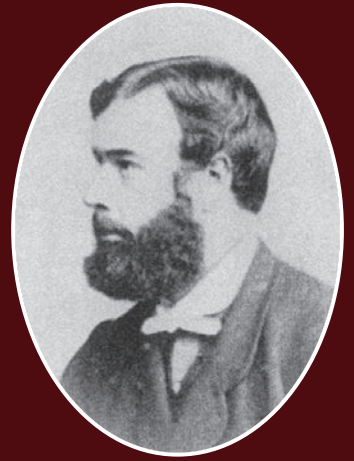


THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE KILVERT SOCIETY



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THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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

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Forthcoming Events 2022-2023

2022

Saturday September 24th

Meet at St Michael's and All Angels Church Clyro, at 10.30 am, for a visit to Cae Mawr, the home of the Morrells, friends of Francis Kilvert, who was a regular visitor to the house, as often mentioned in the *Diary*.

After a picnic lunch, we are hoping to lead a tour of some local Kilvert churches, including Newchurch and Llanbedr Painscastle, followed by tea.

2023

Friday April 21st

The Annual General Meeting will be held at The Bishop's Palace, Hereford, HR4 9BL at 7 pm. Following a buffet supper, there will be a talk about the Jarvis Charity.

Saturday April 22nd

At the Pilgrim Hotel, Much Birch, HR2 8HJ.
Morning seminar and/or a local visit to be arranged.
We hope to go to Hay Castle, a visit postponed from September 2022.
Evening: The Kilvert Society Annual Dinner.

Saturday June 24th

A visit to Kilvert's Wiltshire.

Saturday September 30th

A visit to Worcester and the Cathedral.

Further details are available from the Secretary and will be included in the March 2023 edition of the *Journal*.

The Treasurer would like to thank all who responded to his appeal to change their standing orders to the new subscription rates. There are still a few members yet to make the change.

Contributions to the *Journal* should be sent to the Hon Editor by post or email. Address above
Deadlines: 1st January and 1st July

Front cover: *The National Library of Wales*. Photo: Nicholas Green

Back cover: *A view of Aberystwyth from the NLW*. Photo: editor

From the Editor

Our publications information has been revised and the new information is on the inside back cover of the Journal, so please have a look at this.

We follow Kilvert on holiday in this edition: to the Isle of Wight, about which we have a number of *Diary* entries, now given detail of people and places by Jeremy Archer. The Kilvert family holiday to Aberystwyth was completely omitted from the published *Diary*, but we were drawn there to catch a glimpse of the precious two notebooks owned by the National Library of Wales. A small group had a rewarding visit to NLW in June where we also saw items from the Venables and the Grice collections. Your editor was able to relax as local member Nicholas Green kindly offered to report on the day and take photos. Nicholas also explains a family link with the Wiltshire Awdry clan in his article on the Awdrys of Notton. We have our own Kilvert Society Archive to explore, and a delightful artefact that has been donated is featured. By the time you read this, I hope that harvests will be gathered in, despite the changeable weather so far. We revisit last year's harvest festival at Clyro, in photos and Paul Baker's address at the service. New possibilities for Kilvert research are coming online as the British Library Newspaper Collection is digitized. Teresa Williams is exploring this and her findings will be reported on in stages.

From the Secretary

We will gather next on Saturday 24 September, as previously notified in the June newsletter. Meet at St. Michaels & All Angels, Clyro at 10.30 am. We will visit Cae Mawr. Bring a picnic for lunch, after which we are planning a tour of Kilvert churches: Newbridge, Bryngwyn, Llanbedr Painscastle and Llanddewi Fach. This part of the day is to be finalised and members who have expressed an interest will be notified by email. Due to extra building work at Hay Castle, our tour there has had to be postponed, and we hope it will take place during the AGM weekend next April.

The Society enjoyed a fascinating visit to the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. We were made most welcome and the staff put on a wonderful display of documents relating to Francis Kilvert, his diary, and his ministry in St. Harmon, Clyro and Bredwardine. This led to a great debate about the various documents and their revelations. The only disappointment was the number who attended: our party consisted of the committee plus one member. I hope more of you will be able to attend in September.

The September event brings a close to our activities for this year and our focus is then on to 2023 and the AGM weekend on Friday and Saturday 21 and 22 April again as previously notified. Please make every effort to be there; we would love to see you. The AGM is on the Friday at 7 pm at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford and on the Saturday Seminar and Annual Dinner are at the Pilgrim Hotel, Much Birch. A booking form will be enclosed with the March edition of the Journal. Just a reminder, if you have not booked your accommodation at the Pilgrim Hotel and would like to join us, telephone 01981 540742 and please mention The Kilvert Society when making a reservation as we have priority bookings for the weekend for a short while.

The committee looks forward to seeing you in September.

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Kilvert and ‘Paradise Lost’

On opening the March 2022 edition of the *Journal* my attention was drawn to a short piece entitled ‘The angel with the flaming sword’ in which my puzzlement at Kilvert’s use of this image, expressed in my account of the June 2021 visit to Aberedw, was highlighted. I have to say that I still find the image a puzzling one, but I shall endeavour here to do what I can to clarify some at least of the issues which it appears to me to raise.

The image appears in the course of Kilvert’s description of a trip which he made to Builth with Mr. Venables and the latter’s sister-in-law, Mrs. Pearson, on 13 April 1875. The visit stirred vivid memories of the village of Aberedw as he had first seen it when, on 29 May 1865, as a highly impressionable twenty-four year old newly appointed to his Clyro curacy, he had walked from Clyro to Builth. Aberedw seems to have become then, and was consistently to remain, a special place for Kilvert. On that day in 1865 it was in every respect ‘a new country’ to him, and this novelty never wore off. With its dramatic rocks, its ‘meeting of the sweet waters’, the Edw and the Wye, and Llywelyn’s Cave with its connexion with the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, the last Welsh Prince of Wales, it was always for him a place of legend and romance, enchantment and magic.

There are twelve references to Aberedw in William Plomer’s three volume edition of the *Diary* and two in the surviving notebooks published by the National Library of Wales, the first of these being a long account of a walk he made to Aberedw with his brother Perch on 14 June 1870, five years after his first discovery of the village. Three months previously, on 17 March 1870 he had walked there in company with his friend Hopewell Morrell of Cae Mawr. On 17 September 1874 he again walked to the village, this time not only with Morrell but also Prickard and Trumper, the new vicar and curate respectively of Clyro parish. In none of Kilvert’s descriptions of these visits do we observe any hint of the emotional turmoil which seems to affect him in his diary entry of 13 April 1875, in which the image of the angel with the flaming sword appears.

Perhaps it should be noted that at this specific point in his emotional life affairs were not going especially well for Kilvert. Three years previously he had undergone the humiliation of rejection by Mr Thomas in his quest for Daisy’s hand, and now his relationship with Katherine Heanley seems to have been on the wane. Direct communication by letter having been banned by Katherine’s mother (the protective parent was always Kilvert’s nemesis), the pair were only able to maintain contact through the intermediacy of Kilvert’s cousin, Adelaide Cholmeley. The diary entry of 13 April 1875 suggests that his spirits had reached a low point. Aberedw, now recalled in memory, is still a place of magic and enchantment, but the image of the angel blocking the entrance to Paradise introduces an entirely new and potentially troublesome dimension to Kilvert’s vision of the village and its landscape.

Perhaps this is a good moment to consider exactly what Kilvert may have meant at this time in referring to Paradise. My view is that it is a very idiosyncratic and personal interpretation,



A 1695 image by Michael Burghers from an edition of ‘Paradise Lost’.

in which he draws elements both from Genesis and Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’. The clearest piece of evidence for this may be found in a quotation from Milton during Kilvert’s stay with William and Emma Hockin at their Cornwall home, Tullimaar, in July and August 1870. In the course of his stay Kilvert was clearly growing increasingly attracted to Emma, an attraction augmented by the fact that she was pregnant with her second child. I think it important to understand that, in terms of Kilvert’s inner life, Paradise seems here to be represented by a glimpse of a perfect marital relationship or, better still, a perfect family, mother, father and children: Adam and Eve with their children, as it were. On the face of it, Kilvert does not strike the reader as an especially ambitious man. Throughout his *Diary*, however, it is very apparent that his one persistent aim in life was the acquisition of a wife and children of his own. It is not possible to state precisely what happened at Tullimaar on Sunday 24 July as Kilvert sat drinking coffee with the Hockins in their summer house, but it seems likely that he was confronted by some innocent or intimate gesture between the married couple that gave him a piercingly significant glimpse of marital contentment. Kilvert quotes here from ‘Paradise Lost’: ‘Aside the devil turned.’ The quotation, from Book 4 line 502 of Milton’s work, occurs at a point where Satan, having entered

Paradise, observes Adam and Eve in an act of innocently pure physical love. Satan, with whom Kilvert here identifies, turns away from the scene in envy. In the ensuing lines Satan utters the following words:

Sight hateful! Sight tormenting! Thus these two,
Imparadised in one another's arms,
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss while I to Hell am thrust
Where neither joy nor love but fierce desire
(Among our other torments not the least)
Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines.

The editors of *Kilvert's Cornish Diary*, the third of the surviving notebooks, state about Kilvert's use of this quotation that it is 'a startling reference in this context: one of the most intimately self-revealing notes in the whole of the Diary as we have it.'¹ It is certainly a key to Kilvert's feelings at the time and a powerful pointer to what we may envisage as the type of relationship that represented his personal vision of Paradise.

To return now to Aberedw and the angel with the flaming sword in the diary entry of 13 April 1875: Kilvert is writing ten years after his first visit to the village. He recalls his emotions at the time, full of wonder, hope and expectation. *The world was all before me then*, he writes (this too is a quotation from 'Paradise Lost', Book 12, line 646). His present mood, however, has utterly changed to one of disillusionment. Now it is the gates of Paradise, guarded by the angel, that he confronts. The gates are not shut but *just left ajar*. He cannot enter but he can just see in. He remembers the scenes he met with on that first visit in 1865. But now the various hints that Kilvert gives us allow us only to pose questions. Who were the two beautiful chestnut-haired girls at play with the children under the apple boughs? Does he imagine them now married and with families of their own? And who were the children whose merry voices and laughter he recalls with such clarity? The picture he draws is an idyllic one. Could it be that on that first walk through Aberedw

he encountered just one of those glimpses of a perfect family life that he then had every expectation of gaining for himself – his own personal Paradise – and that now, ten years later, he fears he will never attain? This is all, of course, supposition. None of us will ever know the truth. The puzzle still remains.

The principal problem we encounter in attempting to fathom Kilvert's mind on this and other occasions is that we do not have the complete picture. What we in fact have is about a third of the original *Diary*. We do not know what passages Elizabeth Kilvert chose to excise after his untimely death, nor do we know what was omitted by William Plomer and later destroyed by Kilvert's niece, Essex Hope. This leaves space for surmise. What we do know is that Kilvert was to experience one more failed relationship, this time apparently more torrid in nature, with Ettie Meredith Brown, a relationship also thwarted by the intercession of a protective parent. The ultimate and tragic irony of Kilvert's life is that he did attain his dream of marriage, but that this dream lasted only five weeks. On 7 July 1875, three months after the diary entry of 13 April, Kilvert, on the Isle of Wight, was again watching children at play, this time on Shanklin beach. He writes: *Oh, as I watched them there came over me such a longing, such a hungry yearning to have one of those children for my own. Oh that I too had a child to love and to love me, a daughter with such fair limbs and blue eyes archly dancing, and bright clustering curls blown wild and golden in the sunshine and sea air. It came over me like a storm and I turned away hungry at heart and half envying the parents as they sat upon the sand watching their children at play.* The parallel with Satan watching Adam and Eve is clear. But despite the hopes he must have entertained on his marriage, Kilvert was never to have the child he yearned for. For him this truly was Paradise lost.

Note

¹ *Kilvert's Cornish Diary*, edited by Richard Maber and Angela Tregoning (Alison Hodge, 1989). With illustrations, introduction and notes. There are a few copies of this title available to purchase from the Society. Contact the Secretary for details.

The Drought of 1874

On either side of Kilvert's June 1874 holiday to the Isle of Wight, discussed by Jeremy Archer in this edition, there are entries referring to a drought and heatwave. Readers may recognise the scenes described.

Langley Burrell, 2 June 1874: *A few drops of blessed rain fell this evening but the shower passed by and all became dry and hard again.*

7 June 1874: *Another glowing glorious day of sunshine and unclouded weather. But every day the drought grows drier and the predicted water famine is stealing upon us.*

9 June 1874 [on their way from Chippenham to the Isle of Wight]: *The Wiltshire downs and Salisbury Plain were white and glaring with drought and chalk and dust in the scorching blinding sun. Everything seemed parched and dried up by the 2 months' drought except some brilliant patches of crimson sainfoin which lighted up the white hot downs and burning Plain with the purple bloom and splendour of heather.*

24 June 1874 [returned from the Isle of Wight]: *Blessed blessed rain fell all the evening upon the parched and thirsty ground.*

Worcester Cathedral Roof Damage

1 December 1870: *The Cathedral Tower close by, just restored by Lord Dudley, is a grand rich object. The first impression the Cathedral exterior gave me was one of plainness, bareness, newness, produced by the new grey sandstone with which it has been cased, not yet weather-fretted or lichen-grown.*

Worcester Cathedral was in the process of a restoration project when Kilvert attended Maria Kilvert's funeral, but no obstacles prevented access to the chancel or the cloister garth. William, 1st earl of Dudley (1817-85) paid for the restoration and refacing of the cathedral between 1859 and 1877. Unfortunately, Storm Arwen on 27 November 2021 was too strong a force, and during the gale part of a pinnacle from the side of the tower fell through the roof of the north quire aisle. At the beginning of March, when KS members were due to visit Worcester, the east end was still closed and there was no access to the Kilvert tomb in the centre of the grassed area of the cloister, so we reluctantly cancelled our day.

Repairs were scheduled to take six months, including removing all 3000 organ pipes for cleaning, repairing the roof and vault and carving a new pinnacle, the intention being to produce a commemorative design marking HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee year. At the time of writing, repairs were still going on.

We have rescheduled our visit to September 2023 (See Forthcoming Events column).

The 1870s restoration was newsworthy and this article from the Worcester Journal, Saturday 27 April, 1872, refers to Aunt Maria Kilvert's house, now the Deanery.

ANCIENT ECCLESIASTICAL REMAINS:

A few days ago as some workmen were pulling down the old house on the west side of the Cathedral, formerly occupied by Canon WYNTER, they discovered some early Norman remains – relics of the monastery of Worcester – which are of a curious and interesting kind. It appears that the wretched brick house, now fortunately being destroyed, was one of two prebendal houses, which, after the Reformation, were constructed upon the ruins of the monastic infirmary and the 'necessarium' beneath it. There is a most substantial sub-structure of excellent Norman rib vaulting, originally open from one end to the other, about 70 foot long, in five compartments, which open to the ground.



Worcester deanery

These vaults served as kitchens and cellars when the prebendal houses were raised upon them, but now once more they are open to the light, and with them a curious part of the super-structure – a portion of the old infirmary, and which seems to have been built up into the modern erection by which it was surrounded. The upper story of the building, having been cleared of the brick-work, revealed a massive thick Norman wall, pierced with six narrow lights. The work is very plain, and apparently of the latter part of the 11th century. It now forms a picturesque ruin, and we are informed that it is to be preserved as such, together with the massive Norman vaulting forming the basement of the old houses.

A portion of the premises will be added to the College-green boys' play-ground, and as no new building is to be raised on the site, we hear that Dr BARRY (Canon WYNTER'S successor) will reside in the house lately occupied by Miss KILVERT, in the College-green. This residence is still known by the name 'The Oven,' which is indicative of the monastic bake-house which formerly existed there.

Teresa Williams, who found this article, adds: I think Kilvert would have been interested and even amused by the name of her house.

Fred Lowden: another *Diary* figure identified?

"Amy Lowder was my great-aunt and sister of John Lowder mentioned in the Diaries as being the escort to the Battle of Waterloo of some Japanese princes. John Lowder was Legal Advisor to the Japanese government. He saved the lives of some of these princes by taking them into his home in Yokohama disguised as servants....My grandfather's brother (consequently, of course, Amy Lowder's father) was rector of Chippenham, Wilts."

This is part of a letter, which is in the Society's archive, from Mrs M Lowder written to CTO Prosser on 25 May 1962 from Maseru, Basutoland. An entry in the Kilvert newsletter for July 1962, written by Oswin Prosser, makes it clear that, at some stage, the letter had become separated from a book which was donated by Mrs Lowder to the Society. This was a small prayer book with an inscription on the flyleaf dedicating it to Amy Lowder, in 1848, from Robert and Thermuthis Kilvert, who were her godparents. Mrs Lowder had heard from William Plomer that the Kilvert Society would be interested in the book.

Mrs Lowder's letter is annotated, presumably by Mr Prosser 'John Friedrich Lowder'. There is a *Diary* mention on 25 January 1871 of *Fred Lowden* who had asked the Revd Daniell to take some Japanese pupils (Vol 2, p299). Mrs Lowder says that Lowder was a common surname in Wilts and Somerset, but both men being scholars of Japanese makes it likely that this Fred Lowden is Mrs Lowder's John Friedrich Lowder, or connected with him.

The *Diary* entry does not mention Japanese princes being escorted at the Battle of Waterloo. Did Plomer remember this from an unpublished part of the *Diary*?

EVENTS AND EXCURSIONS

The 2022 Kilvert Seminar

The Editor reports

Every year, the Kilvert Society AGM is held in the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace. This year, after the formal business and the delicious informal buffet prepared by Sue and Mike Rose, our talk was about the big building next door, Hereford Cathedral. Penny Platts, a cathedral guide, brought years of experience and her great enthusiasm to tell us about some of the secrets and mysteries in this ancient building. As she told us that the sturdy-looking Norman pillars are really dressed stone filled with rubble, and there are no foundations, one of the secrets is how it stays up. It didn't always: Penny started by showing us a print of the eighteenth-century Easter Monday when the west end dramatically collapsed. We had a whistle-stop tour of old and new stained glass, carvings, a saxon saint, a medieval shrine, textiles, the Mappa Mundi and the chained library. Surprisingly, the cathedral was allowed to sell its Victorian screen in the 1960s; it is now in the Victoria and Albert museum and is replaced by the modern corona over the altar at the crossing. Amongst the effigies of several bishops, the most interesting for us is the tomb of Bishop Atlay, infamous to *Diary* readers for impatiently reconfirming Andrew Pope on 29 March 1870. Penny included this story; she has been presented with a three-volume set of the *Diary*, with the Society's thanks, from which we hope she will glean more anecdotes to share about Kilvert and the places he loved. Her

entertaining presentation persuaded me to visit the cathedral on Saturday afternoon, spotting as many as possible of the treasures she had shown us.

Alan Brimson's Saturday morning seminar took us on a tour of Kilvert's Bristol: a report follows this piece. We reassembled for an enjoyable evening at the Kilvert Dinner. The staff at the Pilgrim Hotel know us pretty well by now and gently but firmly commanded our attention to be efficiently presented with the right food and drink. As usual, we paused between courses for readings. We were in the countryside in springtime and this was reflected in the choices of readers: celebratory from Mike Reynolds who recited Robert Herrick's 'Daffodils' and Robert Browning's 'Home thoughts from abroad'... *now that April's here*; nostalgic from Richard Lovett who read the passage in which Kilvert looked back on his holiday in Cornwall (Vol 1, p 207). *The drooping of the transplanted flowers and the withering of tendrils torn from their clasp*. Sue Rose shared with us a grace and read us a poem, both written by Julia Yeardye, who was an active member for many years with her late husband, and who reflects upon the beauty of nature in her verse. Jean Brimson made us laugh with a change of author to Pam Ayres.

We had a very happy party, only missing absent friends. Next year will be the Kilvert Society 75th anniversary, and we hope as many of you as possible will be able to join us.



Penny Platts, our AGM speaker.

Photo: editor



All eyes turned on Mike Reynolds as he recited at the Annual Dinner.

Photo: editor



View of the ruins of the West Tower of Hereford Cathedral, aquatint by I Wathen, 1788.

Courtesy British Library, via Wikimedia



The tomb of Bishop Atlay, with the modern Corona in the background.

Photo: editor

Kilvert's Bristol

Alan Brimson's illustrated talk given at this year's seminar was a compilation of the many visits RFK made to the City and County of Bristol. A city the Diarist knew well and of which he recorded: It's a grand city, how much grander than Bath, here is life movement and work instead of foolish drawl and idle lounge (Vol 2, p282).

Victorian Bristol was very much the centre of the activities of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the great engineer of the time, although there is no mention of him by Kilvert, who travelled the twenty miles from Chippenham via the Box Tunnel and Bath to Bristol by Brunel's 'Gods Wonderful Railway' the GWR, to arrive at *Bristol Station* – Bristol Temple Meads.

Our visual tour, illustrated by some thirty slides, began as we made our way toward the Victoria Rooms, passing *the glorious Church of St. Mary Redcliffe* with its association with the boy poet Thomas Chatterton, his birthplace being opposite the church. On 14 October 1872, Kilvert attended the clergy and laity conference at the Victoria Rooms but *mooched off stealing down Park Street* to College Green and the cathedral, where he had been ordained in 1864.

It is just a short walk from the cathedral to St. Augustine's Parade, the site of the confectioner's shop where, on 4 June 1874, RFK bought a bedraggled *barefooted child* a bun and had difficulty understanding her accent. From here we ascend the steep Park Street, now dominated at its summit by the Wills Tower of Bristol University. Halfway up the hill we turn left into Great

George Street where we find the site of the Clergy Daughter's School. Here, Kilvert visited Janet Vaughan. This building is now the offices of a large firm of solicitors and, most disappointingly, the *pretty garden* in which they met is the office car park (Vol 3 p 31-32 & 157).

We proceed up the hill to the district of Clifton, high above the city, an area of fine Georgian architecture and sweeping terraces. Here we find 1, Carlton Place, the home of RFK's cousin Addie (Adelaide) Cholmley. Kilvert was a regular visitor here, and Addie was very encouraging of his pursuit of Katharine Heanley (Vol 3, pp 87-8, 119-120 & 237).

Just a short distance away is Sion Place, the home of Emmie (Emily) Kilvert's sister after her return from India. Her husband Samuel Wyndowe was to retire in 1881 after being the Deputy Surgeon General in the Madras Army.

Directly opposite 16 Sion Place we have Brunel's magnificent Clifton Suspension Bridge soaring over the Avon Gorge (Vol 3 pp 72, 119-20). From here we descend the steep zig zag path down the Gorge with fine views of the bridge to arrive alongside the river Avon (Vol 3, p 201).



The Clergy Daughters' School, Bristol.

Photo: Alan Brimson



St Augustine's Parade, Bristol in the 1890s.

We now enter the old city dock area, now much redeveloped. Here we find Brunel's magnificently restored SS Great Britain, full rigged in its original dry dock in which it had been built, though Kilvert records seeing the vessel in a poor state in Liverpool (Vol 2, p214).

Which brings us back, in conclusion, to Brunel, whose dream was for the Great Western Railway to travel from London to Bristol and for its passengers to embark for New York and the Americas.



St Augustine's Parade, Bristol, now.

Photo: Alan Brimson

The June excursion: A visit to the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth

Nicholas Green reported and photographed the event for us

Friday, 19 July [1878]

To-day we settled that we should all four go to Aberystwyth [for a holiday] next Monday. (Vol 3 p405)

Eight Kilvert devotees did likewise on 14 June 2022, gathering at the National Library of Wales (NLW) in true Kilvertian sunshine. The library, established by Royal Charter in 1907 houses over 6.5 million books and periodicals (including *The Journal of the Kilvert Society*) and has a commanding view of the town.

We were welcomed by Maredudd ap Huw, Curator of Manuscripts, assisted by trainee archivist Ceri Evans. Maredudd had been advised by his predecessor Dafydd Ifans that there wouldn't be anything we didn't know about Kilvert except perhaps that 'Plomer' was in fact pronounced 'Ploo-mer'! He then showed us two of the three extant original notebooks for April – June 1870 and June – July 1870, published by NLW in 1982 and 1989 respectively. (The third notebook is held at Durham University and has been inspected by Alan Brimson). Maredudd read a short extract leading up to the Dawn Chorus

passage of 7 May 1870. He also pointed out Plomer's red underlines in the manuscript denoting text omitted in his 1938 three-volume edition.

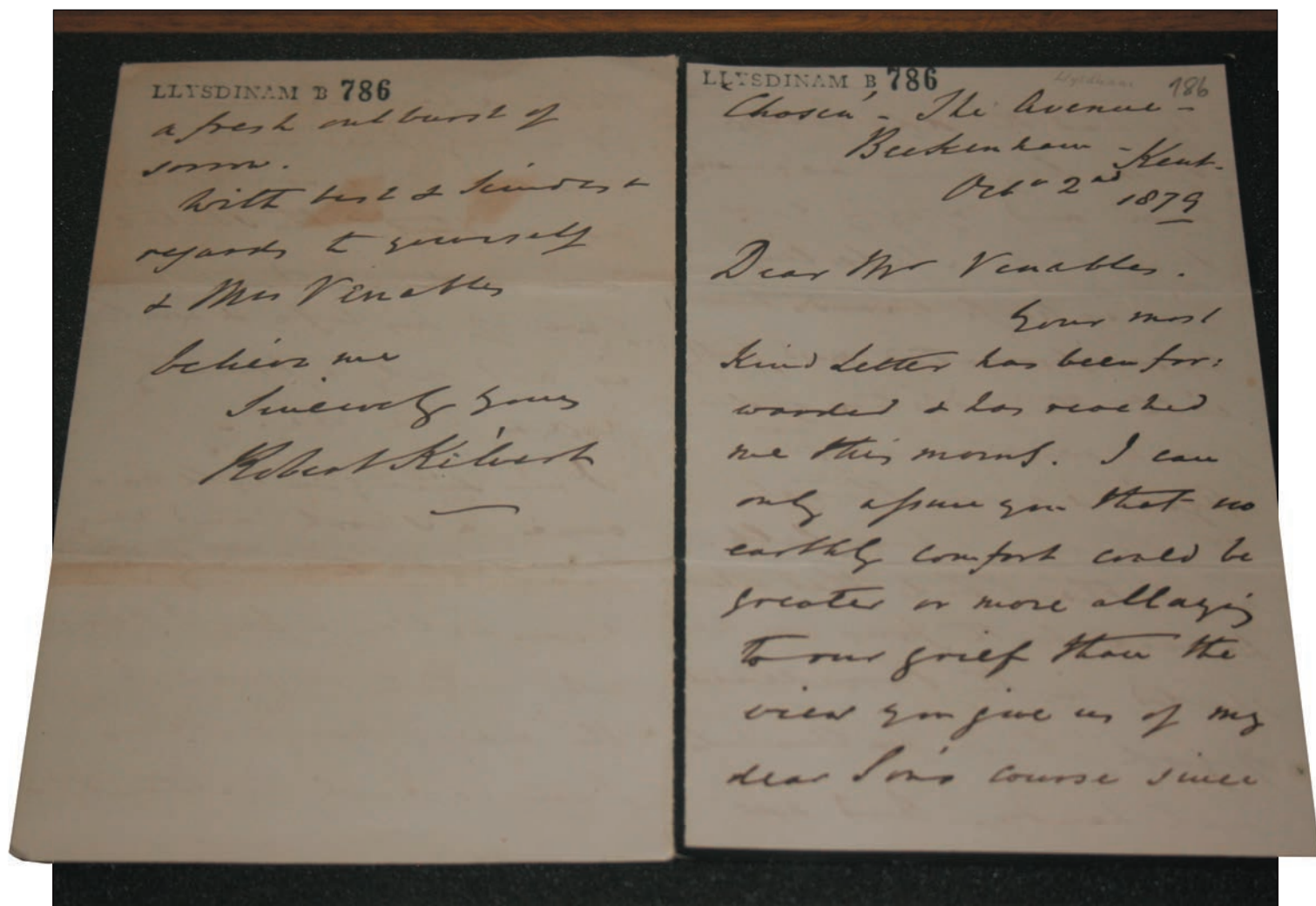
We were then shown five original letters from the Venables family Llysdyman collection viz.:

- Richard Lister Venables to his younger brother George Stovell Venables (who knew William Wordsworth – see Vol 1, p234-5) concerning bringing Kilvert into the curacy of Clyro in 1865. 'I have got a young fellow here...he seems to be a gentleman'.
- 17 December 1868 – Kilvert to Mr Venables ('My Dear Mr Venables') thanking him for his Christmas present
- 23 February 1870 – Mr Venables' second wife Agnes Minna to GS Venables describing her husband and Kilvert seeing Plynllymmon and Cader Idris on a walk at Llysdyman (see Vol 1, p39)
- 22 December 1871 – a letter to Captain Adam, Mr Venables' stepson, concerning matters at Clyro
- 2 October 1879 – Kilvert's father Robert to Mr Venables in thanks for his support following Kilvert's death on 23 September.



Meeting at the entrance to the NLW.

Photo: Nicholas Green



Robert Kilvert to Mr Venables, written from the house of Sam and Emily Wyndowe in Beckenham, Kent. Courtesy NLW.

Photo: Nicholas Green

We then inspected three documents relating to the ordination of Kilvert to the Clyro curacy viz.:

- 22 December 1864 to the Bishop of St Davids – from three Langley Burrell area vicars recommending Kilvert for the curacy ('we verily believe that he has piously ...') Signed

by Edward Awdry, vicar of Kington St Michael, JA Clarke, rector of Kellaways, and Charles Awdry, vicar of Seagry. (On 19 June 1876, Kilvert's *Diary* entry mentions him getting signatures on his *Letters Testimonial*, this time for his appointment to St Harmon (Vol 3, p331)



Our hosts at NLW, Maredudd ap Huw and Ceri Evans.

Photo: editor

- 13 January 1865 – Mr Venables to the Bishop of St Davids nominating Kilvert as curate
- 14 January 1865 – The Bishop of St Davids' sealed letter of appointment to Mr Venables for Kilvert's curacy on a stipend of £100 p.a. to be paid quarterly.

There was also a display case from the Frederick Grice Collection of documents about Kilvert, also held by the NLW.

Having perused this unique memorabilia we repaired to the NLW café and mused over Kilvertian matters. I sampled a piece of fruity Welsh *bara brid* ('speckled bread') worthy of those renowned Mike and Sue Rose teas!

Details of the notebooks published by the NLW are with the list of Kilvert Publications (inside back cover).

Welsh Services at St Harmon?

The editor speculates

One of the items shown to us in the NLW popup exhibition on 14 June was a page showing the Archdeacon's Visitation to St Harmon on 23 June 1877, the questionnaire filled in by Kilvert. It is one of the very few pieces of evidence we have for Kilvert's time as vicar there, and it raises a query. The printed question asks for 'The number of sermons preached. Give a separate account of English and Welsh services if both are used'. The answer, in Kilvert's handwriting, reads:

'Two sermons each Sunday.
In Welsh ___'

Two sermons in Welsh? Each Sunday? Was he making it up, wondered NLW Manuscripts Curator Maredudd ap Huw? Did he have simultaneous translation, or a churchwarden reading out a translation, we suggested? The week day services, which do not ask specifically about Welsh, are recorded as being in English.

There is plenty of time to ponder Kilvert affairs on the winding road back from Aberystwyth to Rhyader, when the traffic is quiet, the road conditions good, and the car in front sticking to 45mph. It doesn't seem like our hero to lie, unless he was knowingly teasing the archdeacon. They had some talk

about Welsh services on the morning of Kilvert's visit to inspect the parish on 4 May 1876.

Breakfast at 8 with the Archdeacon, train at 9, he to Doldowlod to discover if a Welsh service is needed at Llanwrthwl Church (Answer, 'No') and I to look at St Harmon's (Vol 3, p288).

But I would expect Kilvert to take his visitation questionnaire seriously, and, loving preaching as he did, he would not want to be inhibited by a lack of language skills. He is interested in Welsh, but we don't get the impression from the published *Diary* that he is anything like fluent. I had another look at my photo of the entry, this time concentrating on the punctuation. 'In Welsh ___': a new sentence on a separate line, and a dash at the end. I suggest that he is saying ___ meaning a nil return: i.e no sermons in Welsh.

This intriguing document has puzzled members since it was seen on a Society visit to NLW in July 1969. Oswin Prosser, recording it for the October 1969 newsletter, places a full stop, not a dash, after 'In Welsh'. Discussion may continue. It just shows how lucky we are to be able to look, and look again, at the NLW's archive, which, Maredudd ap Huw points out, contains many as yet unexplored possibilities for Kilvert research.

QUERIES.	ANSWERS.
(b) The hours of Service, and	10.30 a.m. 3 p.m.
(c) The number of sermons preached. Give a separate account of English and Welsh services, if both are used.	Two sermons each Sunday In Welsh -
VII.	
(a) What are your Week-day Services, and	Liturgy & Sermon at 7 p.m.
(b) In what language?	on the Fridays in Lent English
(c) How often is a Sermon or Lecture delivered in your Church on Week-days?	
VIII.	
(a) How often in the year do you administer the Holy Communion?	Twelve times.
	about 16 on 17 & 18 Christmas

The page with the entry about sermons in Welsh from the Archdeacon's visitation to St Harmon, filled in by Kilvert. Courtesy NLW. Photo: Editor

A cross stitch present for Caroline Morgan

Caroline Wright married Edward Morgan of Cwmpelved Green on 5 July 1871 at Clyro. There had previously been some fuss because they were living together unmarried, but Kilvert spoke well of the young lady on her wedding day: she seemed *quiet and modest*, and on a pastoral visit on 22 July he was impressed by what he saw: *everything was made the most and best of*.

The couple went on to have eight children, the second being Martha Jane, born in 1874. John Palmer, an honorary life member of the Society, is Caroline's great-grandson and, in 2014, he donated to the Society a copy of Caroline and Edward's wedding certificate, signed by Kilvert as officiating priest, and a photo of Edward's drinking horn with his initials stamped on the base. A cross stitch sampler made by Martha Jane for her mother has recently been donated by Society member Anne Longmate, John's second cousin and a great-great granddaughter of Caroline. Photos of the drinking horn and wedding certificate were printed in *Journal 39*, p 316 but the sampler had not been featured. It is now in the care of Radnorshire Museum and curator Lorna Steele supplied us with a photograph.



Martha Morgan's sampler. Kilvert Society Archive/Radnorshire Museum.

The little sampler is approximately 14 cms long. It appears from the photograph to have been sewn on stitching paper. Perforated paper, a thin card stamped with regular holes in different sizes, became available in the 1820s; cheap and easy to buy, it led to a craze for making mottos and greetings cards. Mottos and hymn or song titles (Home Sweet Home was especially popular) could be elaborately stitched in long stitch and many colours, but texts and greetings cross stitched in one colour, usually red, were often made. The fashion for stitching on perforated paper was at its height in the 1870s and faded out at the turn of the century, other materials such as double canvas having become readily available. However, the modern interest in Victoriana means that perforated paper is for sale again and its history is discussed online e.g. perforatedpaper.net.

Martha has neatly fitted her words into the space she had available. She has got over the inevitable problems of trying to centre text accurately when letters are not all the same size, even when you count carefully (the craft is known as counted cross stitch). An e and the top of a d have been tucked into the border, the head of an f has been linked into the tail of a t, and shorter lines have been given little extra motifs, with random single stitches disguising any unbalance in the lines.

Girls were taught to sew lettering as an employable skill: a good needlewoman had better job prospects in service, where they might be required to mark their employer's clothes with initials. One colour, usually red, would be economical and reflect the marking task. The elaborate red lettering samplers of the nineteenth century Bristol Orphanage girls are distinguished examples of this tradition. Many girls would have used their skill and the materials they had to hand to produce a simpler piece as a present. Martha was 15 in 1889 when she worked and dated this sampler; John Palmer wrote about her in *Journal 41* (p371) and said that she was in service in Cusop in the late 1880s. So this was a Christmas gift sent or taken to her mother by a girl working away from home.

It is a privilege to see this piece of family history, to link it to people Kilvert met and wrote about and to find out a little more about Caroline Morgan of Cwmpelved Green.

John Palmer has this summer donated to the Society a copy of *In the March and Borderland of Wales* by A G Bradley, published by Constable in 1905. Apart from its local interest, this copy is special for us as it is inscribed inside 'From the library of Oswin Prosser, Secretary of the Kilvert Society', and is signed by C T O Prosser. It will join our archive collection at Llandrindod Museum.

FEATURES

A number of Society members were able to attend the Harvest Festival at Clyro Church last September. They enjoyed the service, the organ recital by Hilary Wetton that followed, the decorations in the church and the refreshments served afterwards. The address was given by J Paul Baker.

Kilvert, Woodforde and Hawker

I should like to take my text from the Book of Leviticus chapter 27 verse 30 “Every tithe on land, whether from grain or from the fruit of a tree, belongs to the Lord.”

If you care to make a visit to the cathedral in Brecon and you walk from the car park through the wide double gates beneath the arch you will see, on your right-hand side, the Tithe Barn, now an exhibition space and shop. This harks back to the time when the church’s income came from the payment of a tithe on the produce of the land. The produce could be stored in the barn, sold and used to further the work of the church. In essence what the writer of the book of Leviticus was saying that one tenth of all we get should be given to the church.

In the past, the tithe was given to the church as produce which could be stored but as we developed an economy using coin of the realm it became more common for the tithe to be paid by the farmer in cash rather than in kind. Our local hero, Francis Kilvert received payment of this type when he was vicar of Bredwardine. Ninety years earlier another clergyman, James Woodforde, also kept a diary and he too recorded the payment of tithes by the farmers of his parish.

Woodforde was alive between 1758 and 1802 and like Francis Kilvert he had been to Oxford, but whereas Kilvert had studied at Wadham College, Woodford had been at New College. They both served their time as curates, Kilvert with his father at Langley Burrell and here in Clyro while James Woodforde served his curacy in Somerset, and both men became vicars in their own right. Kilvert was vicar of Bredwardine while Woodforde was a vicar in Norfolk in a village west of Norwich called Weston. Both men received tithes from the farmers of their parish and both men held tithe dinners for the farmers.

On Tuesday 5 February 1878 Kilvert recorded in his *Diary*

Today was the tithe audit and the dinner to the farmers, both held at the vicarage. About 50 tithe payers came, most of them very small holders, some paying as little as 9d. As soon as they had paid their tithes to Mr Heywood in the front hall they retired into the back hall and regaled themselves of bread, cheese and beer; some of them eating and drinking the value of the tithe they had paid. The tithe-paying began about 3pm and the stream went on till six.

James Woodforde had his tithe audit on Tuesday 1st December 1789, he wrote, “Mrs Custance called at our gate this morning but did not come in – It being my tithe audit.” He goes on to

record that he received £245-11s- 0d. He, however, then had to pay a poor rate of 10d in the pound from Michaelmas 1788 to Lady Day 1789, being assessed at £30-5-0 he had to pay £1-5-2½.

Both men record what was eaten at their tithe dinners. Woodforde records “We had for dinner, some salt fish, a couple of boiled rabbits and onions, boiled beef and roast beef and plumb puddings. My brother dined with us in the parlour and the ladies by themselves in the study. There was drunk, about half a dozen bottles of port wine, 8 bottles of rum, beside as much strong beer as they wished to have.” Francis Kilvert moved from Clyro back to his father’s parsonage then to St Harmon’s in Radnorshire and then crossed back across the county boundary to Bredwardine and it was here that we have his recollection of the tithe dinner.



Clyro Church Harvest Festival 2021.

Photo: Shelagh Popham

The Pen Pistyll turkey boiled looked very noble when it came to the table. At the foot of the table there was roast beef, and at the sides jugged hare and beefsteak pie, preceded by pea soup, and in due course followed by plum pudding, apple tart, mince pies and Blanc-mange, cheese and dessert. It was a very nice dinner, thanks to Dora (his sister).

While we can note the similarities between the meals provided by the two men each had quite different ways of enjoying the harvest. This was because of a third vicar, the Revd R S Hawker, who was, like our other two heroes, an Oxford man having been at Pembroke College. He was vicar of Morwenstow on the north coast of Cornwall. In 1843 he introduced the idea of a Harvest Festival to his church and the idea caught on.

So it was that on September 15 1871, Kilvert was able to record in his *Diary* the preparations for a Harvest Festival: *At school the children were busy leasing out corn from a loose heap on the floor, sitting among the straw and tying up wheat, barley and oats in small sheaves and bundles. Elsewhere, Mrs Price and Miss Elcox had got a quantity of wild hops from their fields and were arranging bright red apples for ornament. Also, they had boughs loaded with rosy apples and quantities of bright yellow crabs.*

When I read the descriptions of harvest I think back to that wonderful book in the Old Testament, the Book of Ruth and of the gleaning done by Ruth in Boaz's field and how he tells his workmen to help Ruth in her work. Both our principal

clerics were good at looking after the poor in society. We can no doubt recall incidents from *Kilvert's Diary* when he finds help for the poor, sometimes using church funds to buy blankets in winter. Woodforde records "To Cupper of my parish I gave 6d." While he frequently gave out small sums of money, he does not always explain to his diary why. Interestingly, Kilvert wrote of Friday 14 October 1870: *It is an old custom in these parts for the poor people to go about the farm houses to beg and gather milk between the two Michaelmasses, that they may be able to make some puddings and pancakes against the Bryngwyn and Clyro Feast.* For ourselves, we do not expect to find people at our doors asking for help nor do we see people gleaning in the fields as Ruth did; for myself I feel that donations to food banks are the modern equivalent of gleaning.

But what of tithes: in some places and in some churches, people tithe and give one tenth of their income to their church. In the year of his tithe dinner which we mentioned earlier Parson Woodforde had an income of £245 from his tithes. That was in 1789. In 1939 the vicar of Clyro had a stipend of £325 which I doubt very much had kept up with inflation. Today, it is the ordinary people in the pews who must find the money to keep the church going. The Church in Wales suggests that we give just 5% not 10% of our income to support the work of the church. This is something that we need to pray about, how much should we give? At a time of plenty as exemplified by our harvest it is a good time to reflect on this matter.



Clyro Church Harvest Festival 2021.

Photo: Shelagh Popham

Kilvert's connections with the Merewether family of Bowden Hill, Wiltshire and the 'Notton' Awdrys

Nicholas Green discovers a distant relative in the Diary

Kilvert makes three references in the *Diary* to the Merewether family who hailed from Bowden Hill, a village some seven miles south of Langley Burrell and lying in the lush valley of the River Avon some one mile east of Lacock, where, in 1835 William Henry Fox Talbot had created the earliest surviving photographic negative, taken of a small window in the Abbey's South Gallery. (see *Diary* Vol 2 p323 for an anecdote about Charles Talbot of Lacock).

Monday, 21 March [1876] The noble view was darkening in the dusk as I descended the fine open hill, passing in the twilight the beautiful church of St. Anne on Bowden Hill which I had never seen before. (Vol 3 p247)

The Merewethers lived at Bowden Hill House, the head of the family being Henry Alworth Merewether Jr. (1812-77) educated, like Kilvert, at Wadham College, Oxford. He was made a QC and Bencher of the Inner Temple in 1853 and was Recorder of Devizes from 1842 until his death. As a result of staying at his temporary chambers address in London he was absent on census night in 1851, 1861 and 1871. However, in the 1851 census his wife Maria (who died in 1864) is listed as a 'Barrister's wife' living at Bowden Hill House along with nine servants namely: a butler, cook, governess, nurse, lady's maid, kitchen maid, housemaid, under housemaid and house boy.

Henry Alworth Merewether and his wife Maria had thirteen children: the third being Cecil Georgiana, born in 1845 and who in 1867 married Ambrose Awdry (1844-85), son of Sir John and Lady Awdry (see below); the eleventh and twelfth being Alice and Geraldine, born in 1859 and 1862 respectively. It was Alice with whom Kilvert had danced on Friday 9 January 1874.

At 6 o'clock went to a dance at Notton Lodge with Dora. Some Notton Awdrys and Monkton Awdrys were there ... Alice and Geraldine Merewether ... I danced with Bella and Margaret



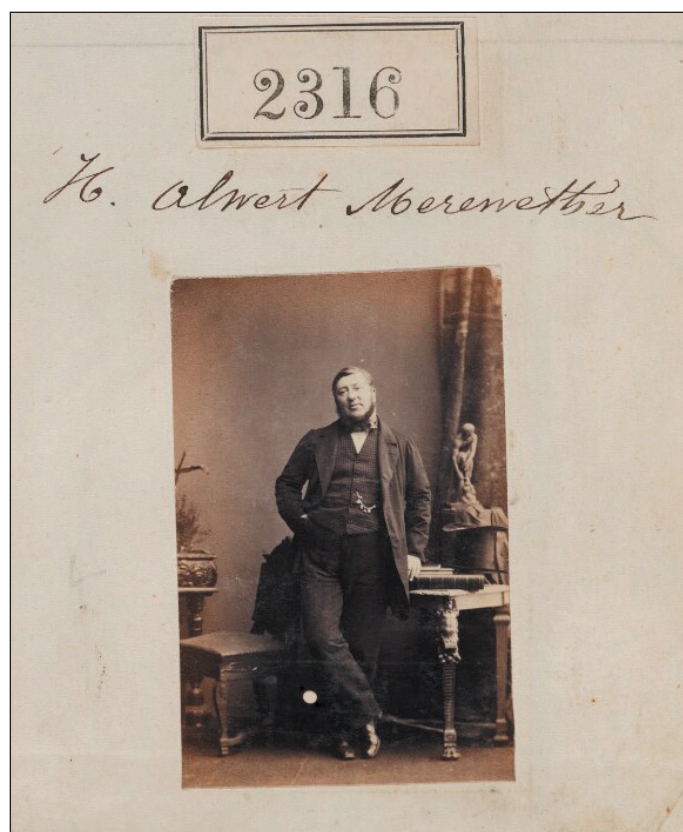
Notton House CMS 97690 National Trust/Rachel Topham.

Awdry of Monkton, Lily and Mary Awdry of Notton ... Alice Merewether. It was a glorious evening. I never enjoyed anything more in my life. [my emphasis] (Vol 2 p402)

Kilvert had been to a similar event there the previous year:

Tuesday 7 January [1873] At 8 o'clock Fanny, Dora and I went to a jolly party at Sir John Awdry's at Notton House. Almost everybody in the neighbourhood was there. There had been a children's party with a Christmas tree at 5 o'clock ... An excellent supper and we got home about one o'clock, on a fine moonlit night. And there were present the Merewethers ... (Vol 2 p305-6)

Kilvert's hosts at these events were the 'Notton' Awdrys, who merit seven references in the *Diary*. Sir John Wither Awdry (1795-1878) like Henry Alworth Merewether Jr. had enjoyed a stellar legal career. In the 1851 census, he is described as 'Knight, Retd. Indian Judge, JP, MA and Hon. DCL Oxford, Barrister not in actual practice'. He was commissioner of the Insolvent Debtor's Court in Bombay. For three years he was chief justice of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Bombay. After his return



Henry Alworth Merewether Jr by Carmen Silvy albumen print 2 Mar 1861 NPG AX 51704 c National Portrait Gallery.



Silbury Hill.

Photo: Mary Steele

to England, he served as chairman of the Wiltshire Quarter Sessions and represented Wiltshire as Deputy Lieutenant from 1852. In the 1871 census fifteen members of his family are listed with him and his second wife Lady Frances at Notton House (now Notton House Academy special school), some seven miles north-west of Langley Burrell). Their sixth child, Vere Awdry (1854-1928) became a Clerk in Holy Orders and was the father of Wilbert Vere Awdry (1911-97) better known as Reverend W. Awdry who authored the delightful *Thomas The Tank Engine* books. Sir John and Lady Frances lived in some style, employing a butler, housekeeper, governess, footman, lady's maid, housemaid, under housemaid and kitchen maid along with four 'visitors' servants'.

Kilvert makes twenty references in the *Diary* to archery meetings often played alongside croquet at, e.g. Clyro Court,

Cae Mawr and Hay Castle. Although he does not mention his proficiency he evidently had equipment:

Tuesday 9 August [1870] We got the old targets, bows and arrows down and practised. I shall take one bow to Clyro. (Vol 1 p211)

Kilvert had been to Monkton (where other Awdrys lived) with Fanny on 27 May 1870 for a croquet and archery party and subsequently on

Tuesday 7 July [1874] Went with Dora to the first archery meeting of the season at Monkton. Neither of us shot ... The company were Sir John and Lady Awdry and 4 of the girls ... Merewethers of Bowden ... (Vol 3 p49)



St Anne's Church, Bowden Hill.

Photo: Nicholas Green



Notton Lodge CMS 97687 National Trust/Rachel Topham.

It is clear from these and other similar *Diary* extracts that, despite his perceived ‘lack of prospects’ Kilvert felt as much at ease with these upper echelons of the mid-Victorian establishment as when ‘villaging’ amongst the humble cottagers of Clyro and Langley Burrell to whom he ministered so devotedly.

As a footnote, I am related to the Herefordshire branch of the Merewethers. My great-great-great uncle was John Merewether, Dean of Hereford Cathedral (1797-1850). Like many other Merewethers he went into the Church. His sister married the Winchester Cathedral organist Samuel Sebastian Wesley, grandson of John Wesley, the celebrated hymn writer and preacher. Dean John was a distant cousin of Henry Alworth Merewether Sr. (1780-1864 and father of Henry Alworth Merewether Jr. of Bowden Hill, see above) and Attorney-General to Queen Adelaide (wife of William IV, who reigned 1830-37) to whom in 1824 Dean John in turn became chaplain. According to the DNB Dean John was

‘an active member of the Archaeological Institution in connection with which he did some important work in Wiltshire, commemorated in 1851 by the posthumous publication of the ‘*Diary of a Dean: being an Account of the Examination of Silbury Hill* [near Avebury, an ancient site six miles east of Calne] and of various Barrows and other Earthworks on the Downs of North Wilts.’

The Dean is said to have spent most of his savings in investigating Silbury Hill. He supervised and paid for a tunnel to be dug horizontally into the middle of this man-made mound which has been carbon-dated to c. 2660 B.C.

Kilvert wrote after visiting on *Wednesday 15 April 1874*: *Then the King of the Barrows, strange, vast, mysterious Silbury Hill came in sight, the great problem, the world’s puzzle, with the white chalk landslip on its lofty green slope.* (Vol 2 p433)

The road [Roman road from Calne to Marlborough and London] *avoids Silbury Hill and makes a detour round it, showing that the hill is older than the road. This fact has been proved by excavation.* (Vol 2 p435).

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I am indebted to the following for assistance with this article:

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Francis Kilvert on the Isle of Wight

By Jeremy Archer

The catalyst for this article was the discovery, completely by chance, of a grave in the churchyard of Old St. Boniface Church at Bonchurch on the Isle of Wight. We have now had a property in the West Wight for a dozen years and learning more about the history of the Isle of Wight has been one of our many pleasures. Old St. Boniface has a rather lovely and compact churchyard, of exactly the type that encourages the enthusiastic visitor to examine every memorial closely. So it was in my case, in the early spring of 2018. The very last one that I looked at – with the cross broken off and tilted at a slight angle by the roots of a self-seeded ash – was that of *EMILY COWPER-COLES, WIDOW OF THE LATE CAPT COWPER-COLES R.N. C.B. – JAN^y 11th 1876, AGED 46 YEARS*. While familiar with part of the story, I had no idea that Emily had been buried at Bonchurch. This unexpected encounter presented yet another opportunity to visit places familiar to the Reverend Francis Kilvert.

It is sometimes said that the Isle of Wight is still firmly mired – if that is the right word – in the Fifties, which is part of its charm. The fact that the 147-square mile Isle is girdled by water has led to a wide range of unusual features and characteristics: red, rather than grey, squirrels; no deer; extensive fortifications that once protected Portsmouth and Southampton; much unspoilt countryside, particularly in the West Wight; many and varied coastguard cottages; spectacular beaches; and splendid walks

amidst wonderful scenery. There is also an impressive industrial heritage: wind farm manufacturing, *Plessey* radars, *Cockerell* hovercraft, *Saunders-Roe* flying boats, *Britten-Norman* aircraft; Napoleonic frigates at Wootton and Second World War destroyers at J. White's yard in West Cowes. The Victorians were particularly attracted by the separation from the mainland and the 'otherness' of the place, most notably the undercliff at Ventnor, where quirky Victorian villas with ornately-carved bargeboards still predominate. As well as attracting Victorian artists and poets – such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Julia Margaret Cameron, both of whom had houses in the West Wight – the Isle of Wight also proved to be a magnet for the newly-mobile, railway- and paddle-steamer-borne holidaymaker. Keen students of his *Diary* will be aware that Francis Kilvert was an occasional visitor, through his close links with the Venables family.

When the *Diary* begins, Kilvert was five years into his second curacy, assisting the Reverend Richard Lister Venables, Vicar of Clyro in Radnorshire. On 1 August 1867 at Mitcham in Surrey, Venables had married, as his second wife, Agnes Minna, youngest daughter of Henry Shepherd Pearson, acting Governor of Penang 1807-08, and his wife Caroline, daughter of John Lyons of Antigua. According to the Archdeacon of Brecon, writing in the February 1987 *Kilvert Society Newsletter*, they first met when he escorted Agnes and her sister, Caroline, to the funeral of the Duke of Wellington in Westminster Abbey on



Old St Boniface church as it must have appeared in Kilvert's time, drawn by Percy Stone (1856-1934).

Photo: Courtesy of Isle of Wight County Record Office

18 November 1852. Agnes was the niece of Admiral Edmund Lyons, 1st Baron Lyons of Christchurch. The Pearson family comprised one son and five daughters; after their father's death on 13 April 1840, the family lived at 4 Lowndes Square, Chelsea. The third daughter, Emily Frances, who was born in Tunbridge Wells in 1830, married on 11 March 1856 at Holy Trinity, Chelsea, Captain Cowper Phipps Coles, Royal Navy, third son of the Reverend John Coles of Ditcham Park, Hampshire. In 1861, they were living at Somerset Cottage, Grove Road, Godshill on the Isle of Wight, so there was a long-standing connection with the island. Captain Cowper Coles drowned in a terrible accident, as Kilvert recorded in one of his earliest *Diary* entries:

Saturday 10 September 1870

At Three Cocks [Mary Bevan] took Mr. Venables aside and told him that a dreadful calamity had happened. On Wednesday morning the turret ship Captain went down at sea with 500 men. Capt. Cowper Coles who constructed her was on board and went down with the rest. Mary Bevan thought Capt. Coles was Mrs. Venables' brother in law and very sensibly refrained from saying anything of what she had heard or seen in the Western Post of this morning until she could speak to Mr. Venables alone. He waited till they got home to break the news to Mrs. V. It is a terrible blow to her and all the family. Poor Mrs. Coles and her 9 children. And



The grave of Mrs Emily Cowper-Coles, Old St Boniface church.

Photo: Jeremy Archer



Spitbank Fort (foreground) and Horse Sand Fort in The Solent.

Photo: Jeremy Archer

no one left to tell the tale, or why the ship went down. The Times of today confirms the sad news.

A serving officer in the Royal Navy, Captain Cowper Phipps Coles CB had invented and patented the revolving gun turret. Unfortunately, the ship which he designed, HMS *Captain*, proved most unstable in poor weather and capsized off Cape Finisterre on 6/7 September 1870, with the loss of 49 officers and 420 men and boys. There is a memorial window in Westminster Abbey and a brass plaque in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Tuesday 13 September 1870

Mrs. Venables gave me a letter of Captain Chandos Stanhope to read and letters from Lily and Edmund Thomas with others from Southsea, all about the loss of the Captain. We have the

gunner's account now. He says the ship turned suddenly bottom upwards in a squall and then went down so. He and some other men scrambled upon her hull and for a minute or two actually stood upon her bottom. What a sight. What a moment. And what a terrible [unreadable] for the 500 men entangled and surprised below deck. She was top heavy, had too much 'top hamper' and too low a free board, so that when she heeled over in the squall she had no high broadside to oppose to and press against the water, and so she turned upside down at once.

Wednesday 14 September 1870

I dined at the Vicarage. Poor Mrs. Venables terribly distressed by Capt. Coles' death in the disaster of the Captain. She utterly broke down at dinner time and cried quietly and bitterly. I never saw her cry before.



The Esplanade, Shanklin, in the 1870s.

Photo: Courtesy of Isle of Wight County Record Office



Nunwell House, Brading.

Photo: Jeremy Archer

Some of what follows is covered in a talk given by Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, a transcription of which was published in the *Kilvert Society Journal*, Number 33, September 2011. We know that Francis Kilvert made at least two visits to the Isle of Wight in order to stay with Mrs. Emily Cowper-Coles at her home, *Newstead*, in Shanklin. The fact that he describes his experience in 1874 as *all fresh, strange and unknown* implies that this was his first visit.

Tuesday 9 June 1874

Went with my mother and Dora and Lettice Hazel [a maidservant] to the Isle of Wight by Salisbury and Stokes Bay. ... After the blazing journey and the intense heat of the railway carriage how refreshing it was to get to Stokes Bay and stand on the pier breathing the delicious cool salt air; watching the bright blue sea dancing and rippling all round and the sunny Island and Ryde lighted by the evening sunlight and the beautiful yachts, tall, stately, in full sail, like broad white-winged sea birds, standing up and down the Solent and the narrow sea. The short passage across to the Island in the steamboat was delightful and revived poor little Lettice who was overcome by the heat.

Brading, Sandown, and at Shanklin Station there was Lizzie James on the platform smiling to receive Lettice, unchanged since the old Llowes and Clyro days. And there

were Gussie and Commerell to meet me and Mrs Cowper Coles in her wheelchair given her by the Duchess of Norfolk.

Mrs. Coles has got Newstead on a lease of 999 years. It is a pleasant well-arranged roomy airy house, very light and cheerful, near the edge of the Cliff with glimpses of the bright blue sea between the houses in front.

Henry Granville Fitzalan-Howard, 14th Duke of Norfolk, was a son-in-law of Edmund, 1st Baron Lyons, which explains the gift of the wheelchair. Edmund Lyons, one of the few British commanders to have come through the Crimean War 1853-56 with an enhanced reputation, had died at Arundel Castle, seat of the Dukes of Norfolk, on 23 November 1858.

Wednesday 10 June 1874

Mrs. Coles was taken in her wheel chair to the edge of the Cliff this morning and I sat with her there reading to her and talking and looking at the beautiful view; the long white chalk headland of Culver Cliff stretching far out into the bright blue sea, Sandown Bay and town and forts and Cliffs on our left, below us and on our right the village of Shanklin and the bright sandy bay busy with bathers and barelegged children paddling in the water or digging in the sand among the boats and machines, bounded on the right by Shanklin Chine and the Cliffs and Cape between Shanklin and Ventnor



Oglander Chapel, St Mary the Virgin, Brading.

Photo: Jeremy Archer

which is so like Cape St. Vincent where the Captain went down that poor Mrs. Coles can hardly bear to look at it and has her chair turned the other way.

The four forts in the Solent – Spitbank, Horse Sand, No Man's Land and St. Helen's – are splendid examples of 'Palmerston's Follies', the construction of which commenced in 1860 in order to defend Portsmouth against French aggression, just four years after the end of the Crimean War, during which the French had been our key ally, eventually holding more than two-thirds of the trench-lines surrounding Sebastopol.

Thursday 11 June 1874

On this day Kilvert joined in the Shanklin Sunday school feast, travelling by train to Brading.

The children marched through Brading with flags to Nunwell Park and we played football and cricket. The heat was intolerable and I drank some 20 cups of tea. When the children had finished tea and had all gone to play again I walked alone along the beautiful road deeply wooded and shaded by trees of Nunwell Park on one side and sheltered on the other by a lofty white cliff. At Nunwell the Oglander family have been seated ever since the Conqueror or before that, and the last of the old race, Sir Henry Oglander, has just passed away, leaving no heir. Six weeks ago he was buried with his fathers in the Oglander Chapel in Brading Church.

Created on 12 December 1665 for William Oglander of Nunwell, MP for Yarmouth and Newport, the Oglander baronetcy became extinct on the death of Sir Henry Oglander, 7th Baronet, on 8 April 1874.

His place knows him no more and a stranger enters into his labours and sits in his seat. From the shadow of the oaks and the vast white cliff overhead I came out into the



Memorial to Sir Henry Oglander, St Mary the Virgin, Brading.

Photo: Jeremy Archer

clear sweet evening light and the fresh air of an open down which was filled with the sweet clamour of the sheep bells. Hard by there was a gate, and a red gravelled drive to the house swept through a beautiful beechen glade cool and dark with a soft green gloom and delicious twilight. It was still and peaceful and solemn as a cloister. Thither the sun could never come nor the fierce heat, and between the silver trunks of the beeches on each side of the red gravelled drive the grass grew a splendid and brilliant green.

Wishing to be alone and to escape the intolerable noise and tumult of the returning school feast I left Brading before the noisy company entered it and walked home by myself perfectly happy in the delightful solitude. From the top of the hill how lovely was the view over Brading Harbour, the distant headlands and the white houses along their sides sparkling as clear as crystal in the evening sunshine and the white winged boats moving slowly round the shores (their topsails showing over the green fields) or standing across the calm blue sea.



'A beautiful beechen glade' at Nunwell House.

Photo: Jeremy Archer



The view across what used to be Brading Harbour.

Photo: Jeremy Archer

On Friday 12 June, Kilvert recorded in his *Diary* his troubles at Shanklin with

the detestable custom of bathing in drawers.

On Sunday he attended four services at St Saviour's, assisting at three of them and attending the 6.30pm *with the girls quietly as a member of the congregation.*

Tuesday 16 June 1874

There are no shutters to the windows here. Many people never

lock and seldom even shut their doors and theft and burglary seem unknown.

Kilvert was obviously finding the Isle of Wight an attractive congenial place. The next day: *this, my soul is Yaverland. Yaverland at last.*

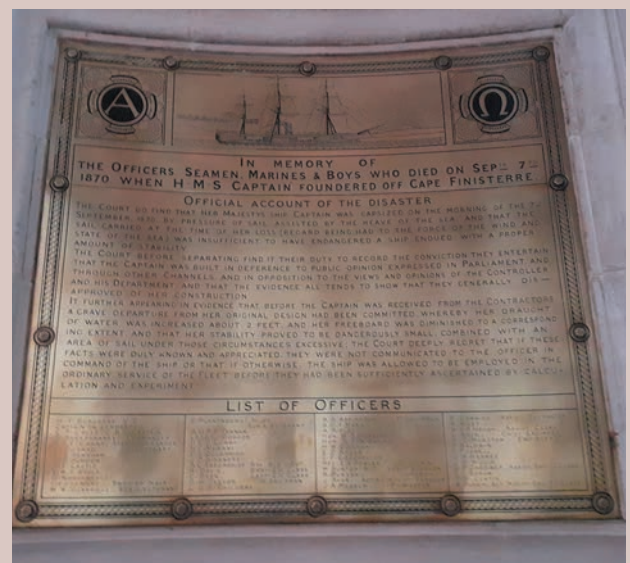
Part 2 of Kilvert on the Isle of Wight, beginning with his visit to Yaverland, and continuing to his 1875 holiday, will follow in Journal 56, March 2023.

A Memorial to the Crew of the 'Captain'

The tragedy of the sinking of the 'Captain', referred to by Kilvert, and by Jeremy Archer in his article 'Kilvert on the Isle of Wight' was commemorated by a stained glass window in Westminster Abbey and two brass tablets in St Paul's Cathedral. The photograph shows the plaque in St Paul's which described the accident and listed the officers; a similar plaque, which was placed opposite the first on the other side of the doors in the north wall of the cathedral, listed the 402 seamen, marines and boys who died with the ship.

Like everything else in this tragic saga, the matter of the memorials was complicated by debate and dissension. The Dean of Westminster objected to a complete list of the dead. The Dean of St Paul's did not want the Ark from the book of Genesis featuring and the brass depicts the 'Captain' alone. There were quibbles over the wording of the inscription. The findings of the court martial have been described as 'controversial' and are rather pointedly headed 'Official Account' on the brass.

Ref: *Black night on Finisterre* by Arthur Hawkey (Airlife, 1999), Chapter 21 'The Admiral and the Dean'.



One of the memorial plaques to the dead of HMS Captain, in St Paul's Cathedral.

Photo: Jeremy Archer

Mr Evans, the Churchwarden

Giles Harris Evans expands on the entry in the *Diary* for New Year, 1878, in which we meet his great-grandfather.

My first acquaintance with Kilvert came through an invitation to read a passage from the *Diary* for a Christmas entertainment at Holy Trinity, Clapham where I was a curate; this was probably in 1972. The result was that I went out and bought a copy of the shorter edition and devoured it with delight.

I became interested again when I arrived in Petersfield as vicar in 1999 and discovered Mrs Marguerite Kilvert was a member of the congregation. When I visited her she told me of her connection through her husband the Revd Robert Kilvert, who was FK's great-nephew. She showed me various items of memorabilia and encouraged me to join the Society. My interest being rekindled, I bought the three volumes this time and read them with growing fascination.

There had been a hint that my family had a connection with Kilvert in some way and I discovered this to be true, in that my great-grandfather was Frank Evans, who is mentioned a couple of times in the third volume.

Kilvert visited him on New Year's Day 1878: At nine o'clock after breakfast I went to the Old Court to see Mr Evans, the Churchwarden, on parish business. He had not finished breakfast. 'We were up rather late last night Christmassing', he said with a smile. Frank is also mentioned along with other tenant farmers on 4 February 1879 when he was among ten farmers entertained at the vicarage. *The dinner was very nice. White soup, roast beef, boiled chickens and ham, curried rabbit, stewed woodpigeons, beef-steak pie, potatoes and stewed celery, plum pudding, custard, plum tart, mincepies, apricot jam tart.* What a feast.

When Francis Kilvert returned to Bredwardine with his new wife there was a great welcome. According to the account of this event in the Hereford Times a committee of farmers collected certain moneys and purchased six silver dessert spoons and forks and a caddy spoon. The article goes on to say: 'Mr Frank Evans, of The Weston [he had obviously recently moved to another local farm], the churchwarden, came forward with the presentation of the tenant farmers and others and read an address printed in gold, with a floriate border in which are expressed congratulations and felicitations on their marriage. He ends with these words: "Allow us to express a hope that God will bless you and yours with a prolonged and useful existence, health and happiness, and crown your Christian labours with their well



Frank Evans of Bredwardine.

Courtesy of Giles Harris-Evans

deserved reward". How soon such joy and happiness would turn to mourning and sadness.

Mr Evans served the community as a district and county councillor, a JP and a parish guardian. When he left Bredwardine in 1908, he received his own illuminated address from local villagers, which stated

'To Francis Evans Esqre JP

Late of the Weston. We undersigned inhabitants of Bredwardine together with a few others connected with the Parish desire to express our great regret at your departure from among us.

For more than forty four years you have been active in promoting the welfare of the Parish. You have filled many official positions as churchwarden, Guardian, district and county Councillor and

Magistrate, with ability and success.

We assure you that the affection and respect which you have won by your kindness and uprightness of conduct, will not soon be forgotten and the remembrance of your long residence at Bredwardine. We beg your acceptance of the accompanying gift [a clock].'

Signatures of over 70 names and finally 'HT Williamson, Vicar'.

24 October 1908

Mr Evans retired to Swainshill. He was a native of Herefordshire, born in Brilley in 1835. He died on 31 January 1913 and is buried a few yards away from Kilvert at Bredwardine.

Editor's Note

This is an expanded version of an article that first appeared in Journal 33, p 126. Giles Harris Evans drew my attention to Frank Evans, who had been unfortunately missed out of Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary, 2nd edition. Mr Evans was unlucky, for he was also missed out of William Plomer's selection for the one volume Diary. In the three volume, where he is indexed as Evans (churchwarden), we also meet James Davies on the same page (345). Kilvert called Mr Evans the Churchwarden and Mr Davies my churchwarden. He was probably differentiating because Mr Davies was the vicar's warden, appointed by the vicar. There were two churchwardens in most parishes, the other being the people's warden, elected by the parishioners.

Kilvert on ‘Countryfile’

In its Easter Day 2022 programme, the BBC’s ‘Countryfile’ included a reading from the Easter 1870 entry about flowering graves with primroses, as part of a programme about Easter customs. Margaret Collins describes the programme as covering Easter traditions nationally, including a field blessing and a custom called ‘Lifting’ in which the chant was ‘Christ is Risen’ but which was banned in the 1860s for being too rough. The focus was Herefordshire, featuring morris dancing in the Golden Valley, the church at King’s Capse and the village of Sellack, where a bridge was constructed over the Wye to make Easter visits easier. Kilvert was cited by folklore researcher Pamela Thom-Rowe as the main source for the community tradition in Herefordshire – the picture of Kilvert that filled the screen was supplied to a BBC researcher by KS Secretary Alan Brimson. Ms Thom-Rowe explained that the tradition was a recognition of new life and resurrection and took place on what was called Flowering Sunday – either Palm Sunday or Easter Day. The presenter was shown placing flowers, though they looked like cultivated primulas to Eva Morgan; this could be because picking wild primroses as Kilvert did is now not allowed. Another caveat is that the 1870 entries relate to Clyro, which is in Radnorshire. However, Kilvert indicated that he saw the custom in his Herefordshire parish in the brief entries for the one Easter we know about from his time at Bredwardine. From the entries for 20 and 21 April 1878: *As I was gathering primroses on the slopes of Castle Hill...Some of the graves were very nicely dressed, especially at Brobury.* The early *Diary* entries provide the detailed and lively readings.



Kilvert country in the Spring; Glasgwm churchyard April 2022.
Photo: Clare McElhayer

Older media sightings

The *Observer*, in its tourism section of 16 August 2020 mentioned that ‘the skies above the Brecon beacons are so free of light pollution that on a clear night you can spot the Milky Way and even meteor showers with the naked eye’.

Last night the stars glowed and glittered in the moonless sky with a strange peculiar beauty and the heaven seemed to be thicker sown with great stars than usual (Vol 1, p103).

Also for tourists, 19th century ones, was a book published in 1838 called *The Welsh Interpreter*, an English-Welsh phrasebook compiled to make it easier for tourists to speak to locals. They were described by its editor as ‘the mass of the Welsh peasantry, of whom it may be exceedingly convenient occasionally to ask a few necessary and useful questions, especially while travelling through the more obscure and remote districts.’ It was written by Thomas Roberts of Pwllheli, an expatriate living in London. (from the *Guardian* 23 November 2020). Would Kilvert have needed a phrasebook, or did he make some notes of Welsh sentences he could use? It isn’t clear from the *Diary* if he understood Welsh a lot, little, or not at all. (See also the question about Welsh services at St Harmon in this edition).

WHAT THE PAPERS SAID

THE HEREFORD JOURNAL,
Wednesday 26 February 1834

‘On Tuesday the Reverend R Lister VENABLES and his bride arrived at Clyro upon which occasion Archdeacon VENABLES entertained the whole of the poor of the parish with an excellent dinner of roast beef and plum pudding. Nothing could exceed the friendly and kind feeling which was exhibited by the neighbourhood upon the happy event.

A large party of farmers and others belonging to that and the neighbouring parishes went out on horseback to the boundary of the parish, to escort the bride and bridegroom to Clyro and at a mile from thence, they were met by the fine amateur Hay Band, accompanied by several hundreds of persons on foot: the people insisted upon taking the horses from their carriage, and they were brought into Clyro amidst the loudest huzzas and greeting of the people. Both the Archdeacon and Mr Venables addressed their friends and thanked them in the warmest terms for the unexpected marks of favour and attention which had been shown on this occasion.’

NOTE: The bride was Mrs Mary Augusta Dalrymple Adam (nee Poltaratzky) Richard’s first wife. She was the ‘Russian Countess’ of Richard Massil’s article in *Journal* 54, p 24-7.

Thanks to Teresa Williams.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Contributions to the *Journal* are welcome, and check the Forthcoming Events column (inside front cover)

OBITUARIES

Mrs Pamela MARSHALL

8 December 1934 – 20 April 2022

We are very sad to announce the death of Pam Marshall. Pam, with her husband Jeff, had been members since 1975. Pam had been a great support to Jeff in all the work he did for the Society as committee member and *Journal* editor and was a kind hostess at their home in Leamington Spa. Jeff died in December 2020 (obituary *Journal* 52), after which Pam went to live with her daughter Annie Garside. We send condolences to Annie and family.



Pam and Jeff Marshall photographed at the 2003 Kilvert Society Dinner.

Miss Anthea ENGLAND

Miss Anthea England of Worcester died on 5 July 2022. She had been a member since April 1994.

Mr William HENDERSON

Mr William (Bill) Henderson of Leatherhead died on 3 May 2022, aged 97. He had been a life member since October 1994, and his wife, Pam, remains a member.

Mrs Ruth MELLING

Mrs Ruth Melling of Guiseley, West Yorkshire died on 14 October 2021. She had been a member since August 1979.

Mr Frank STIRRUP

Mr Frank Stirrup of Bassenthwaite, near Keswick, Cumbria, died in July 2022. He had been a member since May 2001.

Mr Richard CAMP

Mr Richard Camp of Bristol died in 2021. He had been a life member since 1983.

Mr Jim WEBBER

Mr Jim Webber of Compton Bassett, Wiltshire, died on 12 July 2022. He had been a member since May 2005.

Postscript: two visits to Croft Churchyard

'We stood a long time under the restlessly rushing beech in the churchyard...talking of the dead in the present tense'.

This is a quote from a recently published book by Derek Turner called *Edge of England: Landfall in Lincolnshire*, in which he describes a visit to Croft church. The mention of the present tense reminds me of the text on Kilvert's grave 'He is dead yet speaketh'.

I visited Croft church in July this year and stood under the same beech tree, in front of the cross commemorating Katherine Heanley (*Kathleen Mavourneen*). In the left background of this photo is the cross on the grave of Adelaide Heanley, which was restored by the Kilvert Society in 2014.

Mary Steele



List of Kilvert publications

FOR SALE FROM THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Three-Volume Diary, packed in slip case

Members price £60 post free in UK (£15 postage for non members).

Overseas postal rate will vary and will be notified to enquirers.

Enquiries and orders to the Secretary, 30 Bromley Heath Avenue, Downend, Bristol BS16 6JP. Email:

jeanbrimson@hotmail.com



Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary, 2nd edition, fully revised.

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Kilvert Society DVD A film depicting the early days of the Society £15+£2 p&p (overseas postal rate will vary). Orders to the Secretary (details above).

Overseas members please note that all drafts must be in sterling.

SOCIETY PAMPHLETS ON LOAN

The following pamphlets are now available as loan copies from the Secretary.

Collected Verse by the Reverend Francis Kilvert.

Kilvert's Poetry A study by Bernard Jones.

The Bevan-Dew Extracts Entries omitted from the published Diary.

Francis Kilvert Priest and Diarist by Frederick Grice.

More Chapters from the Kilvert Saga: memoirs of the Rev. Robert Kilvert (father of the Diarist): The School at Hardenhuish Rectory by Augustus Hare; The 'Rambling Recollections of the Diarist's Sister Emily (Mrs S J Wyndowe).

Kilvert's 'Kathleen Mavourneen' by Eve Farnery and RB Taylor.

Looking backwards... a Kilvert miscellanea. The Early Days of the Society; On Mrs Kilvert; On Kilvert at St Harmon; On the Homecoming to Bredwardine after the wedding; On the Death and Funeral of Francis Kilvert.

Kilvert and the Wordsworth Circle by R I Morgan.

The Other Francis Kilvert: Francis Kilvert of Claverton 1793-1863 by Teresa Williams and Frederick Grice.

The Oswin Prosser Memorial Booklet The Solitary of Llanbedr by Rev D Edmondson-Owen; Radnorshire Legends and Superstitions by Mrs Essex Hope (Kilvert's niece); Honeymoon Journal by Dora Pitcairn (Kilvert's sister); The Venables Diaries by Laurence Le Quesne; Memories of the Monk (Kilvert's niece) by Ann Mallinson.

The Frederick Grice Memorial Booklet Grice Articles by Frederick Grice including 'An Anglo-Welsh community in the 1860s; The Missing Year; Kilvert and 'Kathleen Mavourneen' by Laurence Le Quesne.

Jubilee Praise: the Tom Palmer Memorial Booklet. Articles from newsletters: The Poems of Francis Kilvert; Making the television series; Kilvert and Bettws; Gleanings from Glaschwim; Some reflections of an Irish Rectory Kilvertian; The Clerk and his Carriage; Kilvert- a neglected genius.

A Kilvert Symposium including Kilvert's Shropshire Ancestry, The Diary as Literature; The Manuscript of *Kilvert's Diary*.

BOOKS ABOUT KILVERT

East End, West End by John Toman: the story of a Victorian clergyman and his wife Bee Smallcombe, who was known to Kilvert. Kilvert Society 2016. £15 inc p&p Available from the Secretary.

The following books are available from booksellers or online.

Francis Kilvert by David Lockwood. Seren Books 1990.

Kilvert the Victorian by David Lockwood. Seren Books 1992.

After Kilvert by A L Le Quesne. OUP 1978.

Francis Kilvert and his world by Frederick Grice. Caliban Books 1980

Kilvert The Homeless Heart by John Toman. Logaston Press 2001.

Kilvert's Diary and Landscape by John Toman. Lutterworth Press 2009.

Kilvert's World of Wonders – growing up in Victorian England by John Toman. Lutterworth Press 2013

Growing Up in Kilvert Country by Mona Morgan. Gomer Press 1990

Exploring Kilvert Country by Chris Barber. Blorenge Books 2003.

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

A Deep Sense of the Uses of Money: Kilvert's forebears in Bath and India. True Heirs to Israel: Kilvert's theology. The Lost Photo Album (2nd ed) All available directly from John Toman john_toman@dymond.force9.co.uk

The Handkerchief Tree: the Journal of Frederick Grice 1946-83 edited by Gillian and Colin Clarke. Mount Orleans Press 2021 ISBN 978-1-912945-28-3

The three books below are the only surviving examples of complete notebooks from the original Diary.

The Diary of Francis Kilvert April-June 1870 edited by Kathleen Hughes and Dafydd Ifans. National Library of Wales 1982 ISBN 0-907158-020-1

The Diary of Francis Kilvert June-July 1870 edited by Dafydd Ifans, 1989 ISBN 0-907158-0201

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

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