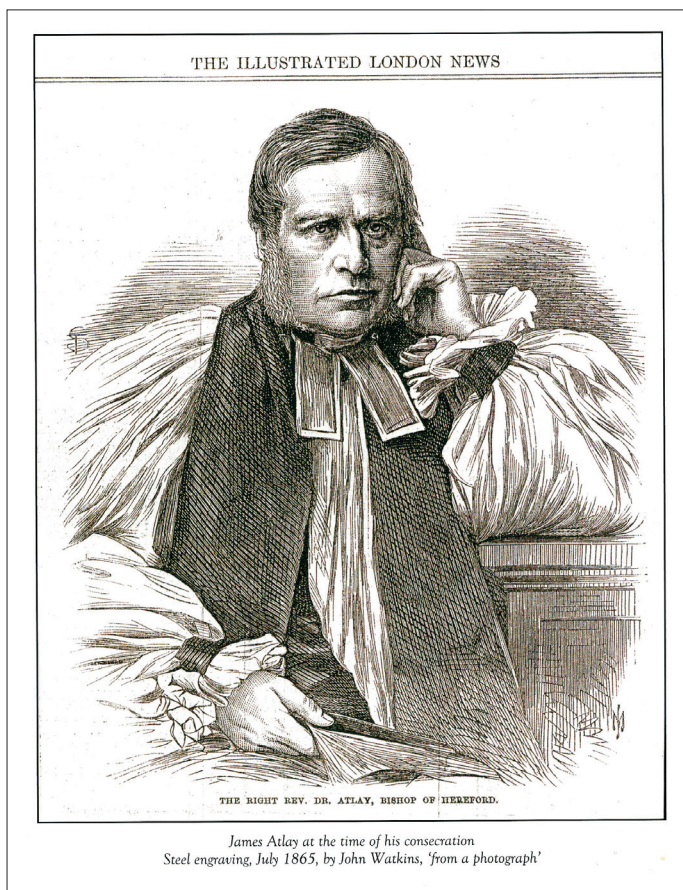
She merits her own chapter, devoted to their children and her abundant good works as wife of the Bishop of Hereford.

There is a chapter on his nine years at Leeds devoting much



*Karl Showler*





A steel engraving, July 1865, by John Watkins, 'from a photograph' of James Atlay at the time of his consecration as Bishop of Hereford. Below left, Atlay's Carrara marble tomb in Hereford Cathedral

time to pastoral re-organisation and educational reform, bringing appointments as Rural Dean and Canon Residentiary of Ripon Cathedral entailing periods of residence in the more salubrious atmosphere of Ripon.

His appointment as Bishop of Hereford and life and work in the Diocese occupy all but the final three chapters and cover his Episcopal Visitations, his care for his clergy, the Three Choirs Festival, his great involvement in education, clergy parsonages and much, much more.

Bishop Atlay was a man of tremendous energy, broad outlook and vision, particularly in regard to caring for the poor – the Atlay Orphanage was something to which he and Frances gave considerable time and energy. He also made valuable contributions to reform through the Diocesan Conferences but although he was decisive he never wasted words.

Despite my life-long interest in the Church of England and the way it is governed and despite living in the Hereford Diocese for 20 years, I have learnt so much from this book about church life and government in Hereford and its educational history.

If like me you wanted to know more about Bishop Atlay and about what made the Diocese tick when Kilvert was at Bredwardine, then I do recommend this book. It is, as I said, a handsome, elegantly presented book, thoroughly researched, beautifully written, very comprehensive and, although it is not cheap, you should buy it. It is a monument to Karl's loving care for his subject.

*James Atlay, Hereford's Forgotten Bishop, is obtainable from Karl Showler at Flat 11 Abbeyfield House, Old Station Close, Camden Road, Brecon, Powys LD3 7RT, price £50 plus £5 p&pp*

*Saints and Sinners of the Marches* by Michael Tavinor, with illustrations by Sandy Elliott (Logaston Press, £20)  
reviewed by Margaret Collins

THIS book, with a foreword by Sir Roy Strong, has been written by the Dean of Hereford to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Friends of Hereford Cathedral.

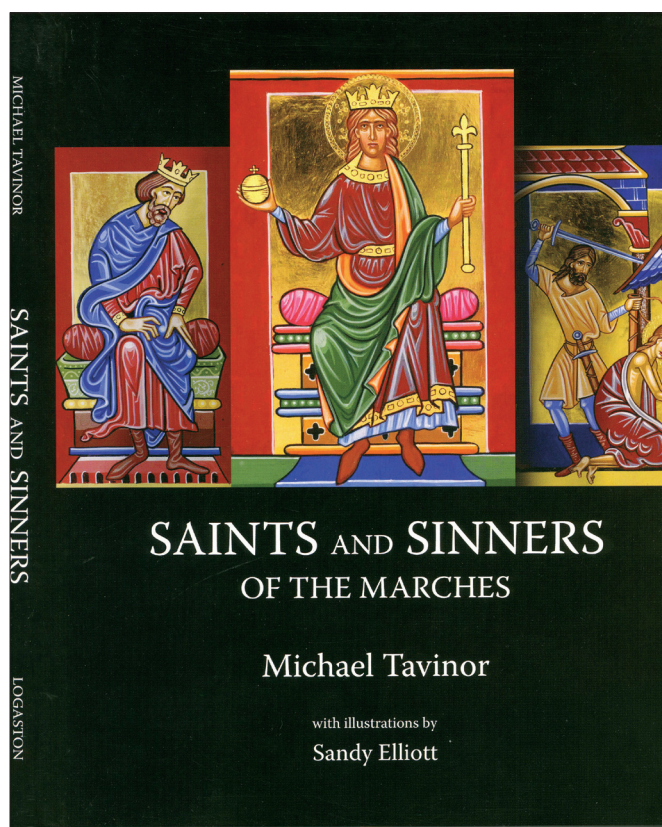
Every page represents a day of the year, with a paragraph commemorating one person from a diverse range of 366 saints and sinners from the Herefordshire area, many of whom fall 'somewhere in between' the two categories. Their lives span many centuries and several are famous, others less well known, but all have left their mark in some way. Following each mini-biography there is a thoughtful reflection leading into a piece of prose or a poem, maybe written by the person him or herself or taken from a wide range of literature, highlighting some aspect of the subject's life. At the top left of each page is a little line drawing by Sandy Elliott which cleverly enhances the text, creating an effect reminiscent of an illuminated letter in a medieval Bible.



On the page for 23 September, the anniversary of his death, Francis Kilvert is seen stepping out briskly along a country lane. His poem *Advent* is featured and *Kilvert's Diary* is quoted twice on other pages.

Despite the immense amount of research and scholarship contained within this volume, Michael Tavinor wears his learning lightly and presents us with a highly readable and attractively produced anthology to return to again and again. *Saints and Sinners of the Marches* is available from Hereford Cathedral Bookshop (tel 01432 374210 for mail order)

Michael Tavinor and Sandy Elliott



## Welcome

*The Society warmly welcomes the following new members*

Mr John and Mrs Pauline Arthur, of Llanwyddelan, Powys  
Mrs Jean Carter, of Lower Cwmgwannon, Clyro, Powys  
Mrs Diana Clutterbuck, of Kidderminster, Worcestershire  
Dr Anthea Ingham, of Rhayader, Powys  
Mrs Sian Jennings, of Cheltenham, Gloucester  
Mr David Llewelyn John, of Church Stretton, Shropshire  
Mr Stephen W. Massil, of Haringey, London  
Mrs Marianne Schmidt-Foth, of Niedersachsen Germany



The Friends of Birds' Marsh – that stretch of country between Langley Burrell parsonage and Hardenhuish that is partially under threat from development – sent us some photos of the snowy Birds' Marsh Wellie Walk of Sunday 20 January. Above is Peter Humphrey, left, the chair of the Friends of Birds' Marsh, with Paul Barnes, one of the few people alive to have lived in the Keeper's Cottage. Francis Kilvert records visits to the cottage (17 May 1870, 18 May 1874). Paul's mother May Harding was born and brought up in the cottage and was a longstanding member of the Kilvert Society.

The Friends are energetically pursuing their application to secure village green status for the wood and surrounding fields at Birds' Marsh.

We are grateful for this information to Stephen Hunt, author of *Birds' Marsh, Chippenham: An Unfinished Story*, obtainable from Hobnob Press, tell 01747 830 015.



Apologies for a wrong caption in *Journal 35* on p176. The picture showed Brobury House but we said it was The Cottage, the home of the Newtons at Bredwardine, above.



Readers may have noticed a reference earlier (p202) just to 'Miss Newton', when of course there were two of them. Which

one was meant? When this was taken up with Sheila Jones, who wrote the piece, she came up with a very good reason: 'Quite seriously, the elder Miss Newton would have been offended at the use of her Christian name, as not giving her the proper respect due to the elder/eldest daughter – and, incidentally, the owner of the estate and patron of the living,' she said.



Last November our President was much fêted on the occasion of his 90th birthday. The tributes including a long interview in the *Church Times*.

Earlier in the year, in his column for that paper, Dr Blythe wrote:

May-time, when I like to read Kilvert's *Diary* to the congregation. It is not all that keen on readings, much preferring speakings without notes. I see the youthful Francis in his Clyro pulpit, trying not to see the girls. And I think of handsome Mr Elton eyeing Miss Woodhouse and her £30,000.

I look down on the same dear ones year after year, often seeing them in the places that they have vacated. The last-ing enchantment of Kilvert's *Diary* is its lasting freshness. And particularly in May. It is dewy and untouched by maturity. He would die suddenly at 39, never having quite grown up or grown out of his freshness. It was heaven's special gift to him. In May, he blooms like the plentiful flowers in this parish.

*Wednesday 13 May. This happy afternoon I went lilying in Hartham woods with sweet Georgie Gale... Today was the Bath Flower Show. But I would rather have gone lilying with sweet Georgie Gale in Hartham Woods than have gone to a hundred flower shows.*

*A lily of a day*

*Is fairer far in May*

*... We were talking of Father Ignatius and his monastery in the Black Mountains.*

Kilvert's happiness came and went like our May's downpours and sunshine. Witnessing young men in habits hacking away at the soil as if they lived in the Middle Ages made him miserable. No enlightened Church of England, no girls. And when all around them in the Welsh hills the spring was in full tilt, and when clearly Robert Browning's God was in his heaven, well, it was perverse. Yet he was touched by their holiness. And thankful that he had a gardener. Parish duties aside, he needed all his energy for walking, and all his confessions for writing.

As president of the Kilvert Society, I haven't enough energy to attend its meetings on the Welsh border, but my heart is often there. And, anyway, what would the white cat, let alone our three parishes, do if I followed Kilvert around?

Herefordshire in May is both near to and distant from East Anglia. At the moment, ignorant as much of distance as of time, the white cat slumbers on an old chest. She has pushed aside a pot of dried poppy heads and a dozen novels to make a polished bed.

Outside, soaked horses devour soaking grass. Down below, the Stour is high. The lanes are better paddled than walked. Every now and then, the skies are turned off to allow me to mow a lawn; for life in a village is conces-

sionary. No sooner do I go in at the first spat than green woodpeckers, collar-doves, pheasants, and chaffinches come out.

And so have all the bluebells at Tiger Hill – maybe a million of them. We all paid court to them, treading slippery paths, intoxicated by their strangely beautiful scent, awed by their psychedelic blueness. Are there words for it? A new Wayfaring tree has been planted in their azure realm. Our ancestors set *Viburnum lantana* on pilgrim routes just for ornament.

Human cruelty often stops Kilvert in his tracks. Mindless cruelties born of ignorance were part of the old rural year. Walking to the Bronith, he finds a dead blackbird in a gin. It is a late Easter, and the creature reminds him of the Cross.

(We are grateful to the *Church Times* for permission to reprint that passage – and to Margaret Collins for alerting us to it. For a free sample copy of the *Church Times*, contact [subs@churchtimes.co.uk](mailto:subs@churchtimes.co.uk), or telephone 01603 785911.)



Adrian Harvey, writing to the *Journal* about Thersie and Major Valentine (see p213) says he very much regretted his father, the late Charles Harvey, was no longer alive.

'He too would have been most interested in this information about the later life of Kilvert's sister,' he writes.

'For many years there were, hanging in the sitting room of my parents' house in Birmingham, half a dozen evocative water colour



sketches of the Clyro area executed by Thersie in 1865. These were given to my father by Mrs Essex Hope.

'They are now in the possession of the National Library of Wales, though I have black and white photographs my father took of them. My favourite was the picture of Clyro School, *pictured above*; I knew it long before I saw the actual building and now I never pass through Clyro without remembering the painting.'

## It is with regret that we record the deaths of the following:

**Barry Smith**, a real stalwart of the Society, who was a former committee member and Membership Secretary and a regular contributor to the *Journal*, has died aged 75.

Barry was born in Sheffield on 5 August 1937 and grew up there during the war years with his parents Eric and Rose Mary and his elder sister Dorothy. Several French exchanges in the 1950s marked the beginning of a lifelong passion for travel and for learning languages. During his military service from 1955 to 1957 he opted to study Russian and to work in the area of military intelligence, monitoring Russian radio during the Cold War.

Barry went on to Cambridge, where he studied Russian, French and Law and then trained as a social worker and probation officer at the LSE. He returned to Sheffield to work for the probation service. During this time Barry became involved with the Quakers. He also began to love walking in the Derbyshire hills, which was to become another lifelong passion. It was at this time that he met his wife to be, Carol, on an archaeological dig.

In 1966 Barry went to Zambia to work as organising secretary of the Council on Alcoholism in the Copper Belt. Carol went out to marry him and in 1967 their elder daughter Hannah was born in Zambia.

The family moved to Aberdeen in 1969 where Barry spent two years completing an MSc in Disability. His younger daughter Maddy was born there in 1971, shortly after which the family moved to Truro. Barry worked for Cornwall County Council social services for 25 years until his retirement.

He pursued his love of languages, studying Cornish. He was recognised for his achievements in the language by being honoured with a Bardship in 1987. His Bardic name was Gof Geryow, meaning Smith of Words.

Barry and Carol moved to Wales on his retirement in 1996, so that he could indulge both his interest in Welsh and his love of walking. He continued to travel widely, most memorably with a trip to Patagonia in 2007.

Barry died peacefully in Hafan y Coed Nursing Home in Llanelli on 6 February 2013.

**Anne Mallinson**, who was one of the children fostered by The Monk (Mrs Anne Frances Essex Phillips, the second daughter of Francis Kilvert's sister, Emmie Wyndowe), has died, aged 83.

Anne said Mrs Phillips was 'the symbol of security to a succession of small children. A succession of children – who were to number well over three hundred – who had grown up and gone out into the world for ever grateful for the gift she had given them'.

Writing in *Journal* 17 (June 2005) she recalled with great affection 'those special years of a unique upbringing' she and her twin sister enjoyed at The Gables in Gloucestershire.

In 2004, with two other "children", she left flowers on The Monk's grave accompanied by a card which read: *In happy remembrance of Mrs Phillips of The Gables 1869–1954 on the 50th anniversary of her death, 19th April 1954. These flowers are placed here with gratitude and love. In appreciation and with thanks for the memorable start she gave to our young lives at The Gables, her home in Uley, during the first half of the 20th century. We will remember her always.*

Anne founded and ran a small specialist country bookshop, The Selborne Bookshop, which closed in 1993 after 25 years when the lease expired. There she also collected rural bygoners, was a leading light in the Selborne Circle of Rural Writers and championed the literary connexions of north-east Hampshire – Gilbert White, William Cobbett, George Sturt, WH Hudson, Jane Austen, Flora Thompson and Edward Thomas (she was founder and first chairman of the Edward Thomas Fellowship in 1980).

Anne died peacefully on 14 January five days before her 84th birthday.



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

# Letters to the Editor

Sir,

Oh dear – I don't think that there's much real difference about Kilvert and politics between Mr Toman and me, but we certainly seem to irritate each other, which is a pity. We ought to try having a drink together one of these days.

It is of course true that there were plenty of politics in the world in which Kilvert lived. If Mr Toman cares to read again the second paragraph of my article on 'Kilvert and Politics' in *Journal* 34, he will see that I said so myself, fairly emphatically, and that I find it surprising that he has so little to say about them. Rather than showing that he is often aware of the great political issues of the day, Kilvert very rarely mentions them, nor the great public figures who debated them (except for the less than exciting fact that he once met a man who went to school with Gladstone).

I said in that article that 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. This statement is true, and, since Mr Toman would presumably mention others if there were any but fails to do so, I presume he agrees with me. But if so, what is he making all the fuss about?

I think the difference between us originates largely in the fact that our notions of what constitutes 'politics' differs widely, and indeed Mr Toman seems to sense as much by calling my definition a 'narrow' one.

The 'wider political issues' which he claims are so abundant in the *Diary* turn out to refer to 'social tensions'; but social tensions are not political issues, though they may feed into them. If there had indeed been a revolution in England during the period of the *Diary*, that would indeed have been a political issue: the fact that John Couzens foretold one is not.

It is true that there *were* social tensions in Britain in the 1870s (though not very severe ones) and that Kilvert does show some awareness of them (though not very much awareness). It is also true that Kilvert did have political opinions, or at least party sympathies, of his own, as appears from his account of the Chippenham election of 1874: more important, it is also true that Kilvert repeatedly shows a genuine sympathy with the lot of the poor, among whom most of his pastoral work was done, and criticises quite sharply the cruelty and inhumanity with which they were sometimes treated by their landlords, such as Captain De Winton of Maesllwch.

If Kilvert thought that such injustices required intervention by Parliament (as some of this contemporaries certainly did think), that would have made it a political issue; but he did not. Kilvert was not a social reformer, but a paternalist; he thought the proper remedy for them was not legislation, but a sense of shame and a change of heart on the part of the De Wintons.

Still having some ink in his pen, Mr Toman then takes up the topic of my suggestion that there is a need for a proper commentary on the *Diary*, and that this might usefully take the form of a serial commentary published in the *Journal*. In saying this, it was not my intention to blame all the authors of books

about Kilvert, including myself, for failing to provide a commentary on the *Diary*, but merely to point to the need for one, but Mr Toman chooses to take it personally and to suggest that in any case his own writings provide the sort of commentary that is needed, containing, as they do (and as he assures us) no less than 576 comments on Kilvert. The suggestion is ridiculous. It would be difficult to write a book 365 pages long on Kilvert without making a good many comments on Kilvert, but that does not make it a commentary.

If Mr Toman chooses to read Christopher Williams' letter which appeared in the last issue of the *Journal* beside his own, he will find in it an admirable concise explanation of the sort of commentary that is needed, with very constructive suggestions of how it might be done. As he realises, it would require the help of many members, and I hope very much that they would both take part in it – for I'm glad to note that, when all the fireworks are over, Mr Toman does think that the commentary is a good idea, and a get-together to work out how to put it into practice, might give him and me just that opportunity to have a drink together that we need. We're both grownups after all, and we have much better uses to make of our time and our talents than filling the columns of the *Journal* with potshots at each other.

LAURENCE LE QUESNE  
Shrewsbury

Sir,

It's a Red Letter Day when the *Journal* of the Kilvert Society in my mailbox. I read it from stem to gudgeon, and back again.

Karl Showler's article in the *Journal* 35 on the copy of William Charles Cotton's *My Bee Book*, recently acquired by the Society, interested me as a bibliophile and as a friend of beekeepers, whose honey is on the table every morning.

Let me weigh in lightly, however, on his statements about 'the first colonial diocese in the Church of England' and the 'Church in the USA.'

Bishops for Canada were consecrated in 1787 and 1793, for Calcutta in 1814, the West Indies in 1824, and Australia in 1836. Then came George Augustus Selwyn for New Zealand, a heroic pioneer bishop, but not the first.

On the American situation let me say simply that the murky period of revolution and reorganisation on these shores from 1775 to 1789 meant that the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London ended sometime during those 14 years. The first bishop for the Church in the USA was consecrated in 1784, at the hands of Scottish bishops owing to English constitutional restrictions.

So William Charles Cotton flourished during a period when the American church was already independent, but he was, nonetheless, an important figure in the colonial church of his day. I'm happy that we have the Kilvert family's copy of the book.

DENNIS WIENK  
Priest of the Diocese of Rochester  
in the American church

*Three-Volume Diary*, packed in slip case, available to members at £60 plus £10.50 p&cp.

#### *Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary*

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

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

*Jubilee Praise*. The Tom Palmer Memorial Booklet, compiled to celebrate the Society's Jubilee in June 1998. This new publication, edited by our former Chairman, Michael Sharp, is a selection of the best essays from the Newsletters of the last thirty years. £5.50.

*Francis Kilvert Priest & Diarist*, by Frederick Grice. This book is a reprint of the 1975 original. £5.50.

*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. £5

*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. £5.

*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 home-coming to Bredwardine and of Kilvert's death and funeral; extracts from the diary of Hastings Smith (Kilvert's nephew) relating to his enquiries into his uncle's year at St. Harmon, etc. £4.50

*Miscellany Two: The Oswin Prosser Memorial Booklet*.

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

*Kilvert's Poetry: A Study*, by Bernard Jones. £4.

*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.

*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. £2.

*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.

*Vicar of this Parish*, by John Betjeman. £2

*Children of the Rectory*, by Essex Hope. £1.50

*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.

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*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.

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

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