

**THE
JOURNAL**



**OF THE
KILVERT SOCIETY**

Issue No. 4

March 2001

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Formed (in 1948) to foster an interest in the Revd. Francis Kilvert,
his work, his diary and the country he loved

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From the Editor:

After the Jubilee celebrations of June 1998, which were greatly enjoyed by all those who attended, many members expressed the view that they would like a similar full weekend's Kilvert events to come round rather more frequently than once every 50 years! The committee has taken due notice of these views and the result is the extended and attractive AGM weekend outlined below. As you will see an intriguing and varied programme has been arranged which will conclude with choral evensong in the cathedral on Sunday. So, please come in great numbers to ensure that this weekend is as successful as that of '98.

Members may be unaware that the Kilvert exhibition, which, for many years, was situated in part of the Hay-on-Wye public library has had to be moved. Appropriately, the showcases which contained the Kilvert memorabilia have been transferred to Ashbrook House, Clyro (once Kilvert's lodgings and these days the Kilvert Gallery) where they may now be viewed. There is a small charge for admission.

Members may also be unaware of and interested in a recent book, *The Assassin's Cloak*, which was published towards the end of last year. Although you would never guess it from the title this is an anthology of the 'World's Greatest Diarists'. Kilvert has a couple of dozen or so entries and finds himself in the company of the famous, the infamous and the (to me) unknown. Woodforde, Evelyn and Pepys are there, of course, and so among many others, are Goethe, Gide, Capt. Scott, Ann Frank, John Wesley, Tony Benn, Gyles Brandreth even, and you will not escape Alan Clark! And did you know Mrs. Pepys also kept a diary? – I didn't, but she is there too. Curiously, there are even examples from fictional diaries, from *Adrian Mole* and from Christopher Matthews' *Diary of a Somebody* which is an entertaining variant on George and Weedon Grossmiths' marvellous *Diary of a Nobody* which, surprisingly, is not included.

The book's misleading but eye-catching title comes from a dictum by the little-known Scottish poet William Soutar (1898-1943) who himself kept a diary (*Diaries of a Dying Man*, 1954). He wrote: 'A diary is an assassin's cloak which we wear when we wish to stab a comrade in the back with a pen.' Nobody could accuse RFK of that. However in an excellent, comprehensive review of the anthology by Bevis Hillier (entitled *Milk from United Diaries* (!)) which appeared in the Christmas number of *The Spectator* Hillier states: 'the quality needed most of all in a diarist [is] *unguardedness*.' * Spot-on that! And who could be more unguarded than Kilvert; he lays bare sufficient of himself in the portions of the *Diary* which do remain – who knows what unguardedness was to be found in the parts that were destroyed or disappeared?

This collection also has an interesting introduction by one of the editors, Alan Taylor, wherein he examines the function of diaries and the role of diarists and, what is more, accuses Plomer of arrogance, although I am not going to reveal the reason here!

I recommend this anthology, it is ideal, as anthologies and diaries are, for browsing. At £25 it is not cheap but it does have 658 pages and a huge range of contributors, spread over almost four centuries. Edited by Irene and Alan Taylor it is published by Canongate.

Those of you who watch *Watercolour Challenge* on Channel 4 will have been pleased to come upon references to Kilvert in the week, last October, when the programme came from the Welsh Marches. Hereford cathedral, Monnington-on-Wye, Ross and Tintern were featured and the production team borrowed items from the Society for the programme of 31st, recorded in Luntley. (Kilvert connection? – tenuous if non-existent!) If you missed it one of the items borrowed is reproduced on the cover!

Finally, there are two inserts enclosed with this edition of the *Journal*. One is the draft of the new constitution for the Society which, together with further proposals (see below) you will be asked to vote on at the AGM and the other is a booking sheet for the AGM weekend's events. To avoid disappointment you are advised to return the booking sheet to the Secretary as quickly as possible and certainly not later than 24th March.

I look forward to seeing you at the end of April.

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Proposals to be voted on at the AGM

A Constitution

Included with this copy of the *Journal* is a draft of the proposed new constitution for the Society. For over 50 years we have operated on a rather vague set of rules, these give clear guidance on some issues and totally ignore others. A good

example being the various categories of Society membership which have evolved over the years but are not defined by the existing rules in any way. The proposal does not change the old rules, it clarifies and adds to them.

A proposal will be placed before the AGM on 27th April 2001 to adopt the enclosed draft as the Kilvert Society Constitution.

Membership Subscriptions

Life Membership of the Society has proved very popular and almost half our members are life members. The major running costs of the Society are borne by those members paying a subscription annually and any increase in costs has to be met by an increase in their subscriptions. An increase in subscription leading to a loss of subscribing members would be financially devastating for the Society.

A proposal will be placed before the AGM to discontinue Life Membership in the future whilst protecting the status of existing Life Members.

Joint Membership is haphazard, in some cases two subscriptions are paid, in most cases only one.

A proposal will be placed before the AGM to charge a Joint Subscription for two persons living at one address of £9 from 1st January 2002.

There are no proposals to change the ordinary subscription from the present rate of £6.

All the above carry the unanimous approval of the committee.

From the Membership Secretary

Result of the Appeal to Members, November 2000

Members will recall that in November last year, a letter of appeal was sent out to all members of the Kilvert Society living in the United Kingdom. It asked all life members to consider making an annual donation to assist the resources of the Society, particularly those who had been members for over ten years and had thus enjoyed the benefits of an initial subscription which was low by today's standards. Secondly, it asked subscribing members to consider making their annual payments by standing order to assist the administration of the Society.

The letter was mailed to just under 500 United Kingdom addresses. It was not sent to members abroad, in the light of the known difficulties which they would have in trying to create standing orders relevant to the British banking system.

It is felt that members would be interested to know of the response to the Appeal, since, except in the case of members specifically making donations to the Society, it has not proved a manageable task to thank individually all those who so kindly responded to the Appeal.

In describing the response to the Appeal, it has been decided to take the 31st December as the 'cut-off point.' It was felt that all those specifically responding to the Appeal would have done so by then, with the standing order mandate form indicating a start-date of 1st January. Also, with the new subscription year beginning on 1st January, it becomes difficult after that date to distinguish the effects of the Appeal from the natural inflow of subscription funds to the Society.

By the end of the year 2000, then, 101 completed standing order mandates had been returned. These represented an annual commitment to the Society of £889. Encouragingly, 34 of these mandates involved life members of the Society.

Donations were forthcoming in 18 instances. In nine of these cases, continuing life members chose to make a donation, rather than commit themselves to a standing order. Five responses were from life members who took the opportunity of resigning their life memberships but who wished to make a 'parting gift' to the Society. Four responses were from members who chose to add a donation to their subscription for 2001.

A total of £3,409 was raised for the Society by way of donation, a most encouraging figure. However, whilst not wishing to differentiate between donations kindly made to the Society, it seems only appropriate to point out that £3,000 of this total emanates from one source, a long-standing Society member who wished to 'commemorate' the great pleasure which he and his brother had derived from the Kilvert Society over many years.

In ten instances, people simply sent in subscriptions, rather than react specifically to the Appeal. In two cases, new life memberships were taken out.

All in all, a gratifying response was received to an appeal which, as far as is known, was a 'first' for the Society. It goes without saying that the funds of the Society are now in a much healthier state. My grateful thanks to all who responded so promptly to the Appeal.

N.B. Membership subscriptions became due on 1st January, 2001. The current ordinary subscription is £6.00. Cheques payable to The Kilvert Society should be sent to:- Barry Smith, Membership Secretary, 25 Prospect Road, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 5DU.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AGM Weekend: Friday 27th April – Sunday 29th April. This, as mentioned above and in the September *Journal*, is to be a much expanded event.

Friday 27th April

The AGM of the Society will take place in the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, to begin at 7.00 p.m. (Please note there is no parking in the Palace grounds). The business meeting will be followed, as usual, by the buffet supper (£3.50 per person) and talk. The speaker this year will be Mr. Adrian Harvey, son of the late Mr. Charles Harvey of Birmingham, who died last year (see obituary, page 17). Mr. Harvey senior was the recipient of one of the three surviving Kilvert notebooks (11th June – 17th July 1870). Mr. Harvey has recently been going through his father's papers which include extensive correspondence with, among others, William Plomer, Mrs. Essex Hope and Frederick Grice.

He will talk about his discoveries.

Saturday 28th April

9.45 a.m. In the Ballroom of the Green Dragon hotel, our president will talk on his friendship with William Plomer. After a break for coffee the editor of the *Journal* will give an illustrated talk on the Radnorshire – Herefordshire Kilvert country, which will include Society archive material.

Afternoon: Free, although members may wish to make their own way to Ledbury to attend the presentation by the Friends of Dymock Poets. This will include *Dymock and Daffodils*, a combined lecture, slideshow and readings by Gabriel Wolf and Linda Hart.

This is part of the Alliance of Literary Societies' day celebrating Ledbury's literary links. Members of the Kilvert Society are *ipso facto* members of the Alliance of Literary Societies so there is no charge for this event. The presentation will begin at 1.45 p.m. in the Burgage Hall in Church Lane.

7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.: Society Dinner at the Green Dragon hotel (£16.00 per person).

Sunday 29th April

10.30 a.m.: Guided walk of the City led by Jean O'Donnell and other members of the Hereford Guild of Guides. (£2.00)

3.30 p.m.: Choral evensong in the cathedral.

Members may wish to take advantage of the special Bed and Breakfast rate offered by the Green Dragon hotel for the Saturday night which is £25 per person.

Please contact the hotel direct (Tel: 01432-272506) mentioning the Kilvert Society.

June Weekend

Saturday, 23rd Meet at Baskerville Arms at 12 noon for a walk in the Clyro area.

Sunday, 24th 3.00 pm Evensong at Newchurch. The service to be conducted by the Revd. Dr. Humphrey Fisher.

September Weekend

Saturday, 22nd Walk in the Rhayader, Elan Valley area led by Colin Dixon.

Sunday, 23rd 3.00 pm Evensong at Clyro Church

Pilgrimage: The fourth annual Llandewi Fach Pilgrimage will take place on Sunday 29th July. If you would like to take part, full details as to timings etc. are available from the Rev. Dr. Humphrey Fisher, Rose Cottage, Newchurch, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3QF (Tel: 01544-370632).

THE SEPTEMBER SERVICE

By Ann Dean (Hereford)

Thankfully, the fuel crisis all but over, the visit to Condover went ahead as planned although, understandably, it was a smaller gathering than usual. Part of the itinerary included a visit to the 400-year-old manor house, Condover Hall. Purchased in 1947 by the RNIB, the building was intended for use as a school for blind children with learning difficulties. Purpose-built premises were eventually erected in the grounds providing essential facilities for the students. Headmaster, Mr. Anthony Best, showed members around the Hall, now used for conferences and wedding receptions.



The fireplace at Condover Hall



Membership secretary and secretary
at Condover Hall



Archivist and chairman
at Condover Hall

Overlooking one side of the main entrance hall is a minstrels' gallery with a beautiful staircase on the other. Framed faces of one-time inhabitants watched from oak-panelled walls as 'intruders' climbed *their* stairs! Recently, whilst having some electrical power points fitted, a small room, (thought to have once been a toilet) was discovered. We saw the original staircase, twisting and winding its way from top to bottom of the building.

Although Condover is not mentioned in Kilvert's diaries, his great-grandfather, Thomas Kilvert, was steward of the Condover estate in the mid-eighteenth century where his first wife, Molly, managed the domestic side of the Hall for the Lady of the Manor, Mrs. Letitia Barnston. Thomas Kilvert's second wife, Elizabeth, had three children, including Francis Kilvert (diarist's grandfather). Thomas Kilvert died in 1782 and the family moved to Bath where Francis had set up as a coach maker. He died in 1817. His seventh child, Robert, was the diarist's father. (See June 2000 *Journal* for more details of the Condover connection. – ed.)

A walk exploring Condover village was followed by Evensong in the church of St. Andrew and St. Mary, conducted by the Rev. Prebendary Frank Rumball, who ended his address saying ... *I will love whatever little flock is entrusted to me. I will laugh with them in their happiness, cry with them in their sorrow and always point them to that great Love reaching out to them.* Frank Rumball is saying this but I think Frank Kilvert would say *Amen* to it.

Condoover church is beautiful, with intricate carved marble figures. One tableau is particularly interesting. A woman lies with her baby, both, it seems, having died immediately after the child's birth. The mother's feet rest on a tiny crib with the fine work of pillow case and covers delicately and painstakingly carved. Touchingly, the covers of the crib are turned back in readiness to receive the infant who, sadly, never used the little bed. It is not difficult to imagine, looking at the peaceful pair, how much they were loved and how much grief and sorrow was felt by the family.

After looking around the church, we went back to the Hall and enjoyed an excellent tea (Kilvert teas are *always* excellent!). The chairman, Mr. Ronald Watts, thanked Mr. Best and his staff for their superb hospitality and we all made our way home having enjoyed another interesting day with Kilvert friends.

THE THREE-VOLUME DIARY

Members and others frequently express astonishment when they discover that the three-volume edition of the *Diary* has long since been out of print and is unlikely, now, to be reprinted. Senior Kilvertian Kenneth R. Clew reveals why this is so.

Background

The three-volume edition (1,352 pages of text plus 12 pages of illustrations) was last printed in 1977 by Jonathan Cape, now part of Random House and sold at £25 per set. The late John Grant, newsagent and bookseller of Castle Street, Hay-on-Wye, in spring 1998 tried to persuade Random House to reprint the edition but was told they wanted £20,000 in cash or orders to do so!

Why was the reprint cost so high?

£20,000 was not an outrageous sum! Printing plates used earlier would have deteriorated and been made redundant by new print technology. A viable print run is at least 1,000 copies, to which must be added collating, binding and warehouse storage costs. No printer is likely to spend £20,000 on a reprint until that sum and profits can be guaranteed! This applies equally to smaller ones such as the Logaston Press, who recently required £2,500 payment (250 subscribers at £10 each) to publish John Toman's *Kilvert: The Homeless Heart*.

Copyright

In general, copyright continues for 70 years after the death of the author, explaining why the three-volume set of the *Diary* has no copyright symbol. However, the surviving notebooks (April-June and June-July 1870) bought and published by the National Library of Wales in 1982 and 1989 state 'Unpublished material copyright by Sheila Hooper'. She is a niece of Essex Hope who burnt all but three of Kilvert's notebooks and is also a Kilvert Society vice-president! The 19th July – 6th August 1870 notebook owned by Durham University and published by Alison Hodge, states 'Manuscript of Kilvert's Journal No. 4 copyright Sheila Hooper'.

I am not a lawyer but 'The Duration of Copyright and Rights in Performance Regulations 1995' indicate copyright lasts 70 years from the end of the year in which the work first became available to the public. What is not clear to me is who is the present copyright owner? Is it Sheila Hooper or the Universities of Wales and Durham who bought or were given the surviving notebooks?

Conclusion

From the above it is obvious that the Kilvert Society is unable to achieve a reprint of the three-volume set from its own resources. Many members own sets of the *Diary*, giving an estimated demand of 65 copies – i.e. 10% of the membership. Most books of 300 or more pages now sell at £25 each, indicating a reprint of the three-volume set would cost at least £75. I have established that Castle Street Books, Castle Street, Hay-on-Wye, Powys, Via Hereford HR3 5DE (Tel: 01497 820160) have a regular secondhand supply of three-volume sets of the *Diary* for sale at c £95. Peter Newman's bookshop, Church Street, Kington often has copies on sale, but at a higher price!

BIRTHDAY HOTCHPOTCH FROM AN AMERICAN MONK

By Fr Gabriel Myers, OSB (St. Anselm's Abbey, Washington, DC)

My Kilvert knowledge is less extensive than my familiarity with two more recent writers, Barbara Pym and Philip Larkin. But I am happy that each of them made fond references to their Victorian 'forebear'.

Barbara Pym's final novel includes a kind and gentle village rector, Tom Dagnall, who does not receive the public appreciation which Kilvert enjoyed. Tom has a keen interest in local history and is understandably nostalgic for past eras.

'He retired to his study and sat among his historical records. He had sometimes attempted to keep a diary himself, the kind of record that could rival famous clerical diarists of the past, a nineteenth-century Woodforde or Kilvert. What was he to write about the events of this morning? "My sister Daphne made a gooseberry tart and told me that she was going to live on the outskirts of Birmingham"? Could that possibly be of interest to readers of the next century?' (*A Few Green Leaves*, ch.17)

The gooseberry tart is an example of Barbara Pym's acute eye for detail and exuberant appreciation of the ridiculous. She shares these traits with Kilvert, as seen in the account of Aunt Maria's funeral (December 1-2, 1870) and in the frog-woman anecdote (July 22, 1871).

Philip Larkin's work embodies, for me, the full-blown poetic vocation which Kilvert longed for but only achieved in prose. The sensitivity and sweetness we love in him – his agonized renunciation of Daisy Thomas, his pain at the death of Little Davie the shepherd boy (Christmas 1878) – are qualities we find in the greatest Larkin poems. *Lines Written on a Young Lady's Photograph Album* reminds me of Kilvert's youthful romanticism; *Love Songs in Age* of his disappointments; and *An Arundel Tomb* of the kind of musing on mortality which came easily to Kilvert. Is it too much to think of Kilvert's approach to his readers, after an early death, as similar to the miner's appearance at the end of *The Explosion*?

..... And for a second
Wives saw men of the explosion

Larger than in life they managed –
Gold as on a coin, or walking
Somehow from the sun towards them,

One showing the eggs unbroken.

Little wonder, then, that Larkin shares Kilvert's enthusiasm for Dorset clergy-poet William Barnes. In a personal letter Larkin sputters about a literary scholar who disparaged Barnes. 'I could kick that filthy fellow all the way from the British Museum back to Soho Square if he says Barnes is "clumsy" – the oaf! How dare he write so about one of the most scrupulous metrists in our tongue? I'll give him clumsy!' (*Selected Letters* 293). In his formal essay on Barnes, Larkin is more careful to watch his manners. He quotes Barnes (via Kilvert) saying 'that here was not a line which was not inspired by love for and kindly sympathy with the things and people described' (*Required Writing* 150).

The Barnes visit (April 30, 1874) is one of my favourite *Diary* passages. *The Poet seemed gratified that I had come such a long way to see him. I told him I had known him through his writings and long wished to thank him in person for the many happy hours his poems had given me.* I could say something similar about my acquaintance with the Diarist!

In January 1996 I suggested *Kilvert's Diary* for oral reading at the evening meal in our monastic refectory. Our community of eighteen monks seemed to enjoy it, but my enthusiasm was stronger. I wrote to the Kilvert Society at the address given in the *Oxford Literary Guide to the British Isles* (in the Bredwardine entry), and was most gratified to receive a long friendly letter from Michael Sharp. This led to my joining the Society, reading the Lockwood biography, and receiving, as a memento, a copy of an 1873 note thanking Marian for her photograph from her 'affectionate friend'.

In May 1997 I was ordained deacon after ten years of monastic life. (Quirky Kilvertian aside: in my twenties I had been an ordained Lutheran minister, serving a rural church in Pennsylvania called Old Goschenhoppen.) My abbot arranged for me to do a summer of practicum at a Benedictine parish in Lancashire, which also allowed time for some literary pilgrimages. Thus was the old saying fulfilled, 'Join the monastery, and see the world'.

A Cistercian friend travelled with me during the two weeks of holiday. Michael and Sue Sharp offered hospitality on our visit to Kilvert Country. An invitation extended sight-unseen is risky for the giver, especially when given to what St. Benedict calls *gyrovague* monks ('wandering from place to place – of this wretched manner of life it is better to be silent'). But for me, the real-life friendship arising from the visit has proven one of the nicest fringe-benefits of Kilvert-reading.

We visited Clyro, Bredwardine, Capel-y-Ffin, Llanthony, the Golden Valley, Cwmyoy, and Abbey Dore. I was most astonished by the thrilling skies and the steepness of the slopes, wondering how the sheep managed to keep from tumbling down. My friend took a more scholarly interest in the Father Ignatius foundation and the alleged Marian apparitions there. On a lighter note, as we left Kilvert Country for Somerset, we stopped at Wordsworth's beloved Tintern Abbey. My friend prevailed against the National Trust's gatekeeper for free admission by explaining that our monastic predecessors 'had built this place after all!' In our comfortable tourist clothing we did not look particularly monastic, and I was worried about seeming a pushy American, but the ticket taker was less sceptical than Kilvert about Father Ignatius.

A few weeks later I returned to the Wye Valley for the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Kilvert Society! How wonderful to dine on steak-and-kidney pie (my first) in the Green Dragon with all its ancient atmosphere. To admire the wildflower centerpieces, handmade to honor Kilvert when it would have been so much easier to order a florist's delivery.

(Remember who added this crowning touch?). To be introduced to Lady Delia, whose name on the letterhead had so intrigued me, and in the light of her lovely smile to remember Clyro church bells announcing the birth of her future mother-in-law. To hear Ronald Blythe make the Tallulah Bankhead quip, 'Only good girls keep diaries; bad girls don't have time.' And then on Saturday to hold my breath as the coach took those steep hairpin curves. My heart rejoiced in the startling alternation between rain and shine that afternoon. When the sun shone *through* the rain I swooned with what Kilvert called dazzle ...



A hymn at the harmonium
Fr. Gabriel at St. Martin's, Cwmyoy ('The slanty church.')

I offer two suggestions for Kilvert-related reading:

(1) Ian Bradley's *Abide with Me: The World of Victorian Hymns*. Even if you lack the passionate interest in the subject that I have, you will learn much from this study, which is rich in anecdote. You will learn why Kilvert used Keble's evening hymn *Sun of My Soul* on a sick visit (December 26, 1874), and how Kilvert's near neighbor the Revd. Sir H.W. Baker affects our congregational singing to this day.

(2) The novels of Charlotte M. Yonge, which were favorites of Barbara Pym. *The Daisy Chain*, 1856, is the chronicle of a large devout Anglican family. Its tears and smiles are reminiscent of Kilvert's stories. One wonders whether he knew or read her, though he of course preferred reading poetry to fiction.

I must close in order not to spend my *entire* 45th birthday at the computer screen. I write to preserve happy memories, and take pleasure in thinking that I am remembered as one of the absent friends at Kilvert Society occasions.

BOOK REVIEW

David Lockwood reviews:

***The Parishes of the Buzzard* by Ruth Bidgood, Gold Leaf Publishing. £10.**

This very recent publication is a most important one for everyone who is interested in the history of Powys. The focus of the author is on Abergwesyn and the neighbouring parishes particularly Llanwrtyd Wells and Builth Wells, but many places are mentioned which have links with the tiny but beautiful Irfon Valley.

Like so many areas which we, since the Romantic Movement, deem beautiful, they are also areas of poverty, hardship and deprivation, due almost entirely to the wild terrain and poor soil. Abergwesyn is no exception.

Ruth Bidgood's researches begin with the very formation of the valleys and mountains as the Ice Age receded and they come up to the present day.

The histories of the churches, the farms, the families, the schools, the crafts connected with husbandry are most painstakingly researched. When we finish it we are not merely interested but very often amused and we feel enlightened not just on Abergwesyn but on the culture of our country. This is because from the minute Bidgood conjures up the cultural growth of Wales it truly is a microcosm of rural Wales.

We hear much deploring of the violence in our football-obsessed age, but we do not have fierce fights any longer between villages and hamlets, nor do we have funerals where even the clergy join in the fisticuffs! We learn, too, of the hard struggle education had in teaching the very fundamentals of the Three R's. It was a disheartening struggle for the teachers, their length of stay was often brief. They had to contend with absence through sheep dipping, peat digging, the harvest when the classrooms were empty. Then in winter the roads, such as they were, were impassable and the children who came were frozen or sodden in their threadbare clothes. The chapter on the schools makes fascinating reading and one realizes what gigantic strides, always uphill, have been made over the last two hundred years.

There is a chapter called *Stories* and many of these tales reveal another way of life – yet one which is almost within reach. This is the work of an historian, but it is also the work of a poet and every so often the vivid and more than felicitous phrase conveys a brilliant image such as the tin-tabernacle church being described as 'corrugated gothic' and the sudden appearance of exotic fowls as 'an astonishment of peacocks'.

Every reader will find something of particular interest in this solid little volume and they will refer to it when it is on their shelf.

My only regret is that the map is not larger for frequently one wished to consult it to identify a place named in the text. The fault is not in the map but in its minute scale.

THE SAD STORY OF ANNINA MARGARET de WINTON

By Teresa Williams, (North Wembley)

I was very interested in the short article by Rosalind Bolton of Wellesbourne, published in the Society's September 2000 *Journal*, as I have done a fair amount of research on 'Nina' over a long period of time. Twenty years ago (!), Edward West and I corresponded about the family, and I sent him the results of my research at that time, which he incorporated into an article.

My interest began when I inherited a prayer book signed and inscribed by Nina Dumaesq Thomas in 1897 to a relative of my late mother-in-law. It is believed to have been a present on the girl's Confirmation.

The author of the September article, Rosalind Bolton of Wellesbourne, was correct in thinking that 'Mira' was a mistake for 'Nina' a shortened form of the name Annina. It is most likely the mistake occurred when Kilvert's handwriting was being transcribed from the manuscript *Diary*.

The lady known as 'Nina' was Annina Margaret de WINTON, (c1859-1932) the second daughter of the Ven. Archdeacon Henry de WINTON (1823-1895) of Boughrood. Her mother was Thomasina Septima COLLINSON (1828-1915) a daughter of the Revd. John Collinson MA of County Durham. Henry and Thomasina were married in 1848. There was also a link with the de Winton family of Maesllwch Castle through the marriage in 1831 of Thomasina's elder sister, Julia Cecilia, with the third Walter de Winton.

Fourteen children were born to Henry and Thomasina between 1849 and 1870, of whom, seven sons and six daughters, survived to adulthood. One son was born at Boldon, Durham at the home of his maternal grandparents, with the other thirteen children born at Boughrood. All the children were baptised in the parish church of St. Cynog.

The late Mr. R.C.B. Oliver, in his article on the de Winton family published in the 1982 Radnorshire Society *Transactions*, described the delightful position of Annina's home in the vicarage at Boughrood, situated as it was on the banks of the river Wye, 'near which were a weir, a bridge, a corn mill, a toll-house and beyond their father's church, a smithy. To the excitement of the children's youthful days was added the coming of the Mid-Wales Railway south from Llanidloes via Rhayader along the Wye valley to Three Cocks where in 1864 it joined the Hereford-Brecon line; within sight of the vicarage a bridge had to be erected to take the railway across the Wye closely observed no doubt by the five oldest boys whose ages in 1863 ranged from 8 to 13 years.'

Mr. Oliver's article goes on: 'Although the vicar of Boughrood had a substantial income, his regularly increasing family, the expense of educating his sons at public school and later starting them off on a career, and the cost of keeping an indoor staff which for many years comprised a nurse and nursemaid, a cook, a kitchen-maid, house-maid and parlour-maid, meant that there was a large annual outlay. Indeed, like many clergymen of those days the Revd. Henry de Winton took in paying pupils to add to his income, as we know from an entry in Kilvert's *Diary* for 5th December 1871 (see volume 2/93-94), when "Henry de Winton and his pupils walked from Boughrood to the lecture by Mr. George Venables in Hay schoolroom, and walked home again."

On Tuesday 3rd April 1877 (a date which occurred during the long gap in the published *Diary*) Annina was married to Edward Lechmere Thomas of Lindula, Ceylon, the fourth son of the Revd. W. Jones Thomas MA of Llanthomas. The ceremony took place at Boughrood Church with the Revd. CS Palmer MA, vicar of Eardisley officiating, assisted by the groom's father, who was the vicar of Llanigon, and the bride's brother, the Revd. Frederick de Winton, Fellow of Jesus

College, Oxford. The bridesmaids, twelve in number were the Misses Eleanor, Isabel, Mabel and Esther de Winton, sisters of the bride, Miss Emily de Winton of Graftonbury, the Misses Charlotte, Edith and Fanny Thomas, sisters of the bridegroom, Miss Collinson, daughter of General Collinson, Miss Palmer, Eardisley Vicarage, Miss [Gaynor] Williams and Miss Margaret Williams of Llangattock Court.

The best man was Lieut-Colonel Thomas. The marriage was reported in *The Hereford Times* for Saturday 21st April 1877, but no description of the service or the bridal clothes was given. The report ended with the information that after the [wedding] breakfast was over, 'the bridal party was grouped and photographed by the skilful and experienced photographer, Mr. Thirlwall of Hereford. At four o'clock they drove away – under a shower of flowers and under the influence of a thousand blessings – on their matrimonial tour, which extended to Chester, and the North as far as Edinburgh. ... the presents given on the occasion were numerous and in good taste, and, what is somewhat rare, many of them, while highly ornamental, were eminently suited for useful purposes.' A long list of donors included such well known names such as Venables, Crichton, Dew, Haigh Allen of Clifford Priory, Baskerville of Clyro Court, Clutterbuck, Lord and Lady Hereford and Collinson.

The newspaper then published a very long report on the Homecoming saying 'Nothing could be more gratifying than the reception the pair met with upon their return from their tour. At Hay, the Foresters with band and flags met them on their arrival at the station, and passed up the principal streets of Hay, where smiles and welcome were the order of the day amongst the inhabitants of that spirited little town.' (An address was then presented by the Foresters to Mr. Lechmere Thomas which he accepted with thanks, saying that he would read it on the journey to Llanthomas).

'The Ancient Order of Foresters, "Court Perseverance" in full "regalia and insignia" (of which the bridegroom and one of his brothers were honorary members), was led by the redoubtable Robin Hood and his trusty companion, Little John, mounted upon a couple of "fiery and untamed" steeds. The Forester's band, under the leadership of Mr. Thomas Broadmead, played some lively tunes whilst in Hay, but having marched beyond the last house on the road from Hay to Llanigon, the band ceased to play and did not strike up again until they approached the entrance to Llanthomas. On reaching the Swan Inn, a hostelry situate at the turn of the road leading round to the entrance to the grounds in front of Llanthomas, the band struck up a lively air, and the Foresters took the horses out (sic) of the carriage and drew it themselves, amid much cheering, through the entrance gate and along the drive to the front of the house. On alighting the bride and bridegroom were heartily and affectionately received by the bridegroom's father and brothers, Colonel Jones Thomas (South Wales Borderers) and Captain Jones Thomas, and other relatives and friends.' (The bridegroom then thanked the Foresters and all present for the kind reception they had given his wife and himself, and for all the sentiments expressed in the address presented to him at Hay).

'The Revd. W. Jones Thomas, (father of the bridegroom) addressing the Foresters and others, said he must not allow them to go away without his saying a few words to them his parishioners and the people of Hay, for the hearty welcome which they had given his son and his wife on their return home. He hoped they would all drink the health of the bride and bridegroom in a glass of good English ale (loud cheers). A plentiful supply of cakes and ale was then handed to all present, and the invitation of the rector was heartily responded to. Shortly after the reverend gentleman entertained a large party at luncheon.'

The newspaper account continued: 'The band played with appreciable taste and skill some choice selections of music, and their brother Foresters and other persons who had been attracted to the spot sauntered about the beautiful grounds of Llanthomas, or stretched themselves on the lawn, viewing, probably, with semi-somnolent complacency, under the grateful influence of the strong ale, the bold eminence of the Wenallt, the advance guard of the Black Mountains range, and dreaming that the sweet strains that soothed their peaceful breasts were led by Pan, Apollo or Dan Godfrey.

The afternoon was fairly fine and warm and the beautiful valley in which Llanthomas lies, and which was now assuming its fresh and spring-green robes, was just such a place as one might wish to spend an afternoon in. There were attractions all round to satisfy the most fastidious lover of nature; but on the occasion referred to it would have been the last resort for a recluse, because all the echoes of the hills were delightfully busy with the sounds of music, mirth and laughter that ever and anon floated upwards through the balmy atmosphere, and which did not cease until night had descended on the scene. It must be remarked also that in addition to the attractions of nature there were some of Art in the matter of the arrangement of greenery and flowers. At the turning of the road green leaves, primroses and other flowers, and on a white grounding extending across the key of the arch were the words "Long live the Bride and Bridegroom" and a little further on at the main entrance was another pretty arch bearing the encouraging words, "Welcome to Llanthomas".

Luncheon being over, the party emerged from the Rectory, and the Foresters with their band, again put themselves in motion, and all walked in procession to a spacious meadow, kindly loaned by Mr. Jones of Penywyrldod Farm where a series of athletic and other sports were gone through. First came the long jump, the prize being taken by Arthur Jarvis with a running leap of 14 ft 10 ins. A prize for the first in a hurdle race of 120 yards was also taken by Jarvis. Among a number of competitors, John Davies, junr, of Llanthomas Farm, proved the victor at throwing the hammer. A tug-of-war competition followed and then Jarvis took another prize in the high jump competition, clearing 4 ft 7 ins. The sports were varied by throwing oranges into a large tub for the boys to dive after, and the efforts of the urchins to take the longed-for fruit out of the water with their teeth, caused much mirth. Other sports followed and there was dancing and the inevitable

game of kiss-in-the-ring and one of the most interesting events of the afternoon was the graceful distribution by the bride of little parcels of tea, sugar and snuff amongst the old people of the parish.

The newspaper report ended by saying that: 'Refreshments were served on the field by Mr. Bruntnell of the Swan Inn. The bride and bridegroom remained at the ground nearly the whole of the time, and seemed to take a great interest in the sports. The Revd. W. Jones Thomas, Colonel Thomas and Captain Thomas were very active in carrying out the programme and the whole proceedings appeared to be thoroughly enjoyed by all present. The parishioners of Llanigon and neighbourhood will, no doubt, have pleasing recollections of the day'

To be continued in the June edition.

'DAISY' THOMAS

By Richard Marriott (Sutton Coldfield)

One of the delights of *Kilvert's Diary* is that it lends itself admirably to a subjective approach, everyone has their particular favourite year, event or period within its pages. I feel that this is only in part due to the journal format; there is a great change in Kilvert's mood and approach to life as the account progresses.

For me, undoubtedly, the early years, 1870 and 1871, hold the greatest interest. Not only was the Diarist a happy man, reflected in his descriptive powers and reactions, but so much more of it survives than the later sections.

The one incident that clashes with this mood is, of course, the unfortunate interview with 'Daisy' Thomas' father, in September 1871. I wonder if Mr. Thomas realised at the time the damage that he instigated, not only to the self-confidence of the Diarist, but on his daughter's future status and no doubt happiness (she remained unmarried at home until her death in 1928).

Some years ago I visited the site of Llanthomas; the lady at the adjoining farmhouse very kindly showed me the one surviving picture she had of the old house, just prior to demolition and gave me permission to wander around the field, the site of that infamous interview over one hundred years before. It was a wild, windswept autumnal day, and it was easy to allow one's mind to wander down the years, armed with Kilvert's account, to envisage the scene.

Afterwards, I made my way to the little hillside church up the lane at Llanigon, where I found the Thomas family's grave. There I found Frances' grave. Parting the encroaching ivy, and rubbing off the invidious lichen, I made out the words 'Faithful unto Death'. As if on cue, a dying sun burst forth through the clouds, low in the west and illuminated the sad little spot for a few seconds in true Kilvertian style.

As a member of the Society for some years now, (since 1980) I have never come across any reference to these words of epitaph, either in the pages of the Newsletter (*Journal*) or in any of the many bibliographical works on Kilvert that I own. Could it be that these words were directed towards Kilvert? Future references to 'Daisy' in the *Diary* suggest she had assumed a puzzled and hurt stance at the Diarist's future reserve. The question begs to be answered: Did she never get to hear, either from Kilvert, or her father, what went on on that fateful day, when they met on the lawns of her home?

Perhaps, if space permits someone can enlighten me further on the point I have raised? Certainly, it would be fascinating to read any account of 'Daisy's' later years, however scant.

'THE SOLITARY' NOT SO SOLITARY

By Sidney Ball (Swindon)

In *Journal* No. 3, September 2000, Barry Smith asks if Donald Gregory is correct to say that the 'Solitary' held six Welsh curacies? No, none were in Wales before the Revd. John Price became Vicar of Painscastle. As the Solitary and Barry Smith both graduated from Queens' College, Cambridge (at different times, of course!) I sent Barry a note of the Solitary's curacies a while ago. Thus:

In 1834, John Price having been ordained Deacon, his first curacy was at Abthorpe (Northants) until 1839 when he went to Astley for five years (this Astley either in Lancashire or Warwickshire). Then came three years at Hutton Roof (Westmorland) and two years at Epwell (Oxfordshire). From 1849 to 1856 the Revd. John Price was Chaplain at Boxmoor Infirmary, near Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. His last curacy was at Gorton, Lancashire from 1856 to 1859. Certainly John Price had a varied life before moving to Painscastle, where Francis Kilvert called him 'The Solitary'.

LINKS WITH LEAMINGTON

By Sidney Ball (Swindon)

Members will join in wishing continued success for Jeff Marshall as editor of the Kilvert Journal. Although there is no mention of Mr. Marshall's home town of Royal Leamington Spa in *Kilvert's Diary*, I can reveal some interesting Kilvertian links.

The Napoleons give us two links. Kilvert mentioned Napoleon Bonaparte and St. Helena (Vol. I, pages 218 and 219) and the man chosen to convey Bonaparte to St. Helena, Sir George Cockburn, lived and died in Leamington. Kilvert wrote more about Napoleon III (Louis Napoleon) and family as they were contemporary with the time of the *Diary*. Forced to leave France in 1870, Louis Napoleon lived for a time at 4 Clarendon Square, Leamington.

When Mrs. Henry Venables gave a fine travelling clock to Francis Kilvert, it was chosen from Nathan's in Birmingham by Mr. Knightley Howman (Vol. One, page 254). Mr. Howman's mother was nee Jane Sarah Wightwick Knightley, in most pedigrees cited as 'a daughter of John Knightley of Leamington' (one edition of Burke's LG gives the Knightley family's residence at Offchurch Bury, Leamington. Our editor will tell us if Offchurch Bury is in, or separate from Leamington)* (see below – ed.)

Another Kilvertian link is in connection with the Warneford Hospital in Radford Road, Leamington. The founder of this hospital, in 1832, the Revd. Dr. Samuel Warneford, and Francis Kilvert were kinsfolk; both were descended from the Warnefords of Sevenhampton in north Wiltshire.

In 1764 the Sevenhampton estates, with the family mansion, were inherited by Dr. Warneford's father, Francis Warneford, who was a fifth cousin of that Walter Coleman who married Sarah Power (for Sarah, see Vol. III, pages 107 and 215).

The Revd. Dr. Samuel Warneford was very rich; much of his wealth came from the families of his mother and of his wife. He used his surplus wealth for a host of charitable purposes, far too many to list here. But, I must mention the asylum Dr. Warneford founded on the outskirts of Oxford, for here Kilvert's great friend, A.L. Mayhew, ended his days. This asylum is now known as the Warneford Hospital. In the entrance hall there is a statue of Dr. Warneford – another statue of this kinsman of Francis Kilvert is in Queen's Hospital, Birmingham.

- * Q. How do you make an editor feel inadequate?
A. Tell him some facts about his home town which he did not know!

Seriously however I am grateful to Mr. Ball for filling in some gaps in my local knowledge and for revealing these Kilvert connections.

I now, in my turn, can add some details which may be new to him!

1. The house in which Napoleon III spent a brief part of his exile stands, as Mr. Ball says, in Clarendon Square, a square of tall elegant houses grouped around central gardens, the whole having a French 'feel'. It is situated in the upper part of the town at the western end of Clarendon Avenue, which crosses the top of Leamington's main thoroughfare, the Parade.
2. Offchurch Bury is a country estate close to the village of Offchurch, a couple of miles to the east of Leamington. The Knightleys were associated with the estate from the time they acquired it at the Dissolution in 1539 until the death of Jane Knightley, Countess of Aylesford in 1911. The estate has changed hands twice since then.

The village church, not surprisingly, contains monuments to the family. The inscription on one of them is, I think worth quoting:

Sacred to the memory of John Wightwick Knightley of Offchurch Bury who after enduring for many years the most acute bodily sufferings with patient resignation departed this life 18th June 1814 in the 49th year of his age.

3. Offchurch is allegedly so called because it is claimed to be the burial place of King Offa of Mercia – yes! he of the Dyke. Indeed the church has on show fragments of a stone coffin which were discovered in the chancel walls during rebuilding works in 1866-67. These are labelled 'Offa's coffin!' Make of that what you will!
4. Leamington's Warneford Hospital (where both our daughters were born) is now no more. It was demolished in recent years and the site is now a housing estate. On its closure all departments were transferred to a much enlarged hospital at Warwick, and Leamington no longer has any NHS hospital.
5. Dora and James Pitcairn spent one night of their honeymoon (July 31st 1879) in Leamington (See Miscellany II - The Oswin Prosser Memorial booklet for Dora's Honeymoon Journal) at the Clarendon Hotel, once a most agreeable Trust House standing at the top of the Parade. It is now an office block.

After dining at the Clarendon on July 31st Dora and James went out to explore the town and came upon: *A broad walk under an avenue of lime trees.*

This is the lower part of Holly Walk near the Town Hall. *Jim said [it] only wanted rows of little tables and plenty of seats with groups of people round them and a band playing to make it like a foreign town.*

It was in this part of Holly Walk too, that in *Dombey and Son* Dickens laid the scene of the first encounter between Carker and Edith Granger.

Dora's honeymoon journal concludes on 20th August 1879, the day of her brother's wedding at Wootton. She writes: *We have been thinking all day of the wedding and picturing all to ourselves.*

'A minor mystery this' writes Jack Burrell of Bristol in a recent letter, 'why did Dora and her husband not return from their already long holiday in the Lake District to attend Kilvert's wedding?' Why, indeed?

ed.

THE ARCHERS

Not an everyday story of country-folk but some details culled from the Archer's (sic) Register by Robert Powell (Blockley), which feature personalities well known to readers of the Diary.

Apart from my general (and abiding) interest in FK for the past 25 or so years, I have a particular interest as an archer, toxophilite and bowyer. I am sure that members are aware of the several references to archery in the *Diaries* eg. in vol II, p.150, Kilvert does not think it 'desirable or practicable' to have an archery club at Hay. I give below copies of results that show the club was actually formed about three years after Kilvert's diary note. Unfortunately I do not have *Archer's Registers* from 1864 to 1880, my first being 1881 two years after the death of Kilvert.

As we can see society life of his friends and associates went on many years later (I suppose much as one would expect!) and we will see many familiar names in the results. I will research earlier registers for reference to FK, but I doubt if there will be any. Apart from buying arrows in Bath and picking up stray arrows for pretty lady archers, I think on the whole, Kilvert preferred croquet.

Later registers list Col. Thomas as Hon. Sec. to the archery club but then we are getting further and further away from the Kilvert period.

From the Archer's Register 1881

Wyeside Bowmen – July 9th. The weather was unpropitious. Ten ladies and six gentlemen competed. Seven dozen arrows were shot at 60 yards. Principal Scores:

Ladies	hits	scr	Gross scr.	golds		hits	scr.	gross scr.	glds.
Miss Baskerville	25	121	146	1	Mr. Crichton	32	142	174	1
Mrs. Crichton	25	156	182	4	Mr. Morrell	29	149	188	2
Gentlemen					Mr. Edye	29	111	140	2
Rev. A. Seacome	45	237	282	6	Rev. H. Dew	31	122	153	2

Prizes – For score, Miss Baskerville and the Rev. A. Seacome; best golds, Miss Thomas and Mr. Morrell.

July 20th – Nine dozen arrows at 60 yards. Ten ladies and eight gentlemen competed. Principal Scores:

Ladies	hits	scr	Gross scr.	golds	Gentlemen	hits	scr.	Gross s scr.	glds.
Miss Baskerville	31	167	188	4	Col. Thomas	52	204	256	4
Miss Ellen Bevan	34	134	168	2	Rev. H. Dew	45	193	238	2
Mrs. Morrell	30	118	148	-	Mr. H. Crichton	40	196	236	3
Mrs. Bold	28	112	140	3	Rev. A. Seacome	32	198	230	5
Miss Bevan	23	93	116	-	Mr. Edye	42	174	216	5
Mrs. H. Crichton	13	104	117	-	Mr. Morrell	38	150	188	1

Prizes – For score, Miss Baskerville and Colonel Thomas; best golds, Miss de Winton and Rev. E. Seacome. Extra prize, for score not previously winning a score prize, Miss Ellen Bevan, 64.

From the Archer's Register 1890:

Wyese Bowmen (Founded 1875)

Hon. Sec – Lt.-Col. H.W.M. Baskerville, Clyro Court, Hay, Breconshire

Club Round – (Ladies, 8 dozen at 60 yards, Gentlemen, 8 dozen at 60 yards)

There are four Prize Meetings in the year, the last being a Handicap Meeting, and the Club Ground, which is at Hay, is open at stated times for practice. Winners of score prizes have to bear percentage deductions, and it is customary with this Society to add hits to score to swell the total. Challenge Medals are awarded to the lady and gentleman making the highest aggregate scores of the season, and Challenge Badges to the lady and gentleman making most golds during the season.

First Meeting, July 2nd – Weather warm and genial, without glare. Winners:-

Ladies: Mrs. Crichton, Miss Mynors, Mrs. Battiscombe, Viscountess Harberton,

Gentlemen: Rev. H. Mynors, Lt.-Col. Baskerville, Mr. A. Battiscombe, Rev. H. Gibbon.

DISASTER OFF DUNGENESS

New member, Mrs. Maud Hobbs of Folkestone, sent in the following article on the wreck of *The Northfleet* (see *Diary* entries for 24th January and 18th February 1873). The article which appeared in the *Folkestone Herald* of 30th June 1889 is reproduced by kind permission of the editor.

More than a hundred years ago a ship carrying families and labourers to Australia sank off Dungeness. Now a group of divers has bought the wreckage of *The Northfleet*.

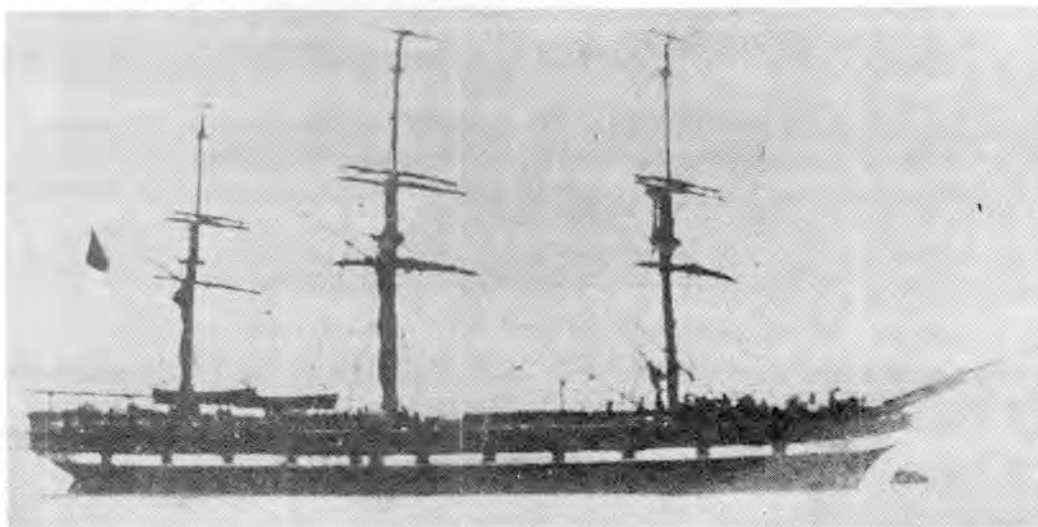
‘We saw people with children clinging to them, crying for us to help them. Some were floating, some were in the rigging, and some were in boats. By the time I got the boat lowered and arrived at the vessel she had sunk’.

This is the chilling description ship's mate John Stanley gave of one of Britain's worst sea disasters to a hushed inquest at Lydd Town Hall.

Stanley saved 21 people as other ships stayed put on the squally sea of Dungeness ignorant of what was happening.

The next day, 23 January 1873, newspapers across Britain carried the story of the drowning of 293 passengers on *The Northfleet*. In the following months the inquiry began into how the accident happened, a disaster fund was launched, which Queen Victoria contributed to, and an ugly wrangle began over where the dead should be buried.

Soon a team of divers from Folkestone sub-aqua club will plunge the dark depths where *The Northfleet* rests. They aim to bring up some of the artefacts left behind by the families and labourers who perished on their way to start new lives in Australia. Treasures are not likely to number amongst the finds.



The Northfleet – once one of the fastest ships between Britain and Hong Kong

The Northfleet was chartered to take families and unmarried labourers to Hobart, Tasmania to help build the railway. Couples paid £30 and the single men £14.15s for the passage. Food was included in the price. They were people leaving

the old world for a new, hopefully better one with the few possessions they had. The cargo was hardly the stuff to stir the imagination, 341 tons of old railway lines, 85 tons of salt and 101 tons of tin plate and nails. On a previous dive more than four years ago the railway lines were found, stacked up much as they had been loaded over 115 years ago.

But the circumstances of the sinking mean that most of the passengers' meagre possessions were left behind. *The Northfleet's* captain, Mr. Knowles retired to his cabin and wife at 10 p.m. after the ship had sought the shelter of Dungeness Roads, about three miles offshore. The lights of other anchored ships could be seen all around.

He had hardly settled when he heard shouts for the pilot. Seconds later the ship shuddered after a crash and the dark outline of a steamer could be seen retreating into the night. The passengers, most of whom had been sleeping on straw beds, appeared on the deck, confused and shivering.

Captain Knowles ordered the distress signal to be fired from a small six-pound gun. As the crew prepared the gun it became blocked, nearby ships remained oblivious of the unfolding tragedy. For fifteen minutes attempts were made to pump out the water pouring in. When floating boxes could be heard thumping against the top deck it was clear that battle had been lost.

When that realisation dawned on the passengers and crew it was every man for himself. Men pushed their way into the lifeboats ignoring the captain's call for women and children first. In a desperate attempt to assert his authority Captain Knowles drew his pistol and shot at one of the passengers. Not seeing much difference between being shot and drowning, the Tasmanian-bound labourer stayed put and survived.

As he and 17 others rowed to safety *The Northfleet* slowly plunged beneath the waves. A contemporary account takes up the story:

'Four hundred people were left struggling for their lives amongst the waves. The shrieking women, and the loud cries of the men for help, were awful, and must have been heard miles off. Some of those that could not swim were floating on the water on barrels and pails, of which they were obliged to leave go from sheer exhaustion.'

At daybreak all that remained of the 800-ton ship that rivalled the *Cutty Sark* for speed were her three mast tops. The next day bodies began to be washed ashore.

This sparked the ugliest episode in the aftermath of the tragedy as Lydd objected to bodies brought up from the wreck being buried in the parish cemetery. Eventually a new piece of land had to be bought and consecrated in a hurry.

Divers demanded £5 for every body recovered as well as the £2 they were being paid to salvage what they could.

That was not very much since they faced the same problem that will face next month's dive – the strong current.

'I have been stretched out like a flag when I was on a rope out there,' said sub-aqua club diver Brud Martin. 'It's so dark with silt stirred up by the current you can hardly see your hand in front of your face,' he added.

In 116 years much of the sleek ship has been silted up as well and parts are inaccessible to divers. On one dive however, Brud entered the ship through the massive gash in its side and struggled to the cabin room at the front.

'It was eerie, that is all I can say. It is perfectly preserved, even some of the glass used in the ship is intact,' he said.

It was another diver, John Brind, who mounted the investigation which found the wreck for the sub-aqua Club. He became intrigued by *The Northfleet* after hearing about it from a local historian. But all his attempts to find it failed until he approached local fishermen who knew exactly where it was. They had even trawled up one of its massive anchors.

After the discovery, a small syndicate of Folkestone divers, including Brind, bought *The Northfleet* for £50 from the Salvage Association of London. A purchase which means they can keep anything they find but also face any bills to do with it.

The disaster investigation led to the identification of the ship which holed *The Northfleet* and fled without stopping and a series of historic safety laws. All the evidence of the disaster inquiry pointed to the hit-and-run ship being the Spanish steamer, *Murillo*. But no charges could be brought against the captain or crew for lack of a firm identification. The reason for that was simple – it did not have a visible name or number.

As a result of *The Northfleet* tragedy it became international law that all ships are clearly identified.

The disaster also highlighted the dire need for a standard distress signal instead of the confusing mixture of guns, rockets and flares. (cf *The Titanic* disaster – ed.)

Many lives could have been saved if nearby boats had recognised *The Northfleet's* calls for help for what they were. Instead many well placed to help thought *The Northfleet* was merely asking for a pilot.

The Northfleet's sinking ushered in a standard distress signal that has probably saved thousands of lives since.

Although ten divers of Folkestone sub-aqua club have sunk their first ambitious schemes to open a *Northfleet* museum, by recovering more artefacts, they hope at least to keep memories of a hidden piece of Shepway history alive.

FROM RECENT CORRESPONDENCE TO THE EDITOR

- i) The Reverend Clive Edmonds has recently moved from the South of England to Westbury-on-Severn. This brings him much closer to the country he loves and we wish him many happy years there. We shall, also, look forward to seeing more of him. He has, very kindly donated to the Society a leather-bound book called *The Christian Ministry* by Charles Bridges published in 1830. Its interest to us is that it once belonged to Squire Ashe of Langley Burrell. It is now with the Kilvert memorabilia in the display case in the Kilvert Gallery in Clyro. This collection, newly displayed, is well worth a visit, it grows slowly.

We are very grateful indeed to Clive Edmonds for this pleasing gift.

- ii) Angela Bowler (Chesterfield) writes:

I thought you might like to know how much I have enjoyed reading my three-volume edition of *Kilvert's Diary* since I collected it from you en route for our holiday in Wiltshire. During the week we spent in Kilvert Country I seemed to spend all my time checking the references to the various places we passed through.

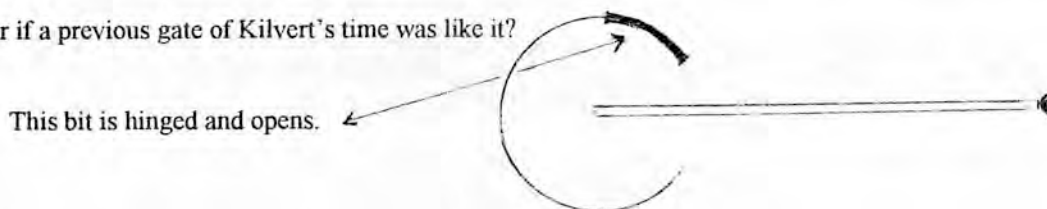
We visited the church at Hardenhuish and spent some time trying to imagine what Kilvert must have been able to see from the churchyard. We were just walking down the sloping path away from the church when a car stopped at the gate and the lady driver rushed up to us. 'Would you like to see inside the church?' she asked. She was the vicar and I could hardly believe my luck at this perfect timing. I explained the reason for our interest in the church and she very kindly spent some time pointing out the various features of the surprisingly light and airy building. She showed us the framed record of Kilvert's baptism.

Thank you for making it possible for me to have my own copy of the *Diary*. I regard it as one of my treasures.

- iii) Basil Butcher writes from Hereford:

I wonder how many people in the Society when they visited Whitney Church (see Sept. 2000 *Journal*) noticed the unusual gate into the churchyard? It is a 'kissing gate', but has anyone seen one where the full-sized gate is used? I never have. When I first saw it, I thought how stupid, how can it be opened wide to allow a hearse in? On careful checking I found that there is a section of the curved part which can be folded back, after undoing a latch, and so allow the full gate to be opened! After use, the gate can be put back into the semi-circle, the small section relatched, and it is a normal 'kissing gate' again.

I wonder if a previous gate of Kilvert's time was like it?



- iv) Jack Burrell writes from Bristol enclosing the following cutting from 'Church News' in *The Times*:

The Rev. Robert King. Team Vicar, West Hereford (Hereford): To be Vicar, Weobley w Sarnesfield and Norton Canon, and Priest-in-Charge, Letton w Staunton, Byford and Mansell Gamage and Monnington (same diocese)

There are some Kilvert associations here (he writes) – Letton was combined with Willersley in Kilvert's time but is not mentioned here. I do not know if it has been attached to another group of parishes. Byford's vicar in Kilvert's time came to the rescue when the Kilvert's carriage broke down (*Diary* 1st January 1878). Mansell Gamage church was reopened with much ceremony in Kilvert's time (*Diary* 26th February 1878). I think the wheel has turned again and services are no longer held there regularly.

By a coincidence I heard from a friend who had recently been to Weobley and asked if it is mentioned in the *Diary*. It is not, but it is the sort of place RFK would have liked.

v) Charles Fremantle writes from Wiltshire:

Dear Friends of St. Peter's, Langley Burrell,

I am writing as Treasurer to reassure you that the funds for our Millennium Bells have been raised without having to take anything from our church resources. The project was launched and led by our curate, the Rev. Dr. Gordon H. Edwards, during his brief period with us. The church will be forever in his debt!

DRAYCOT CERNE, WILTSHIRE

By Kenneth Clew (Tadworth)

Kilvert's Diary has several mentions of Draycot Cerne and Draycot House (mostly in Vol. II – Ed.). Sadly, the dwindling congregation at St. James's Church led to its closure in 1995. Draycot House was demolished in 1955 but the church survives and is now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. This has ensured that it is kept in good repair and remains accessible to the public.

A sixteen-page illustrated guide to the church has recently been published. Although it makes no mention of the Kilvert connection, it gives much useful information, including pedigrees of the de Cernes and their successors, the Long family, at Draycot. The latter had their own private pew on the north side of the nave, the booklet recording:

'When the house was still standing the family pew was richly furnished with carpets, a chandelier and a velvet-covered bench running all the way round A secret door behind the panelling provided a separate entrance from the house so that the family did not have to mix with the villagers. It is said that during the sermon the curtains between the nave and the pew would be closed and the servants would bring mulled wine and other refreshments from the house.'

Copies of the booklet are available from The Churches Conservation Trust, 89 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DH at £2 each, inclusive of postage.

REPAIRS TO BREDWARDINE CHURCH

The story so far:

In April of last year we accepted help with the roof repair from English Heritage. Our Architects then drew up detailed specifications for the work. These then had to be submitted to English Heritage experts and also to the eagle eyes of our own Diocesan Advisory Committee for approval. Both groups wished small modifications to be made before accepting them. By December we were in a position to ask five firms to tender for the work and the lowest of these, from a firm about whom we had good reports, was accepted.

Work was started in May this year. The findings were very much as had been expected, with woodworm and rot in many battens and some rot in the underlying wood, especially in the valley between the tower and the north side of the roof. There was much dirt and debris in the roof space, including impressive evidence of the nest-building energy of birds over more than a century. In spite of difficult weather, the work was completed early in July.

Looking at the church now there is little to show for the careful work that has been done, although it's possible to see that there are no longer any lines of tile-slippage and the rainwater arrangements are evidently improved. The modern materials and methods used are expected at least to double the life of the new roof.

The English Heritage commissioned architect has commended the quality of the work: the result of a happy collaboration between architect and builder.

What next?

Now that all the roofs, including the tower, have been made waterproof, we are in sight of our goal of concentrating on getting the bells back to work, but we have first to complete the work on the porch and sort out a few smaller items.

**George Newsholme
(Churchwarden)**

OBITUARIES

CHARLES EDWARD HARVEY (1908-2000) Charles Harvey was born in Smethwick, where his father owned a business as a tailor and wool merchant. Until he was five the family lived above the shop in Waterloo Road, but in 1913 the increasing success of the business made possible the purchase of a house just over the county boundary in Birmingham where he lived until his marriage.

In 1919, having survived a bout of Spanish influenza and the ensuing pneumonia, he gained a place at King Edward's Grammar School, Five Ways. Though generally regarded as 'good' at English, he seems to have been better known at school for his prowess at Rugby football, playing as a forward for the school first XV. Whatever his academic record, by the mid 20s his father's business was running into difficulties, and there was no question of a university education. In 1924 he left school to become a clerk in the firm of Stewarts and Lloyds, the steel tube company based in Birmingham and Glasgow.

He remained at Stewarts and Lloyds for the whole of his working life, 44 years, eventually becoming Progress Manager at the Birmingham office. It was during his early years at work that he began to develop the literary and antiquarian interests which were to engage him for the rest of his life. He met and corresponded with a number of leading antiquarians in the west Midlands. His particular interest was medieval church architecture. To create a record of church buildings with particular features of interest, he became at this time a keen photographer, using initially an elderly Sanderson quarter-plate camera, and developing and printing his own photographs.

He married in 1939. He purchased the three-volume edition of Kilvert's diary in 1942 as a present for his wife. It was he, however, who became the more interested in it, and his increasing fascination led him to take a number of holidays in the Clyro area during the 1950s. Travelling around the villages on his bicycle, he visited the places described in the *Diary*, taking copious photographs and talking to local people, with many of whom he became friendly. He kept a journal of each of these holidays, together with records of his other research activities. He corresponded with a number of Kilvertians including William Plomer and Frederick Grice. In 1955 he also began a correspondence with Mrs. Essex Hope, the daughter of Kilvert's sister Thersie, into whose possession the manuscript of the *Diary* (after the excisions by Kilvert's widow) had passed. Over a period of nine years, he received more than 50 letters from Mrs. Hope. She also gave to him at various times a series of family photographs, some watercolour sketches, mostly of the Clyro area, painted by her mother, and – most importantly – a manuscript notebook containing the diary from 11th June to 17th July 1870. This was the third of the three notebooks Mrs. Hope spared from her destruction of the surviving manuscript; it was published by the National Library of Wales in 1989.

His interest in Kilvert's diary prompted a wider study of the diary genre from the 1970s onwards, and he carried out researches into both Pepys and Woodforde. After his retirement in 1968 he also had more time for his other pursuits, including carpentry and woodcarving as well as photography. In the last five years of his life he was increasingly afflicted with impaired mobility and vision, but he retained a keen enjoyment of literature and liked to hear of the Kilvert countryside which he had known so well in earlier years.

Adrian Harvey

KATE GOODWIN In August 2000 Kate Goodwin of Bath died at the age of ninety-five. She was not a founder member of the Society but a very very early one. Until her retirement she lived in London and worked for many decades in a confidential capacity for the well-known solicitors Romaines.

All her life reading was one of her greatest pleasures, together with the theatre. She loved opera, especially Wagner and Chekhov was a great favourite. Her father came from Newtown and her mother from Grosmont and initially she read Kilvert in the hope of finding possible information about her ancestors, she found none, perhaps better she found Kilvert.

The area of Skenfrith, Grosmont, Abbeydore, Longtown, Clodock were the scenes of her childhood holidays and always called by her 'the blessed country'. She often stayed at Llanthony Abbey with an uncle, later alone. From there she attended Kilvert events. She rarely missed an AGM, or a summer or autumn service. The last AGM she attended, not long ago, she came up from Bath by taxi and returned the same night.

She made friends in the Society, most notably the Dearlove brothers. Many of us will miss her always cheerful and enlivening presence very greatly.

David Lockwood

ALSO It is with regret that we record the deaths of: Mr. M. Comyn of Vowchurch, a member since 1974; Mrs. J.C. Naimaster of Mill Hill, London, a life member, and Mrs. N.C. Marsh of Clapham Common, London, a member since 1979. We offer our sincere condolences to their families and friends.

BOOKS FOR SALE

A three-volume edition (1961) of the *Diary* – it is not illustrated but has the index.

A second-hand Penguin (1977) edition of the abridged *Diary*.

Please contact the Publications Manager.

THE GEORGE ELIOT FELLOWSHIP

I have been asked by the George Eliot Fellowship to publicise their guided tours in the Nuneaton - Bedworth area of Warwickshire, George Eliot's birthplace and home for twenty one years.

Tour dates and times:

Sunday 20 th May	1.30 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.
Wednesday 27 th June	11.00 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.
Wednesday 8 th August	11.00 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.
Sunday 9 th September	1.30 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.

Tickets £10.00 (Children £8.00)

Please contact: Rose Selwyn, Tourism Officer, Nuneaton Borough Council, Town Hall, Coton Road, Nuneaton, CV11 5AA (Tel: 024-7637-6490).

I have heard good reports of these. Ed.

Contributions for the June edition of the *Journal* should reach the editor no later than 21st April 2001

The current ordinary subscription is £6.00 and is due on 1st January of each year. Cheques payable to The Kilvert Society should be sent to:- Barry Smith, Membership Secretary, 25 Prospect Road, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 5DU.

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984. The names and addresses of members are held on a computerised list exclusively for the distribution of the *Journal* and other information about the Society, to its members. If you object to this, please contact the Hon. Secretary. It has been decided that if any member objected, that member would have to provide **stamped addressed envelopes** for the dispatch of their *Journals*.
