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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 2023-24

Saturday 30 September

Visit to Worcester Cathedral and Deanery. Meet at 11am at the door of Worcester Cathedral for a tour of the Cathedral, where Kilvert attended the funeral of Maria Kilvert, who was buried in the family tomb in the cloister, and to see the Deanery, once her home (Vol 1, p267-276).

2024

Friday 26 April

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford HR4 9BL at 7pm. Following a buffet supper, we will hear a talk about the history of Brecon Cathedral.

Saturday 27 April

At the Pilgrim Hotel, Much Birch HR2 8HJ

Morning: a talk about Kilvert by John Price.

Afternoon: a visit to Rhosgoch Mill and Llanshifr (to be confirmed).

Evening: 7 for 7:30: The Kilvert Society Dinner at the Pilgrim Hotel.

June 2024

We hope to visit Moccas (details to be confirmed).

September 2024

We hope to visit Oxford (details to be confirmed).

If you are on email, please help us to cut postage costs by sending your email address to the Secretary at kilvertsociety@gmail.com

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: A view of Hay from the platform at the top of the castle. Photo: Geoff Collins

Back cover: Kingston St Michael East Window. Kilvert reported the local 'indignation' because Mrs Emily Proddgers was shown 'in the most prominent position'. (Vol 3, p150). The scandal was that her head was uncovered by hat or veil. Photo: Alan Brimson

From the Editor

The service of thanksgiving for the life of Canon Dr Ronald Blythe, CBE FRSL was held at St Edmundsbury Cathedral on 1 March. I had the privilege of attending on behalf of the Kilvert Society, of which he was President from 2006. 1 March is St David's Day, the patron saint of Wales and daffodils were among the flowers in the cathedral. 'The Welsh border, to which, one way or another, I become more and more attached, is haunted by the robust and yet short-lived Francis Kilvert,' said Ronald Blythe. This quote is from his last book *Next to Nature*; the book is now available as a paperback (John Murray, £12.99, ISBN 978-1-39980-469-1).

Back in 1996, Ronald Blythe wrote in one of his *Church Times* 'Word from Wormingford' columns: 'The post is full of invitations to give talks. Life could be a seminar.' He accepted the invitation from the Kilvert Society to speak at our Golden Jubilee in 1998; 'I am complimented,' he wrote in his letter of acceptance, beginning an association with the Society that lasted until his death.

In the 1950s, Ronald Blythe was acquainted with William Plomer. Living in Aldeburgh, trying to write his first novel and running out of money, he was advised to become a publisher's reader. 'Thirty shillings a report... The only person I knew who wrote about being a publisher's reader was William Plomer. And he was part of the Aldeburgh scene.' It was while working in that capacity in 1937 that Plomer came across the notebooks which he then edited into *Kilvert's Diary*, to our lasting gratitude.

Our long-standing friend Mary Hurlbutt wrote to us from her home in Pennsylvania in the spring, including a generous and thoughtful donation of £75 in honour of the Society's 75th anniversary. Mrs Hurlbutt's grandmother, Marianne Powell, was the recipient of a letter from Kilvert, which Mrs Hurlbutt donated to the Society in 1979. 'She would be delighted to know that Kilvert and the diaries he kept are still being celebrated.' Mrs Hurlbutt regrets that transatlantic travel is now too taxing for her but writes 'I am blest by all the memories of times I was able to be in Kilvert Country.' We continue to be thankful for her support.

The *Index to Journals 1-51* is now in the members' section of the Society website. *Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary* has been reprinted: see inside back cover for details of all publications for sale and loan.

From the Secretary

The AGM weekend of events was one of our most enjoyable meetings, as the Society celebrated the 75th anniversary of its founding in 1948. At the buffet supper after the AGM a cake, produced by Sue Rose, with Kilvert's portrait upon it, was ceremoniously cut by Chairman Rob Graves. Then the first of two excellent speakers over the weekend, Huw Rees, spoke on 'Jarvis, Kilvert and the Bredwardine Journey,' which broadened our understanding of the Jarvis Charity in Kilvert's time at Bredwardine. David Whitehead addressed us at the Saturday morning seminar. His subject was Moccas and the Cornwall family during Kilvert's time. That afternoon, we visited Hay Castle for a most interesting guided tour led by extremely knowledgeable guides. Finally, winding up the weekend, was the Society's Annual Dinner which took its usual format with readings between courses amidst a wonderful friendly atmosphere with a real buzz amongst the diners.

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about Francis Kilvert

In June, our event was our bi-annual Wiltshire visit, starting at Kingston St. Michael, where parishioners gave a talk on the church and kindly provided teas and coffees. Then we went on to Langley House, the former home of Squire Ashe. Here we had access to the beautiful grounds, coach house and stables unaltered since Kilvert's time. We took tea provided by Sue and Mike Rose in the barn at Manor Farm, Langley Burrell.

Our last event for this 75th anniversary year will be on Saturday 30 September. Meet at the main door of Worcester Cathedral at 11.00am. We hope to have a tour led by the Archaeologist of the

Cathedral and visit the Deanery.

Please be aware of the new address and telephone number for Sue Rose our Membership Secretary:

8 Fairway, Calne, Wiltshire SN11 0LE

Her email address remains the same: sue.rose4@btinternet.com

Lastly, I am endeavouring to have everyone's email address. If you received the June newsletter by post and you have an email address, then please email to kilvertsociety@gmail.com This will greatly reduce postage costs.

From the Chairman

Recently, I have received two separate items of correspondence which I believe will prove of interest to members. In the first of these my sister Julie, an avid reader and devotee of the writings of Alan Bennett, drew my attention to a slender volume entitled *House Arrest*, and subtitled 'Pandemic Diaries', giving an account of Alan Bennett's thoughts and experiences during the lockdown periods between February 2020 and March 2021. In a passage dated 1 December 2020, Bennett tells of his attention being drawn to an entry from Kilvert's Diary for New Year's Day 1882, which runs as follows: *I went to London by the midday mail. Reached 23 Gloucester Crescent at 3 o'clock. Katie ran down to open the door – prettier than ever. The Monk was gracious and he came forward with a smile and an embrace. The baby Mary is charming – blue eyes and fat rosy cheeks, quite a Wyndowe. She will be very pretty.* The significance of this for Alan Bennett is that he himself once lived at 23 Gloucester Crescent, and that this was the house where he encountered the infamous Lady in the Van, who, as he points out, 'wouldn't have liked the children at all'. He concludes his entry with a listing of some celebrated visitors to the house, including Barbra Streisand, Kenneth Williams, John Gielgud, Vincent Price and Morrissey, adding that the name of the Reverend Francis Kilvert can now be appended to the list.

The second item of interest was sent to me by Sian Jamison,

who lent a collection of watercolours by the Thomas sisters of Llanthomas for display at our Friday AGM evening in April of this year. Those members who attended the evening will recall that these paintings were given to Sian's grandmother most probably, it would seem to me, at about the time that the house was demolished in the early 1950s. The item that Sian Jamison actually sent me was a Kilvert Society Newsletter of June 1988, in which Edward West, at that time Hon. Secretary, provided a detailed description of Llanthomas House, including a reference to the sisters' watercolours and their location in the house. Towards the end of his piece we find the following: 'The drawing room was hardly ever used during the years I knew the house. It had the air of a museum piece. I recall a spinet, three elegant sofas, a china cupboard, many small tables covered with various knick-knacks; the walls were hung with many paintings by the sisters, the most able of whom was Edith. Over the fireplace was a collection of miniatures. The room had for me a feminine air, with its colourful silk cushions and embroidered covers.' Whether these are the same paintings given to Sian's grandmother we of course shall never know for certain, but there is a strong case for assuming that those are indeed the pictures to which Edward West here refers.

Should any members have any further gems of interest to offer I shall be more than happy to receive them and pass them on to the membership in general.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Kilvert Society was founded in 1948, and we have been celebrating its 75th birthday this year. The first recorded outing by Kilvert enthusiasts had been the previous year, to the Diarist's family home at Langley Burrell.

In 1947, a party from the Herefordshire Photographic Society made a coach trip to Lacock Abbey to see the home of William Henry Fox Talbot, pioneer of photography. 'We discovered that Langley Burrell, Hardenhuish, and some of these places were very near to Lacock, so we invited Mr Wright and some of the friends who were interested in Kilvert to come with us. We had a wonderful day and I was able to film all the most important buildings around Langley. There was no evidence that the name of Kilvert had received any recognition at all and the gravestones were rather neglected. It was some years before there was any activity in the Wiltshire area.'

The quote comes from the History of the Kilvert Society album 1948-1980, compiled by Godfrey C Davies. He is shown in the photo, holding a tripod, along with Sid Wright (foreground), Mrs Davies and Mrs Wright, Mr and Mrs Butcher, Mr and Mrs C T O Prosser. Mr Wright was the first President of the Kilvert Society, and Mr Prosser later became Secretary, a position he held with distinction for many years.

The first official Kilvert Society commemoration in Wiltshire was at Langley Burrell in 1966, when a tablet to the Diarist's memory was dedicated.



Kilvert enthusiasts at Langley Burrell, 1947.
Photo: KS Archive

EVENTS AND EXCURSIONS

The 2023 AGM and Seminar

The Editor reports

The 2023 AGM was held at the Bishop's Palace in Hereford on Friday 21 April. The formal business being completed, we were asked to admire, and then consume the special cake made by Sue Rose to commemorate the 75th year of The Kilvert Society. After this, and the usual delicious buffet supplied by Sue and Mike Rose, we heard a talk by Huw Rees about the Jarvis Charity. Huw's talk will featured in full as an article in the next *Journal*. During the evening, members were able to look at a set of watercolours painted by Edith, Charlotte and Fanny Thomas, and lent to us for the evening by their current owner. They were behind reflective glass and it was not possible to photograph them without light getting into the photo, so, unfortunately, this was a treat for members present only.

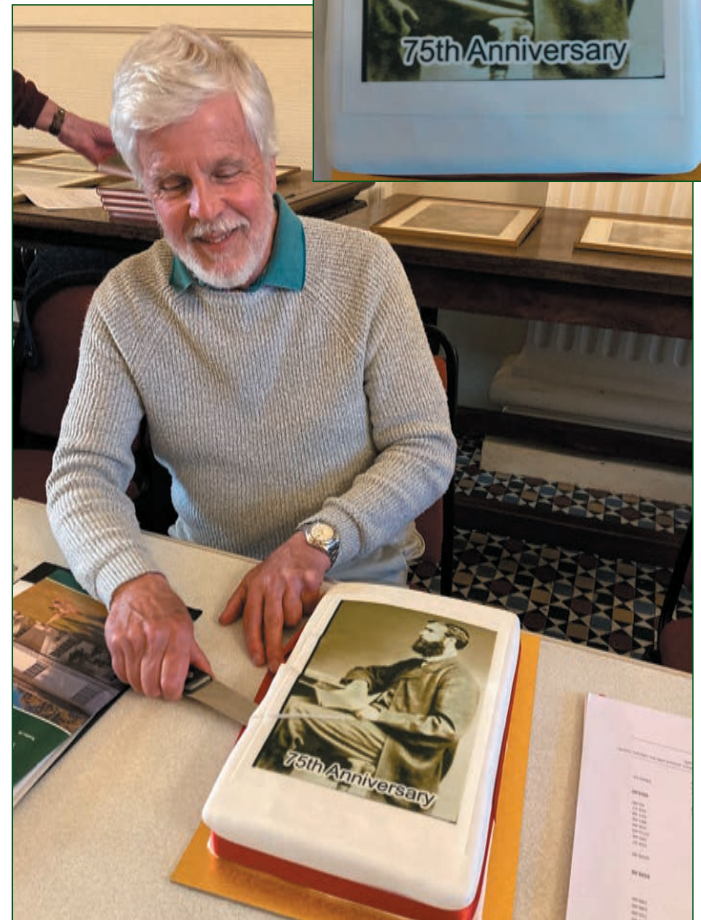
Our seminar day on Saturday at the Pilgrim Hotel, was a full one. In the morning, David Whitehead gave us a fascinating illustrated talk about Moccas, its history, people and Kilvertian associations. He extended his discussion to refer to Bredwardine, including, in a neat link with the previous evening, the Jarvis Charity. We will return to David's wealth of information, and the photographs he has kindly made available to the *Journal*, more than once in future editions, and we also hope to visit Moccas and see the trees funded by members on Moccas Hill.

In the afternoon, our postponed visit to Hay Castle finally took place and was well worth the wait. Geoff Collins writes about it on the following pages.

Our AGM dinner was a very pleasurable occasion, thanks to the hard work of the Pilgrim Hotel staff and Alan and Jean Brimson for their organisation: the complete opposites of Idle Jack, who starred in the English folktale told by your editor as part of the evening's entertainment. Our readings aptly commemorated important figures in the history of the Kilvert Society. Margaret Collins chose passages from *After Kilvert* by

Right:
The Kilvert Birthday Cake.
Photo: Alan Brimson

Below:
Rob Graves, KS Chairman, cutting the Kilvert cake.
Photo: Val Dixon



David Whitehead at our Saturday morning seminar.

Photo: Val Dixon

Society Vice-President Laurence le Quesne, referring to former Deputy Vice-President Frederick Grice and to Charles Oswin Prosser, former Secretary. Our current Secretary regrettably rejected Mr Prosser's system of bringing members together at events by blowing a whistle. Mike Reynolds had used his great knowledge of English poetry to find a poem by *Diary* editor William Plomer and two poems by our late President, Ronald Blythe. Toasts to King Charles III, Francis Kilvert, the Society in its 75th year, and to our members ended the evening in celebratory style.

Hay Castle at last!



Geoff Collins describes our AGM Saturday excursion

Hay Castle 2023.
Photo: Editor

In 2017, our speaker after the AGM was Nancy Lavin-Albert of the Hay Castle Trust, who came to tell us about the proposals for renovating Hay Castle and opening it to the public. The Society presented the Trust with a three-volume set of the *Diary* for their library and we promised to visit. There was then a long wait while the Castle spent years covered in scaffolding.

On Saturday 22 April, after a very successful AGM the previous evening and with the annual dinner to come that evening, at least 30 of us prepared our appetites for it by climbing the hill to Hay Castle; a visit that had been planned as far back as 2019 but had been postponed by the pandemic and by the work, with a further temporary closure in September last year. The Castle was officially reopened by King (then Prince) Charles last July.

And what a great success the refurbishment has been. Of the original castle keep and walls there remains sufficient to evoke the turbulent history of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The modern light oak, steel and glass staircases and galleries highlight the dramatic metre-thick stone walls right up to the viewing platform (with access by stairs or a brand-new lift) where the battlements give a stunning and commanding view of the River Wye and Brecon Hills.

Our party was split into two groups. Our guide was Peter Ford and the other group was led by Alan Nicholls. Peter took us on a fascinating journey from the Norman Conquest to Richard Booth, king of Hay (and books) who died just two years ago. We began at the oldest remaining part, the great gate,

the doors of which were removed, conserved and reinstalled in 2019 and which were originally built around 1200 when the main fortifications against the Welsh were established by Matilda de Braose, the 'Lady of Hay' who clashed with and was later murdered by King John. For at least three centuries the castle was key to the security of the Marches, the borderlands between England and Wales, as were the string of similar motte and bailey castles running north to south along Offa's Dyke. They protected the ruling barons from marauding Welsh and sometimes English rebels (who did not maraud). Hay castle was



Hay Castle 1865.

Photo: KS Archive

said to have been destroyed by King John, but it was rebuilt and eventually became derelict for 150 years until, in the mid-16th century, it changed to a primarily residential building when James Boyle, who was appointed sheriff and mayor of Hereford by Henry VIII, put a new mansion on the site, joined to the old castle. This was improved upon in the next century by Thomas Gwynn who created the Jacobean mansion house that Kilvert enjoyed visiting, the outside of which we see today. For much of the time, being lord of the manor, whoever owned the castle also owned the whole town. It was variously owned by lords and ladies and for many years used as a vicarage by the Reverend William Latham Bevan, including the period when Kilvert regularly visited, but the last two owners were a fairground operator and a second hand-book dealer. So they weren't all snooty.

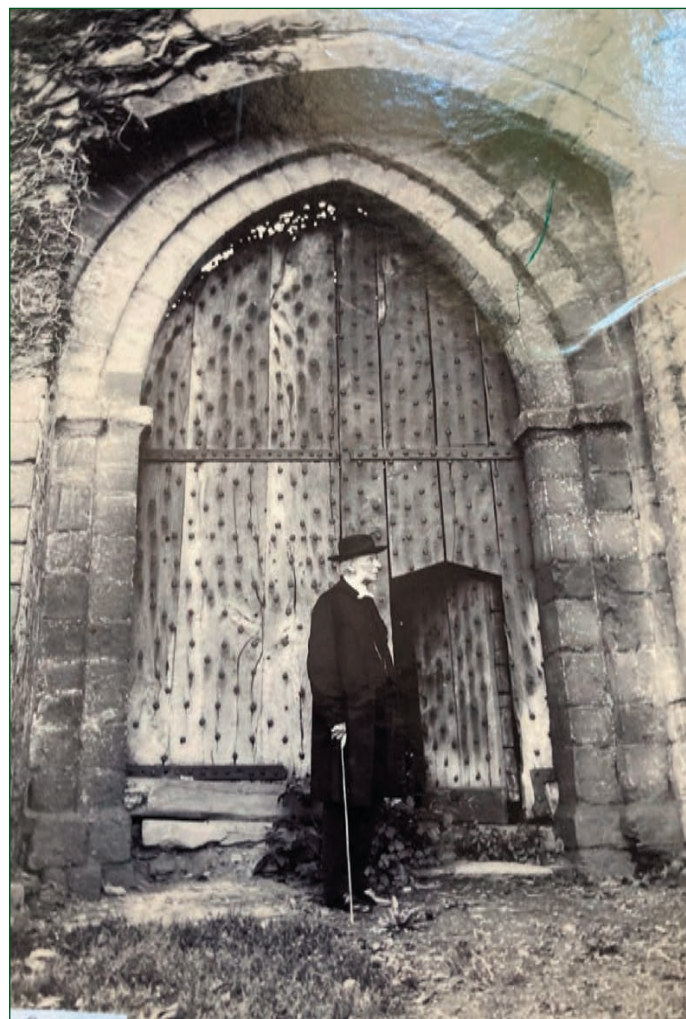
Our tour was accompanied throughout by the playing of a Regency string quartet and singing ensemble, bewigged and bedecked in fabulous Georgian costumes that I last saw at Jane Austen week in Bath, which would have been in keeping during the castle's ownership by the Wellington family who were county squires from 1721-1821. But, because the family was so large, there were inheritance wrangles which resulted in the manor being divided into three apartments, each with its own staircase.

Kilvert's visits to the Bevan family give us a good impression of what a grand place Hay Castle was in Victorian times and after Kilvert it enjoyed a 'golden age' under the ownership



Hay Castle gates with our guide Peter Ford (left).

Photo: Val Dixon



The Reverend Bevan at Hay Castle gates.

Photo: KS Archive

of the Dowager Lady Glanusk until 1939. Unfortunately the rooms, furnishings and staircases have all gone, mostly due to two catastrophic fires in 1939 and 1977 and also gone is the atmosphere of elegance that Kilvert must have enjoyed.

Now, only the exterior of the house is the same as Kilvert saw it, except for the stables which I doubt he frequented because he didn't have a horse. The day we visited, the stables were used for a carpentry demonstration. However, the lawns upon which Kilvert, Daisy Thomas and the Bevan sisters played croquet remain. Ever since the days of Matilda de Braose, there have been tales of a secret tunnel which successive generations have dismissed as myths until 1993, when it was reported that a man working on the grounds fell into it, right where the croquet party had been standing 130 years earlier. But the meadow where the archery party had been? That, sadly, is now the main Hay car park.

With funding from the National Lottery, Hay Castle Trust have created an excellent tourist attraction complete with a ceramics gallery, a display of Richard Booth's eccentricities, dressing-up costumes, a well-crafted tableau on Kilvert in the shape of a lectern (the first thing you see on entering the building, but perhaps that was for our benefit because they knew we were coming), a souvenir shop complete with archery kits (but not croquet), and a tea shop equal to any National Trust one. They also kindly provided our excellent tour guides for the basic admission price.

Ref: *Hay Castle and Mansion, A Social History 1122-2022* by Peter Ford

Moccas Church



Moccas Church
Photo: Tim Lewis

Inspired by David Whitehead's talk at our Saturday morning seminar, some members decided to visit the park and church that afternoon.

David gave us a history of the church and its restoration by Sir George Cornwall, as well as explaining internal features. Moccas Church has Celtic associations, being associated with a church that was dedicated to St Dyfrig. A 12th century life of the saint refers to an early Celtic monastery: no archaeology has been found, but aerial photos show a large circular enclosure indicative of an early church. There were two churches inside the enclosure, which was common in Celtic Christian sites.

In the early 19th century, Moccas church nearly disappeared under a covering of ivy, appealing to contemporary taste for the picturesque and providing an artistic view from Moccas Court. Sir Velters Cornwall (inherited 1835, died 1868), took little interest in the church. His younger brother had gone into the church and inherited the baronetcy on the death of his brother – this was Kilvert's Sir George Cornwall. Sir George had an interest in the archaeology of the early Church, having toured the eastern Mediterranean and Sicily in 1863 and looked at Romanesque architecture, including round arches and apsidal churches, such as we see at Moccas.

Sir George employed George Gilbert Scott Junior (1839-1897) to restore Moccas Church. The church was built of local tufa. Tufa for the restoration came from a quarry on the estate and one in the Teme valley. Scott put in new pews and provided

space for an organ. He put in a stone altar, a controversial choice theologically, as Scott was Anglo-Catholic, but Sir George had wanted a Protestant communion table. Scott justified his choice by saying that the Dean of Westminster had just put a stone altar in a side chapel in the Abbey. Scott was going to move the famous knightly tomb that is in the middle of the church, but Sir George insisted on saving it.

Sir George's main interest was music – cello, organ and singing with 'masterly style' and great taste' according to the local papers. The organ is there because of his enthusiasm. It is as big as a cathedral organ, and was made by Walkers of London, cathedral organ builders. It works by water pumps, which are now electric. Sir George wanted different effects and a large sound, which Kilvert noted could be heard outside the church (Vol 3, p165). Scott then brought in decoration to support the grandeur of the organ, going to Charles Eamer Kempe (1837-1907), one of the leading stained glass designers and manufacturers of the era.

When Kilvert visited the church on 10 April 1875, he first heard the organ. *When Sir George had finished playing he came up into the Chancel and courteously shewed me round the beautiful little Norman church with its apse and stone altar. The thing that interested me most in the Church was the beautiful tomb of Sir Reginald de Fresne (Fraxinus = Ashe) the Crusader, perhaps an ancestor of my own.*



Moccas Church organ.

Photo: Tim Lewis

The Royal Free Chapel at Snodhill Castle

Snodhill Castle Trust has launched an appeal to rescue, research and conserve the Royal Free Chapel discovered in the Inner Bailey of Snodhill Castle. It was built before 1142, had somehow vanished from sight in 1597, and was uncovered during the excavations of July 2022. The fund was launched at a ceremony on 29 May, an event which included a reading from *Kilvert's Diary*, and the Castle Trust held a Dig Open Day on 22 July to show the work being undertaken in 2023 by students from Manchester and Cardiff Universities and the National Field School of the US.

The Royal Free Chapel at Snodhill was unique, as it was the only royal chapel built within a lordship (rather than a royal) castle. Its chaplains were personally appointed by the monarch from the 13th to the 16th century. It is further evidence of the importance of the castle.

For information about the castle, and to donate, go to snodhillcastle.org.uk



‘From Shade to Sunshine’

Mary Steele joined other KS members at Kington St Michael and Langley Burrell in June.

‘Marriage: On Tuesday last, 26th June, at Kington St Michael Church, by the Reverend Robert Martyn Ashe, the Reverend Robert Kilvert, Rector of Hardenhuish to Thermuthis, eldest daughter of Walter Coleman Esq., of Langley Fitzhurst.’

This entry, from the *Devizes & Wilts Gazette* of 28 June 1838, tells us that we were only a couple of days short of Mr and Mrs Kilvert’s 185th wedding anniversary when, on 23 June this year, we visited the church where they were married. Kington St Michael, village and church, are mentioned several times in the *Diary*. It was the parish church of Kilvert’s maternal grandfather, Walter Coleman, and Kilvert tells us *He was a regular attendant at his parish Church, Kington St Michael’s, and he was so punctual that the village folk at Kington used to set their clocks by the Squire* (Vol 2, p403).

In the church, there is a memorial to Walter Coleman, his wife Thermuthis and their daughter Dorothea Anne, who died aged 4 in 1825. On 23 February, 1875, Kilvert recorded *examining all the old monuments...and musing and praying among the graves*

of my forefathers. Am I better or worse, have I gone further forward or backward than I was when I lived here at Kington St Michael ten years ago?

Kington St Michael is, therefore, an important place for Kilvertians to visit, as well as a delightful one. Our meeting there was informed by relevant *Diary* entries chosen by Sue Rose and Alan Brimson and by extracts from local newspapers, including the one at the top of this article, found for us by Kilvert researcher Teresa Williams, to whom thanks.

Our hosts, Mr and Mrs Labouchere, provided refreshments from a modern kitchenette neatly tucked into the north aisle. Colin Labouchere played the organs (pipe and electric) and told us about the spire falling down during a great storm in 1703. This was the greatest storm recorded since meteorological records began, but a more recent gale, on Christmas morning 1990, caused its own drama when a pinnacle fell from the tower through the roof into the churchwarden’s pew and Colin, who is the churchwarden, had a lucky escape.



Kington St Michael church.

Photo: Alan Brimson

No gales on the day we visited, but hot sun meant that many of us sought the cool of the porch, to eat our picnics and at the same time admire the fifteenth century wooden studded door supported by two Norman shafts. The pretty churchyard, with its impressive table tombs and lovely view also offered a grassy picnic spot, although it is above the 1582 plague pit, when eighteen villagers died. *My mother says she remembers to have heard as an old village tradition that the street of Kington St Michael was green with grass during the Great Plague for there was scarcely any passing in those dreadful months.* (Vol 2, p344).

Our group then proceeded to Langley Burrell church, where we passed the grave of Kilvert's parents and the Ashe burial plot, and, as Kilvert must have done many times, went through the private gate and across the lawn to Langley House. We were there, by kind permission of the current owner, to see the stables, which are unaltered since Kilvert's day. Their shade, and that of the trees in the grounds outside the stable yard, was very welcome. The afternoon's heat meant that we had to forgo a walk *across the bright warm meadows to the Manor Farm* (Vol 3, p29) and drove there instead. At Manor Farm, the stables again provided a cool retreat, this time as a tearoom where we had a delicious Kilvert tea.

It was a lovely day in idyllic surroundings. Warm thanks, as warm as the day, go to organisers Sue and Mike Rose and to Jim Hall, who guided us in Kilvert's footsteps around locations from the Diarist's beloved Wiltshire home.



Kington St Michael: the Norman chancel arch.

Photo: Editor

Note:

The headline comes from Vol 2, p239. Frederick Grice suggested that Kilvert lived in Kington St Michael for a short time in 1865, perhaps to help out during an absence of the incumbent, Edward Awdry (Grice: Kilvert and his world, p34). I wrote about scholar John Aubrey, one of Kington St Michael's 'local worthies' in Journal 46, p16-17.



Langley House stable block seen from the grounds.

Photo: Nicholas Green

The Kilvert Trails in Langley Burrell

Rosemary Waterkeyn of Langley Burrell Residents' Association describes how the new online Kilvert Trails have been created.

I have a confession to make – I had never heard of the Reverend Frances Kilvert when I came to live in Langley Burrell just over two years ago. Shame on you, I hear the cry! Happily, I have managed to rectify this travesty and have now read the three volumes of his published *Diary*; joined the *Kilvert Society*; discovered the places where he walked and lived in my part of the country; and met some truly knowledgeable people who have given me a zest for learning more about this remarkable man. To this end, I met Robert Whitrow, who was living in Kilvert's Parsonage, and who was passionate about setting out both a Heritage and a Kilvert Trail for our Parish and surrounds. Sadly, he was battling against the clock as he was suffering from a terminal illness. This did nothing to deter his energy and passion to see these trails come to fruition and I put up my hand when he asked for help in achieving his aim. Offering to help produce these trails turned out to be an excellent decision. I had no previous experience or knowledge of how to do this and had absolutely no idea at all about the enormous amount of work that it would entail.



Langley Burrell Church.

Photo: Nicholas Green

We broke it into two online releases: the first was the heritage assets with the heritage walks. Then the second release which added the audio markers and the Kilvert's trails. Permission had to be obtained from the owners of all the beautiful listed buildings to say that I could photograph the outside of their homes, and also use these on the Trails. I needed then to explore various places mentioned in *Kilvert's Diary* and take extra photographs. This took me on 'magical mystery tours' as I called them with Jim Hall – a mine of information on Kilvert. To the north of Langley Burrell, I discovered the beautiful lake in Draycot Park where Kilvert and his friends would skate in winter, and perform the quadrille. On to the west to Allington to discover the Bullich House (Bolehyde being the name now) where the squire made himself a pair of wings to fly, but only got as far as the horse or duck pond. Finally out east to the Moravian School where Thermuthis Coleman, Kilvert's mother, went to school riding on a donkey.

For those sites on the Gazetteer where we were unable to take photos, I sketched some illustrations. An outline of the walks was built using footpaths and rights of way, and then mapped out on Google Earth Pro. I had, as mentioned, read the *Diary* from cover to cover and I chose the relevant extracts which I then recorded into short audio clips. Once done, I passed all this over to my neighbour Karl Eaves to integrate. A massive part of these trails was the IT knowledge and skill required to set up the websites in the first place. Karl spent an inordinate amount of time devising and putting together the whole intricate system.

I should explain that both trails are inter-linked, in that the Heritage Trail sets out in detail the history of all the listed buildings and monuments in our Parish. These were researched in great depth and written up by the historian Louise Ryland-Epton. This information is accompanied by photographs of all buildings and monuments on the Gazetteer and four walks are mapped out on interactive maps. The Kilvert Trail is different in that there are three audio walks across the parish boundaries, as Kilvert walked far and beyond these on a regular basis. However, if the person on a walk wishes to know more about a particular point of interest or building, then they can easily refer to the Gazetteer whilst using the same site.

The work is still ongoing to tweak the system and put right any errors found. It's taken an inestimable number of hours by Karl, Louise, and myself to complete, but it was a joy to do and nearly ten months after saying to Robert "can I help you?", both the Heritage Trail and the Kilvert Trail have gone live on our website. Robert was able to see the first appearance of the Heritage Trail, but sadly not the Kilvert Trail about which he was so passionate and determined to get done. However, I like to think he will be pleased with what we have done to enable more people to know about Frances Kilvert and his wonderful description of rural life in Victorian times. I do hope you will enjoy it too.

To find the Trails, go to the website – langleyburrell.org and click on the links.

‘Missions, Medicine and Military Men’ – A new publication from John Toman. Fully illustrated.

*This study, entitled *Missions, Medicine, and Military Men. A Victorian Family and the Indian Mutiny*, is available electronically from John Toman as a pdf. Please send me your email address and I will email the pdf to you. My email address is: johntoman79@gmail.com*

It is surprising that large and almost totally new elements of the Kilvert story can be discovered in our Society’s 75th year. Therefore, I am pleased to bring to the Society’s attention an exploration I have conducted over the last three years into the Kilvert family’s involvement in India. The first part of it looks at Kilvert’s preoccupation, bordering on obsession, with the Indian Mutiny of 1857. The second part, which complements the first, gives a detailed account of the career in India of Samuel Wyndowe, the diarist’s brother-in-law.

The Indian Mutiny makes its appearance in the *Diary* in the explosive and shocking entry for 22 January 1873, which purports to be the experience at Cawnpore of John Gough, an old soldier who was one of Kilvert’s Langley Burrell parishioners. Knowing that Gough’s regiment was the 19th, I searched the internet to learn more of its history. It was puzzling to find that although it was sent to India to quell the Mutiny, it was never at Cawnpore. Cawnpore was of stupendous significance for Victorians because it was the scene of the brutal massacre of 200 British women and children by rebels. When it happened, Gough’s regiment was still in England. That event not only dominated the war that followed but also haunted the memory of Victorians for ever more.

The Kilvert family’s support for the missionary cause in India would have meant that the impact of the Mutiny on them was deeply disturbing and particularly on the young Kilvert because he was only just sixteen when it happened. We know that the Mutiny was a topic opened up fully for discussion among pupils at the school in which he was a boarder. That was one source of his obsession with the Mutiny. We must recognise too that with lessons over for the day pupils had the opportunity on their own in the dormitory to review newspaper accounts full of Mutiny horrors akin to those of the Gough diary entry. Evidence that Kilvert, like many Victorians, was never able to forget the Mutiny lies in the fact that he continually sought out books that dealt with it. In March 1871 he read the biography of Bishop Cotton of Calcutta, whose task in 1858 was to rebuild Christian India. Twenty years after the Mutiny, Kilvert was reading Chesney’s ‘The Dilemma: A Tale of the Mutiny’ (1878).

Kilvert’s prevailing anxiety for his sister’s safety in India upon her marriage in 1865 to Sam Wyndowe may be attributed to his memories of the violence and barbarity of the Mutiny. She and her family had returned on their first home leave in May 1870 when her brother wrote: ‘Thank God for bringing them all safely home.’ Nothing encapsulates more vividly his fear that



Surgeon-General
Samuel Jardine Wyndowe.
Photo: KS archive

British women and children in India were always under threat from blood-crazed sepoys than the Cawnpore diary entry. That is one of the impulses that drove him to write that entry.

Another is to be found in his devotion to the missionary cause: the Cawnpore entry enacts the savage punishment meted out to rebels who had opposed it. It is widely recognised now that missionary activity was a major cause of the Mutiny. Recent studies of the Mutiny confirm that it was basically a religious war. That is certainly the way Kilvert would have seen it. My new account of Sam Wyndowe’s career in India shows that that would have been his understanding too. He was sufficiently a believer in that cause to have actually founded a church for Hyderabad’s Christians early in his time there.

We have had to guess at the nature of Sam and Emmie’s life in Hyderabad. My new account not only recreates that in detail but also explains why the *Diary* says so little about it. It explains too Sam’s unexplained ‘low health’ in India in 1878 and Kilvert’s long bout of mysterious illness during 1878 by showing that they were indissolubly connected: they had their origin in the terrible famine of 1876-8. An important fact revealed in this study is that Sam was a hero, working tirelessly to save Indians both from it and from a simultaneous cholera epidemic.

Neither Sam’s heroism nor even the famine itself feature in the *Diary*. The reason for this appears to be that the British Government in India kept the cost of famine relief as low as possible and was indifferent to the thousands of Indian deaths. Sam knew this. Kilvert knew it too and I believe shame and guilt made him exclude it from his diary. I believe that these were the factors which in 1878 brought both brothers-in-law close to nervous breakdown.

Kilvert’s vision of a Christian India brought about through missionary endeavour depended on an administration that was enlightened and benevolent. The 1876-8 famine showed clearly what the reality was. This was a further cause of Kilvert’s depression at this time. Nevertheless, a Wiltshire newspaper for 29 September 1879 recorded that he conducted a service at Langley Burrell church on 7 September 1879 as well as ‘a Mission Service’ at local schools. Thus, right up to his death (23 September), he had retained his belief in the missionary cause in spite of the catastrophe of the Mutiny.

I am confident that the abundance of new information in the study will provide a much enlarged understanding of Kilvert and his brother-in-law for members.

An Unholy Row at Draycot Church, and a Letter from Langley Burrell Rectory, Wiltshire, 1853-1877

Tim Couzens unravels the story.

Many readers will know the story of the heiress Catherine Tylney Long and her “scamp of a husband” William Long Wellesley – the ruination of her estates in Essex and Hampshire¹. This story concerns their children – William R.A. Long Wellesley (later 5th Earl of Mornington, (1813-1863) and his sister Lady Victoria Long Wellesley (1818-1897). Also involved were Catherine’s sisters – Miss Dora and Miss Emma Tylney Long.

Some readers will also recall Kilvert’s friend, the Revd Charles Awdry, from this entry²:-

Charles Awdry of Draycot came over to call on me this afternoon, and I walked back with him as far as Cold Harbour. He told me he once said to Lord Cowley at Draycot House, ‘My ancestors owned this estate when yours were peasants.’” ‘It is true’, Lord Cowley said, ‘We are only a hundred years old. Which introduces Awdry’s forthright nature. More follows, below, on Lord Cowley.

The Draycot Estate had been preserved for William Jr, through the Court of Chancery and Trusts, until he came of age in 1834. Bailing out his father caused further financial stress, to the extent that he was nearly bankrupt himself in 1846. But, through a large number of sales, the core estates survived. By the early 1850s the ancestral home was back on a reasonably even keel. Draycot House was repaired and the first phase of the restoration of St James’s Church, Draycot Cerne was undertaken. This included the removal of the west gallery and installation of the first organ. This gives us the earliest mention of the Awdrys⁴ in the family correspondence⁵:-

9th July 1853 William Viscount Wellesley to his sister Victoria:-
 “‘Our Dear’ Mrs Awdry [Jane] played the organ yesterday worse than ever. I think she had better give it up altogether. The congregation sing well enough if she would not spoil it all by her Bad Play’.

Throughout the late 1850s William and Victoria maintained friendly relations. He commuted between Draycot House and Paris. She lived at Eastbourne. But they often met at Christmas. It was therefore a huge shock when it was discovered that William had disinherited his sister and passed the remainder of his estates to his cousin, Henry Wellesley 1st Earl Cowley, by a new will, executed just before his death in July 1863⁶. In return for nursing him devotedly, for the last two months of his life, Lady Victoria was given an annuity of £1000⁷. Lord Cowley, then Ambassador at Paris, had introduced William at

high society functions and let him use the beautiful English garden at the Embassy⁸. He denied all prior knowledge of the content of the will and very tactlessly thought Lady Victoria would eventually see the advantages of Draycot passing to the Wellesleys⁹. The rumour mill went into over-drive, in both Paris and at Draycot – had Lord Cowley’s son applied undue pressure? Was Lord Mornington able to pass the estate to whoever he liked? What was behind the disinheritance?

Lady Victoria’s first reaction, encouraged by her evangelical aunts, was one of resignation to the will of God and ‘bore most cheerfully the loss of her property’¹⁰. In December 1863, together with her aunts, she was designing the inscription for a memorial plaque, above new altar rails, in Draycot Church¹¹. A local clergyman suggested the following, to be carved into altar



The Lady Victoria Long Wellesley.

rails “I became dumb and opened not my mouth, for it was Thy Doing” [Psalms 39:9]. At the same time, Lady Victoria had contracted Arthur O’Connor, of London, to make stained glass for the East Window of Draycot Church as a further Memorial for her brother¹². It was eventually agreed that the Cowleys would pay for the main memorial, in the family pew¹³, and Lord Mornington’s friend, Captain Arthur Palliser, was to pay for a new South Window.

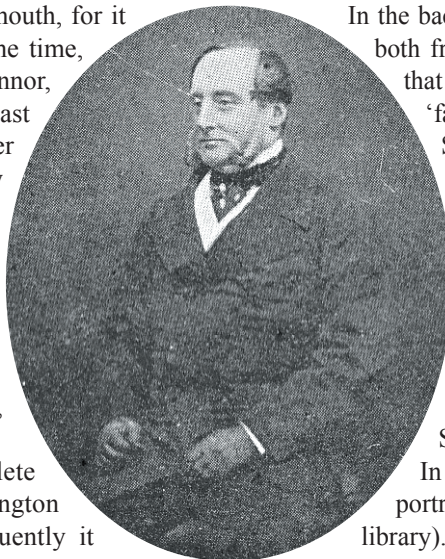
Charles Awdry, at first, was delighted. He wrote a friendly letter, to Dear Lady Victoria, costing up all the memorials and windows:-

“My object to make my Church complete during my incumbency and L^d Mornington once promised me Altar rails, consequently it will be very appropriate the Miss Longs completing the promise; on top rail in brass I project the words of memorial the Miss Longs may wish. The East Window to insert painted glass would, if you think, will be an affecting and nice memorial on your part ...”¹⁴.

And again, soon after, ‘there is plenty of scope for an even more striking memorial to Lord Mornington in the East window and putting up Altar rails. The pattern I sent you was the very one Lord Mornington liked and had promised It is appropriate to the architecture of the Church. I hope you will put up the chancel window & the Altar rails the Miss Longs.’¹⁵



Charles R.E. Awdry (1811-1875). Rector of Draycot Cerne (1850-1875)



The last Earl of Mornington

In the background, Lady Victoria was receiving letters, both from friends and purported solicitors, claiming that her brother’s will was not legal because of a ‘fatal error’, about the entail, in a Deed of 1834¹⁶. So much for divine providence. By October she had ‘taken good legal advice on this sad subject, that confirms my previous opinion, that it is no true uninfluenced Will’¹⁷ – and she must have considered contesting it. However, the eventual decision was not to proceed. By May 1864 she was communicating with Lord Cowley only via lawyers. (He had offered the use of the agent’s house at Wanstead and Seagry House, Wiltshire – which she refused. In the end she only accepted the Long Family portraits and the contents of the Draycot House library). Clearly, she felt an acute sense of injustice and her actions now made this obvious.

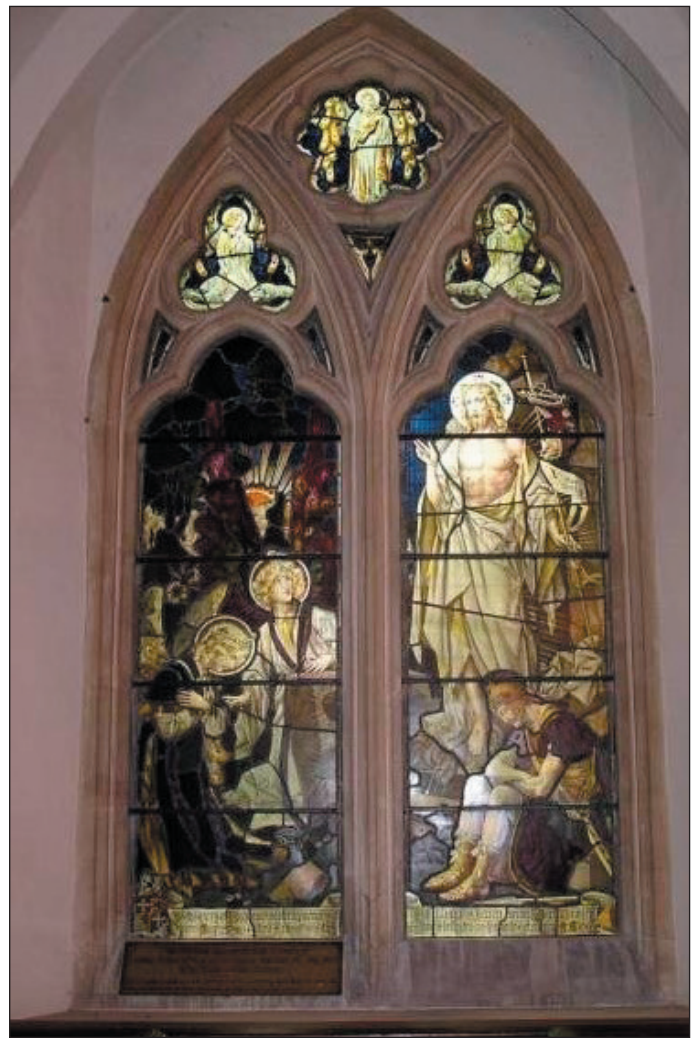
Rather than visit the Draycot Estate herself, she sent “spies” – her Goddaughter, Octavia Barry, who stayed with the Kilverts at Langley Burrell Rectory in June¹⁸. Her account is given in full¹⁹:-

‘My dearest Godmama, I cannot help writing to you now that I am in this neighbourhood, as I think you would like to hear of some of the people who all so sincerely regret you not being in possession of your estates. I am staying here with the Kilverts – I came on Thursday last & intend staying till next week, when I may be going on to London or rather its neighbourhood.

Yesterday we drove over to Sutton²⁰ & I went as you wished to see your favourite, Miles the Blacksmith. He did not know me of course, but directly I mentioned your name he went into such a state of delight, at seeing anyone who knew you. When I asked him if he had any message he exclaimed God bless her give her my love, but when he became more collected he said send her my duty & best respects & tell her I wish she could come back. The just question they asked was can you give us any hope that she will come back & they were quite downcast when I said I was afraid there was none. Miles was so excited he threw his arms about & said “It’s not only me it’s everyone wishes it” wouldn’t it be a happy day we’d meet them on the new road & haul the carriage in that we would. Miles had an accident which disabled him from his work, but as it occurred a twelve month ago, no doubt you heard of it. Ruth Miles was also eager to hear about you. She has nearly lost her sight poor thing. They all asked so eagerly after you & the Miss Longs – & old Miles could hardly get over the idea that you would not have your rights. I also saw the dressmaker – who spoke with such deep respect when she enquired for you.

I went to see Beavington & he sent his duty to you & wished me to thank the Miss Longs & yourself for your kind enquiries about his pension. I called at the Rectory & there heard the most heartfelt regret from Mr Awdry who talked of nothing else but the way in which you had been wronged & was pretty free in his expressions on the subject. The rest of the family were out, but he came out to the carriage & took me over to the church. I cannot tell you how I felt when I felt myself on your property & felt how cruelly you had been deprived of it. I looked at Palliser’s window & could hardly help a feeling of loathing as I read the inscription. I admired the altar rails very much – & the text upon them – is so appropriate – Those words they will tell their tale of sad but beautiful resignation to all who turn to read them.

Bristow, when he read them, said to Mr Awdry “I don’t understand the drift of those words” “Oh don’t you Mr Awdry, repeat them, I’ll explain them to you. These ladies have been robbed & they wish to express their resignation to the will of Providence. I quite admire Mr Awdry in this respect for he doesn’t care what he says of or who he says it to, which however has offended the Dangans²¹. I will not tell you all he said of them – but he ended by saying – ‘Oh if Lady Victoria had come here all would have been smooth’. One curious thing he told me which shows Lord Cowley can’t be satisfied & that was He called on Mr Awdry about 3 weeks ago & said “Well Mr Awdry what’s up? What is Lady Victoria going to do? Mr Awdry replied ‘I am not aware she is going to do anything. I don’t think you need be afraid you have only had to deal with ladies’, but Lord Cowley stayed with him for three hours talking it over. And when he heard of Mr Scrope’s idea²² – about the entail – he said “If it can be proved that Lord Mornington had no power to make a will I will leave Draycot in half an hour”. It is evident he can’t satisfy his conscience & I think if you had to deal with Lord Cowley alone you would stand some chance of compensation. Mr Awdry also told me that he had heard there was a private understanding that Lord Dangan has to give Palliser £50,000 at Lord Cowley’s death. Everyone unites in thinking Lord Mornington knew nothing of what the will has done. Mr Awdry said he had seen your name in the papers at the Drawing room & also Lady Feodore’s²³. Did you see her? I am anxious to hear from you. I do much wish to hear whether anything has been settled about the country place



Draycot Cerne East Window.

you are to have. Do tell me. The Awdrys very kindly asked me to Draycot to stay. But I declined going partly because it would be so painful now to be at the place which has gone from you. And also I do not particularly like the people the Awdrys meet with. But they are so very kind & hospitable that if they pressure much more perhaps I might go there for one day or so. But the whole place seems to me infected now though none of the usurpers are now at the House. Will you let me know if there is anything I can do for you in this neighbourhood, & I shall be delighted to do it for you, or any other poor people you would wish me to see. I am passing a pleasant visit here [Langley Burrell Rectory] & feel the benefit of the change. Croquet is all the rage here, & I am getting quite a desperate player. Mrs Kilvert is going to have a croquet party tomorrow. On Friday we are going to one at the Winthropses at Hardenhuish House. I trust it will be fine, but there are some rather unpromising showers today & of course it must put off both if it comes on.

Hoping to hear from you soon. With kindest & best love & best remembrances to the Miss Longs. Believe me ever my dearest Godmama. Your most affectionate god daughter Octavia Barry.

PS I shall most likely leave this place tomorrow week’.

Whatever else Awdry told Octavia Barry is not known. But soon after this Lady Victoria cancelled the plans for the stained glass East Window at Draycot Church²⁴ and even removed her part of the dedication on the altar rails.



Memorial to the 5th Earl of Mornington, Draycot Cerne.

Charles Awdry was furious and fired this diatribe off to Lady Victoria on 6 September²⁵:-

‘Dear Madam,

In reply to your letter I shall put before you some plain facts. You were the latest of four to ask permission to place a memorial to Lord Mornington in my church. You asked for the East Window already undertaken by another; by him on your wish being known obligingly relinquished to you; other works were then handsomely and at once carried out so as to be in harmony with yours when done; at the end of a year you decline to keep your word, thus preventing my having this principal work admirably done which it would have been, and thwarting my whole plan & causing me considerable expense.

In order to oblige all, it seems that I have made a mistake. And shall not for the future, consult any one as to what I allow placed in the church. I alone am responsible. In your allusion to the “sanctity” of the place and the “hitherto” honoured resting place of your ancestors. I flatter myself I have done as much to preserve that as you or your & my ancestors. I found the church damp, not even weather tight, uncared for by the family. Badly attended: as to the neighbourhood, what it is now: for one hundred years all these ancestors did was to take away a great part of the consecrated churchyard to make a flower garden of & united front to House, & erect an exclusive “Den²⁶” {so Lord Cowley terms it, who I am glad to say is going to take it down} for themselves; I have attracted the poor. I have registered every gift and charity that I have received {I find yours in the 15 years to be under £5} and with the exception of your Aunts donation, all demands of the entire Parish belonging to a noble estate fall on a clergyman with 12 children & a small living.

You state you were acquainted with your Brother’s feelings on sundry matters. You could not have had the unreserved communications I had & possess correspondence about. In justice to myself & in answer to what I am advised is not a courteous note, I here close “troubling” you.

I have today heard from Captain Palliser and have to acquaint you that Lord Cowley, Your Aunts and himself will alone place memorials to Lord Mornington.

I took down the roof over your promised window, which I was not compelled to do, but which would hinder any repair unnecessary after glass was put in; the £10 that it cost I think you ought to pay.

Mr O’Connor also writes to the mechanic I employed to take his very troublesome measurements to ask what he had to pay {£10}. & never does so. I remain yrs sin^y C.R. Awdry.’

One can only imagine what Lady Victoria’s reaction to that letter might have been. She vowed never to set foot in Draycot and kept this promise until her burial in the family vault, in 1897.



The plaque dedicating the altar rails.

As a footnote, the rather more diplomatic Rector’s wife, Jane Awdry, kept in contact with the Miss Tylney Longs, through the 1870s. She wrote about charity donations to Draycot Estate schools and other local news. In June 1877 she wrote to Lady Victoria from Birmingham to ask about her own husband’s memorial, together with the others in the chancel of Draycot Church²⁷. They were immediately replaced and there they remain. So maybe there was a happy ending to the sorry saga after all.

For more on the Wellesley family of Draycot House and the Awdrys, see *Journal* 37 – September 2013. St James’, Draycot Cerne, is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust [see weblink for details of how to arrange a visit –

<https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/visit/church-listing/st-james-church-draycot-cerne.html>

All photos courtesy of Tim Couzens. Reproduced with permission.

REFERENCES AND FOOTNOTES

- ¹ *Diary* Friday 12 Dec 1873.
- ² *Diary* Thursday 14 Oct 1872.
- ³ One wonders if he was aware that his ancestor, Susanna Long, eloped with the gardener and was cut off by her mother Lady Henrietta. They had to be supported, in secret, by the rest of the family.
- ⁴ Redbridge Ref 90/96/A28/AQ36
- ⁵ London Borough of Redbridge Archives. Wanstead House Collection.
- ⁶ Essex Record Office D/DCy F2. Actually his cousin, once removed. William’s father, the 4th Earl of Mornington was the 1st Earl Cowley’s first cousin.
- ⁷ His mistress, Lucille Bruchet, was given an annuity of £4000. The estates were heavily mortgaged, so Lord Cowley made little financial gain until later. Victoria was then 45 and two engagements had come to nothing, so children were probably not expected.
- ⁸ He met the Emperor Napoleon III and Empress at a concert in 1860 – 90/96/A28/AQ45. See also *Lady Victoria Long Wellesley: A biography*, by Octavia Barry, 1898.
- ⁹ Redbridge ref 90/96/A28/BB1.
- ¹⁰ Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre Ref 947/2122A.
- ¹⁰ Redbridge ref 90/96/A28/BH5.
- ¹² Redbridge ref 90/96/A28/AJ1-3. A very good High Victorian designer, who had been recommended by Fanny Toke, the daughter of another former Rector Draycot.
- ¹³ Executed by the sculptor Henri de Triqueti.
- ¹⁴ Redbridge ref 90/96/A28/C2
- ¹⁵ Redbridge ref 90/96/A28/C3.
- ¹⁶ Redbridge 90/96/A28/A11 from Motton & Motton. There is no record for this firm of solicitors and the address does not exist. It is likely to be from an imposter.
- ¹⁷ Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre Ref 947/2122B.
- ¹⁸ She was the youngest daughter of Rev. Henry Barry (d 1850), former Rector of Draycot Cerne and Lady Victoria’s eventual biographer. The year of the Langley Burrell letter is not stated explicitly. The Kilverts were probably unaware of her ulterior motive for the visit.
- ¹⁹ Redbridge ref 90/96/A28/E2.
- ²⁰ Sutton Benger.
- ²¹ William Viscount Dangan (1834-1895), later 2nd Earl Cowley and his wife Emily Gwendoline (Peers-Williams)
- ²² George Poulett-Scrope of Castle Combe, Wilts – a distant Long relative. Who must have heard the rumour that there was a problem with the 1834 Deed.
- ²³ Feodora Wellesley, Lord Cowley’s daughter, later Viscountess Bertie of Thame.
- ²⁴ O’Connor’s window was eventually placed at South Wraxall church, near Bath, another ancestral home of the Long Family.
- ²⁵ Redbridge ref 90/96/A28/C4
- ²⁶ The Long pew at St James, Draycot Cerne. It was repaired, not removed, and still contains the family memorials above the crypt.
- ²⁷ Redbridge ref 90/96/A28/D1. They all needed to be re-set after major repairs.

Morres, Britford And the Stonehenge Walk

Richard Parker follows the route of a Wiltshire walk from the Diary

Kilvert made his first (and only as far as we know) visit to Stonehenge on 27 August 1875 (Vol 3, p222) in the company of his friend the Revd Arthur Philip Morres (or Morris as he also appears in Plomer). He'd arrived at Britford Vicarage on Wednesday 25th to stay until Saturday 28th. Britford village is situated just 1¾ miles from Salisbury Cathedral.¹ A 1992 Newsletter article speculated on how Kilvert came to know Morres. Both Arthur Morres and Kilvert went to Wadham College, Oxford; however, Morres graduated in 1857 but Kilvert only 'went up' in 1859, thus seemingly ruling out a meeting there.

In the *Diary*, Britford and Morres are first mentioned on 11 July 1874 (Vol 3, p49) on a day visit. Kilvert notes that he has not been to Britford for 23 years, implying that he was only eleven years old or so – how does he remember that so clearly? On this occasion Kilvert also refers to Morres's *soldier brother* – this is Elliot James.

The only other account of Britford is another day visit on 26 May 1875 (Vol 3, p192) when Kilvert mentions *Francis Hill* – actually Frances, a sister of the Vicar's wife, Mary Anne. Kilvert records the riverside meadow scene in some typically evocative word painting. Some puzzling nomenclature used is *water carriages* – this may evoke an image of stately river barges but actually refers to the man-made series of watercourses constructed in the late 17th century to create water meadows. Kilvert also mentions *hatches* – these are sluice gates on the 'carriages'. This extensive system of man-made channels along a four mile stretch of the Avon valley was constructed between 1665 and 1690 by John Snow, the steward of landowner Sir Joseph Ashe, who financed the project. The purpose was to provide river nutrients to flooded land promoting early grass and reliable crops of hay.²

On his August visit (Vol 3, p220-6), although Kilvert had recorded he was to stay with the Morres's (presumably husband and wife), his first night was spent not in the vicarage but in the *old Manor House*, Kilvert handily tells us that it is situated close to the village green, thus pointing to it being Manor Farm, which appears on the 1875 (published 1887) 25" OS map, an 18th century and now Listed building. Why was Kilvert pushed off here? As the South Wilts archery meeting was set for Kilvert's day two (in a field near the vicarage), perhaps Morres already had enough guests. On day two, Kilvert casually informs us, as he passes the Manor House, *where I stopt last night* – as if he would not be lodging there again; however, there is no explanation in the surviving text. There is no mention of 'Manor Farm' in the 1871 Census but it does appear in the 1881 version, occupied by a bailiff and his family. There is some confusion of sequence in the *Diary* as Kilvert states: *As I went ... past Britford Moat between the water carriages to my sleeping quarters at the old Manor House...* which implies the water carriages are between the Moat and the Manor house, patently not the case. The Moat is a large house lying between the vicarage and Manor Farm and, as its name implies, surrounded by a moat (of rectangular shape). What Kilvert might have meant is that he took the path running immediately south of the moat and which crosses a man-made watercourse lying east of the Manor, and a logical route to access the front of that abode.

On Kilvert's second day, he attended the South Wilts Archery meeting and encountered Major Hawkins Fisher, *the champion archer of England*. Charles Hawkins Fisher was champion archer for 4 years from 1871-1874. Characteristically, Kilvert also noticed Edith Pinckney *the prettiest archer there... a slight delicate girl of sixteen* [actually she was seventeen] *but the first archer in South Wilts*. A report of the event was given



Britford water carriages 1875 OS 25" map.

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Distant view of Stonehenge from trackway corresponding with Kilvert's 'wheel track'.

Photo: Richard Parker

in the *Bath Chronicle*³ which records that Major Fisher won the Visitor's prize for best gold with a score of not less than 80 and Miss Pinckney won the third ladies' prize for best gold. A Mr Morris appears in this report with a score of 50 hits & 232 points. Can this be the Rev. Philip Morris? I think not, more likely his brother Elliot James, who sounds a rather sporty type (he was a keen cricketer) which promotes him as the prime candidate. Edith Pinckney went on to win the Grand Western Archery Society Championship medal for ladies the following year and in 1877. Amazingly, what appears to be this very medal was auctioned in 2020 and sold for £420.⁴ Just four years after Kilvert's encounter, she married Charles Curtis, a director of a gunpowder factory.

But there is a long walk to be undertaken and Kilvert asserts that from his starting point (Britford Church) to Stonehenge is *eleven miles*. The precision of *eleven* rather than *ten* sparks interest; readers may be familiar with my curiosity as to Kilvert's navigational skill and distance estimation [*Journal* 52] and here is another example.⁵ Some confusion of route occurs at the very outset because Kilvert states that they *walked through the meadows*: surely not immediately from the church when there was a perfectly good 'road' heading in the right direction? What Kilvert might have implied is that where the road takes a sharp turn to the SW just after Bridge Farm, they diverted onto the more direct footpath which did, indeed, traverse the meadows. This path rejoins the road at Harnham House. Going via Salisbury Cathedral Close they struck out along the Devizes road – now the A360. I was keen to experience some of the journey but had no intention of completing a 20 mile or so round walk and as I valued my safety too much to risk several miles along A-roads lacking provision for safe walking, I restricted myself to a small area between the A360 and the Avon at Normanton. My plan was

to park in Amesbury and take a minicab to the Druid's Lodge and walk the approach to Stonehenge then back to Amesbury. A lack of immediate availability of cabs forced me to divide the walk into two parts but more of this later.

Kilvert informs us that after some six miles (out of Salisbury and before reaching the Druid's Head Inn), Stonehenge was glimpsed in the dim distance. It is very hard to believe that this was possible; however, the road does reach an elevation of 134m (440 ft) at the Monarch's Way crossing (modern map), about one third of a mile beyond the 5 mile MS affording a theoretical line of sight to the monument of approximately four miles with no intervening higher ground or obscuring woods etc.

Kilvert and his companion had breakfasted before Church and started their walk immediately after so no doubt they were very welcoming of the *merry lunch* at the Druid's Head Inn, which is about 8½ miles from their starting point. Kilvert tells us nothing of the folks there (or perhaps Plomer omits this) but census research shows Isaac and Martha Woolcott and family resident in 1871. Isaac was also a respected racehorse trainer who died less than two years later in May 1877. Martha only kept the inn going until September 1878 when it closed as a public house permanently.⁶ The 1881 Census shows Martha was living with two shopkeeper daughters in Wilton; the same census does not list the Druid's Head, only Druid's Lodge, a different building at the same site and not an inn.

On with the walk, and Kilvert tells us that *soon after leaving the Druid's Head and struck across the turf eastward we came in sight of the grey cluster of gigantic Stones*. Clearly they took a short cut and there was such a footpath immediately after the Inn heading NE directly towards the stone circle. Kilvert describes this path as a *wheel track* and reassuringly, the footpath still exists. The first part of my walk started near the Druid's Lodge,



Edith Pinckney's Grand Western Archery Society Championship Medal for 1876 and 1877.

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at the fir copse which did not exist in Kilvert's time (and does not appear on OS maps until the 1960s); however, the track soon aligns with Kilvert's *wheel track*. The *Diary* offers a description of the Plain hereabouts very different from what we see today, mentioning heather, thyme and harebells, in contrast to the modern day arable fields. Kilvert also mentions *Ambresbury* instead of Amesbury – why did he use this antiquated form of the name? My unaided view of Stonehenge did not occur until I reached the vicinity of Wilton Down and the point where I stopped and returned to my car.

Kilvert is clearly rather overawed by the stones and waxes lyrical at some length about his impressions. Taking leave, the walkers return via a different route as, apart from the satisfaction of exploring new ground, they wished to view the archery meeting at Great Durnford Manor in the afternoon and naturally sought a more direct approach to it. Exactly which way they went from Stonehenge is open to question, and my guess is the footpath that diverges in a more southerly direction than the one they arrived on, but perhaps they were at liberty to wander where they pleased. From here they'd have had to turn more easterly until reaching the *shade of the beautiful cross avenues, dark and cool...till we came to the farmhouse of Normanton*. Similar avenues still exist either side of the Wilford to Normanton road. The second part of my walk commenced at Amesbury recreation ground car park, from where I walked a reverse approximation of Kilvert's route to a point roughly ½ mile short of Springbottom Farm before retracing my steps.⁷

On reaching Normanton Farm⁸ our Diarist had to ask the way to Normanton Hatches, the crossing point for the River Avon but actually, close by; it's possible that the travellers were directed back to the footpath running alongside the thatch-topped garden

wall, both of which still exist. The path then cuts through a narrow thicket and over another footbridge where it arrives at a hillside – I turning north to Amesbury and Kilvert turning south to Great Durnford and the *hospitable* Manor of John Pinckney and his family. The pretty young Edith Pinckney (John Pinckney's niece) is not mentioned at Durnford; her parents were Captain Philip and Emma Pinckney, residing at Milston, a village just north of Amesbury, Captain Philip being the brother of John Pinckney; the two families are not distinguished in the Plomer index. The Durnford Manor archery ground is marked on the 1878 OS 25" map between the house and the river. On this occasion Major Fisher's form was below par as Kilvert tells us that he *was not shooting like the champion archer of England and kept dropping his arrows into the green*. Fisher was also a keen falconer and could not resist regaling Kilvert with falconry knowledge, even inviting him and Morres to his hawking lodge at Chitterne (on Salisbury Plain) to see rooks being hawked. There is no mention in the *Diary* that this invitation was ever taken up and I suspect it held little appeal to Kilvert. Fisher's home was at The Castle, Stroud, Gloucestershire, and in 1900 he published a book about falconry called *Reminiscences of a Falconer*.

Exactly where the walkers went thereafter is somewhat conjectural. They did proceed through the village between the *pretty cottage gardens* until taking a path to the left and ascending the downs; possibly they turned onto a track that is now a road called Jubilee Hill, Kilvert records that they could see Woodford Church and *Hele* Farmhouse (Kilvert means Heale Farmhouse); Woodford appears on modern maps as Middle Woodford. The road reaches a height of 129m (423 ft.) and runs SE down to the junction called High Post with the straight south heading track – the modern A345 – continuing over Fourmile Hill and leading



A 'drowner' at work on a seven-hatch weir at Lower Farm, Britford, 1954.

By kind permission of the Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading

directly to Old Sarum. This last named they must have been particularly keen to view because despite the twilight hour and the exertion of their, so far, 18 mile or so slog, they still mustered enough energy to negotiate the moat and steep embankment. Any notes of the remainder of the walk have not survived but assuming the above described route and continuation via the Cathedral Close, the return journey is slightly over 11½ miles.

Some new information about the Revd Morres's family might be welcome. His wife Mary Anne died in 1889. In March 1891, he married Emily Louisa Harrison in Menton, France but she only survived another four years, dying in March 1895 aged about 45, eight days after giving birth. From 1894, Morres was chaplain at St. Nicholas Hospital, Salisbury, residing, appropriately, in The Close. Morres died suddenly whilst on a visit to his brother Charles in London in October 1900 aged 65. Sadly, his children fared much less well: Mary b 1868 died aged 2 months. Elliot Arthur b August 1869 died October 1887 aged 18. From the second marriage, John Nicholas, b 13 March 1895 died two days later. The only offspring to survive both parents was Philip Humphrey b 1872, who was living in Australia as a fruit grower at the time of his father's death and, although it was impossible to return in time for the funeral, was in England by the time of the 1901 census. Philip died in 1912 at Renmark, S. Australia aged 41, apparently by his own hand, despite being engaged to be married.⁹

To end on a brighter note, time to consider Morres the ornithologist – he was well respected locally in this field and contributed letters and notes to local newspapers and journals. Several obituaries mention Morres's collection of stuffed birds, considered very fine,¹⁰ which Kilvert observed on his 11 July visit. The collection was bequeathed to his son Philip Humphrey who offered to loan them to Salisbury Museum provided they built a new room for their display although Philip would retain the right to reclaim them at any time: as a result, not surprisingly, the museum declined the offer.¹¹ After Philip's death the collection was sold at auction in 1913¹² and the entire lot of 145 cases was purchased by Mr. E. B. Maton of Enford, Pewsey, Wilts for £125.¹³

REFERENCES AND FOOTNOTES

- ¹ The KS visited Britford in 2007 and this was reported on in Journal 23 by Richard Vine. In the same edition is an article about the Morres family by Dave Hepworth; both are well worth reading.
- ² The Development of Water Meadows on the Salisbury Avon 1665-1690 by Joseph Bettey; *Agricultural History Review* 51 (2003), 163-72. This provides a fascinating account of the trials and tribulations of John Snow in achieving his grand project. See also Historic England 2018 *Water Meadows: Introductions to Heritage Assets*.
- ³ Bath Chronicle & Weekly Gazette 2 September 1875.
- ⁴ Noonans Auction Archive 18 June 2020, Lot 722.
- ⁵ Salisbury Cathedral Close at the North Walk exit, I estimate, is 1.8 miles from Britford church and conveniently it is near enough one mile from here to the first MS along the Devizes road. I am assuming the logical route of north from North Walk into High St., left at the top into Bridge St. which becomes Fisherton St. and continues into Devizes Rd. I calculate 10.8 miles to Stonehenge. For the return trip, I am assuming a southerly walk down Castle St. from where there is a short deviation to High St.
- ⁶ The Salisbury & Winchester Journal 12 October 1878.
- ⁷ The path I believe Kilvert took is no longer a public footpath, so I had to take the footpath from Wilsford towards Springbottom Farm, not an avenue in 1875 but appearing so now.
- ⁸ From 1920 to 1940 the home of retired British physicist Sir Oliver Lodge.
- ⁹ Adelaide Observer 21 September 1913 & 24 August 1912 (engagement notice).
- ¹⁰ The Salisbury & Wilton Times 19.10.1900 is the most informative. Note the mention of Major & Mrs Fisher does not refer to the Diary Fisher – he was a bachelor – but to a Maj. Arthur Fisher.
- ¹¹ Salisbury & Wilton Times report of the annual meeting of the Salisbury Museum 14 June 1901.
- ¹² Western Chronicle 27.6.1913.
- ¹³ The Wiltshire Times 5.7.1913.

Susan Catherine Venables, the 'Mrs Henry Venables' of the *Diary*

Teresa Williams uncovers the life of a member of the Venables connection with Kilvert.

Susan Catherine is listed twice in the index of the *Diary*, once, as 'Mrs Henry Venables,' and secondly, with an incorrect initial, under 'J.C. Venables.' There are six quite brief references to her in the published *Diary*, the brevity caused possibly by William Plomer's editing of the original manuscript. Kilvert, however, would have thought of her as a friend, having known her since 1865, when she married the widowed J Henry Venables, younger brother of Richard Lister Venables (vicar of Clyro) and of George Stovin Venables Q.C.

She was born in Simonburn, Northumberland, a small village and parish situated on the North Tyne River, approximately nine miles north of Hexham and 20 miles west of Newcastle-on-Tyne. The area is rich in Roman remains and historical legends, including Arthurian tales and is situated near to Hadrian's Wall.¹

Susan's father was John RIDLEY of Park End House, a gentleman landowner of independent means, farmer and employer of 50 labourers, according to the 1851 Census return. Her mother, Bridget (nee Atkinson) was a native of Temple Sowerby in Westmoreland. John and Bridget were the parents of six children, with Susan being the youngest child. She was baptised twice at Simonburn's parish church, firstly on 8 January 1824 in a privately held ceremony, (usually denoting some concern with the child's health), then again a year later in January 1825.

The 13th century parish church of Simonburn is dedicated to St Mungo: (the name translated from the Celtic language meaning 'dear friend' or 'dear one'). He was born in the sixth century in Culross, Fife, and is best known as being both the founder and patron saint of the City of Glasgow. He is credited with four miracles. They involve a robin, a tree, a bell and a salmon containing a ring, the first miracle occurring when he was quite young. It is alleged that a robin had been killed by his school classmates in an effort to blame St Mungo for the deed. St Mungo, however, took hold of the dead bird in his hands, prayed over it, and it was restored to life. Travelling widely in his younger years as a missionary, he eventually built a church on the site where Glasgow Cathedral now stands. He was buried in his church in about the year 614. His feast day is held on 13 January.²

The 1841 Census lists the family of John Ridley, 60 years old and Bridget, his wife aged 50, with four of their children, Jane 25, Thomas 20, John Matthew 20, and Susan 15, living at Park End House in the township of Simonburn. The two sons were not twins: Thomas was almost four years the elder. In the 1841 Census, ages were 'rounded' up or down to the nearest five or ten year number. There were five servants in the household, one male and four female. Nothing is known of Susan's education, whether she was schooled at home or went away to a girl's school as a boarder. Unfortunately, the 1841 Census did not record occupations so we can only speculate whether one of the female servants listed, a Miss Mary Bevan aged 40, could have been employed as a governess.

Throughout the 1840's the Northumberland newspapers carried numerous reports of the activities of Susan's father John Ridley with an occasional mention of Bridget her mother attending some function, but no event listed the attendance of the Ridley daughters.

One event on 4 June 1844 which we can be sure the whole of the Ridley family attended, was the marriage of Susan's younger brother, John Matthew Ridley. His bride was Anna Maria Hilton, the youngest daughter of Henry Hilton, Esq, of Sole street House, Kent. The ceremony took place at Selling Parish Church, situated a couple of miles from Faversham in Kent and Preston House, the home of *Dear Annie Hilton* of *Diary* fame.³ John Matthew's marriage would eventually provide the reason for Susan's introduction to the Venables's family and her marriage to J Henry Venables.

The 1851 Census shows Susan aged 27, staying as a 'visitor' together with her older sister Mary 38 years, in the household of Matthew CLAYTON, a 50 year old unmarried Attorney-at-law. Listed with him was his older unmarried sister, Ann, at their home in Westgate Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Mr Clayton was a relative of Susan's mother Bridget; a member of the large Atkinson family of Temple Sowerby in Westmoreland. Seven servants were employed to run the household comprising a butler, groom, cook, two housemaids, kitchen maid and a laundry maid.

In the 1850's local newspaper reports show Susan with members of her family, attending some special events. One such occasion took place on Tuesday 28 September 1852. Susan, together with her sister and escorted by their brother Thomas, was amongst those attending a "Ball and Supper of splendour and magnitude at Eslington Park the beautiful seat of the Hon. Henry Thomas Liddell." (Situated near the river Aln, a few miles from Whittingham in Northumberland, the 18th century mansion was, and today still is, the private home of the Earls of Ravensworth.) The *Newcastle Journal*⁴ described how "ten rooms on the ground floor had been set aside for the party of more than 200 ladies and gentlemen. The rooms were decorated with exotic flowers and brilliantly lighted with wax tapers. Dancing commenced after 10pm with polkas, quadrilles and gallopades until one o'clock when the company sat down to a supper comprising every delicacy of the season and the richest wines and confectionery. Dancing continued until five o'clock in the morning when the company departed homeward." The journey must have been an uncomfortable one as a "storm of rain had been falling all night" turning the river Aln "into a rushing torrent of water, flooding cottages and rendering the road from Eslington to Whittingham, almost impassable."

There were no problems with the weather in September 1854 when the Simonburn Floral and Horticultural Society held its third annual meeting, "in a spacious pavilion erected on

the village green.” Over 700 visitors availed themselves of the “kindness of the Rev’d Meyrick Beebee, rector of the parish, who opened his grounds and pleasure gardens to the public” (for a fee of sixpence). Mrs (Bridget) Ridley of Park End, two daughters and her son, John Matthew Ridley of Walwick Hall together with his family, were present to view the hundreds of items entered for judging. The account in *The Newcastle Journal*⁵ gave details of “extra prizes” subscribed by inhabitants and neighbours. These included “a pig for an entrant winning five or more different categories of fruit and vegetables: a fat goose for the best basket of fruit entered: clogs or slippers for best geranium plant and a Bible and Prayer book for ‘best wild flower selection’ by a child under 12 years of age.”

A similar event is reported⁶ two years later, again attended by the Ridley families. The day was fine and the report stated that 862 entries by 113 competitors were on view in the pavilion erected on the village green, and that Simonburn’s Show was “held in great anticipation as the time for the annual home gatherings of families whose sons and daughters had left the parental roof.”

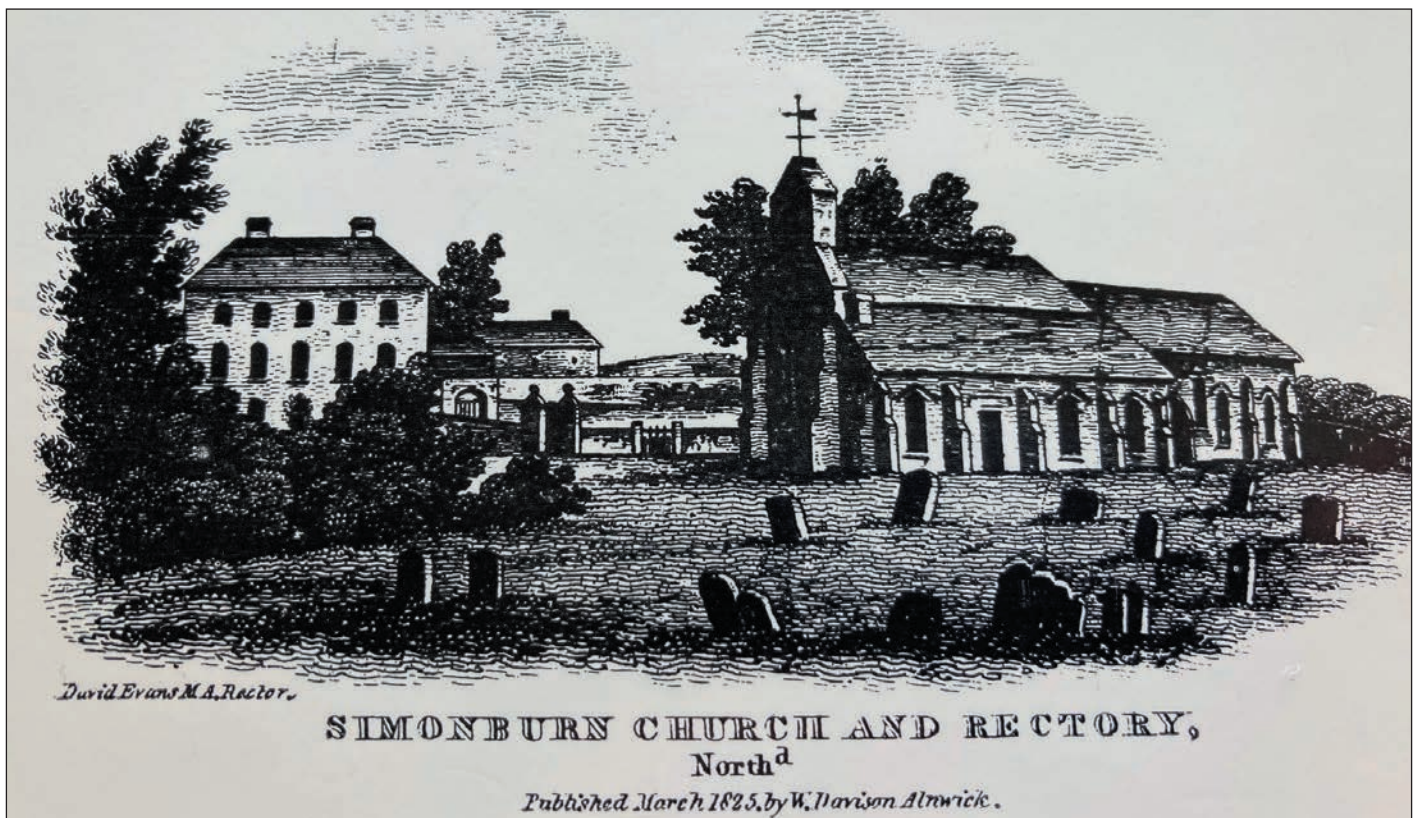
Susan’s father, John Ridley, was involved in the ceremony of the ‘Opening of the Wark Bridge over the North Tyne,’ which took place on Friday 27 August 1858. Northumberland newspapers described how the carriage of the High Sheriff of the county was detached from its horses and “drawn by the inhabitants of Wark on to the new bridge, stopping half-way over.” Details of the bridge’s construction and solid foundations were given, “the width consisting of eight 40 foot spans and one inland span of 30 foot.”⁷ The opening ceremony was performed by the “Rev’d M Beebee, rector of Simonburn, followed by several speeches, the Wark Band providing music.” John Ridley proposed a vote of thanks to the High Sheriff, L J Hunter Allgood, Esq., saying how his “practical help and valuable financial aid, saw the bridge completed within the remarkable time of four months.” Also at

the ceremony was “Mrs Ridley accompanied by her daughters.” The day ended late with “a very large crowd dancing on the new Bridge to the enlivening strains of the Wark Band.”

In 1861 John Ridley was now aged 80, Bridget 72, Mary 48 and Susan 37 years. The Census reveals that John is still farming but has reduced his working force to 37 labourers and four boys. His son Thomas aged 44, whose occupation is recorded as ‘landed proprietor’ is listed as visiting the house. A groom and four female servants help to maintain the household. The house is now named ‘High Park End,’ a change in name perhaps to avoid confusion with Susan’s later home, ‘Low Park End.’ Her life would have continued as before with visits to and from family members for celebratory or sad gatherings, attending church and local events. It was a death in the Venables/Hilton families in May 1864 which would bring about a fundamental change in her life as a maiden lady.

As mentioned earlier, Susan’s brother, John Matthew Ridley had married into a branch of the Hilton family on 4 June 1844. John’s wife Anna Maria was the youngest daughter of Henry Hilton, Esq, of Sole Street House, near Faversham in Kent. After their marriage the young couple lived first in the Faversham area, near to Anna Maria’s family, but by the early 1860’s had settled at Walwick Hall, a short distance from the Ridley’s house at High Park End, Northumberland.

Anna Maria was sister to Sophia Hilton who later that year on 23 December 1844 married Joseph Henry Venables, Esq; (he apparently preferred to be known as ‘J. Henry’ or ‘Henry Venables.’) This marriage would link together the Hilton, Ridley and Venables families. Henry was a Parliamentary Barrister living both at 17 Cambridge Square, Hyde Park, London, and Llysdinam in Breconshire. Sadly, after nearly twenty years of childless marriage, Sophia died at Cambridge Square on 18th May 1864 aged 47 years. She is buried in the churchyard of St Catherine’s, near Faversham.



Simonburn Church, 1825.

Courtesy of the Revd Sarah Lunn, Simonburn/Teresa Williams Collection

Henry was, as already stated, the younger brother of the Reverend Richard Lister Venables, Vicar of Clyro, (where Kilvert would serve as curate for seven years from January 1865), and of George Stovin Venables Q.C., an eminent barrister and writer. They were the three sons of the late Richard Venables, Archdeacon of Carmarthen and his wife, Sophia (nee Lister).

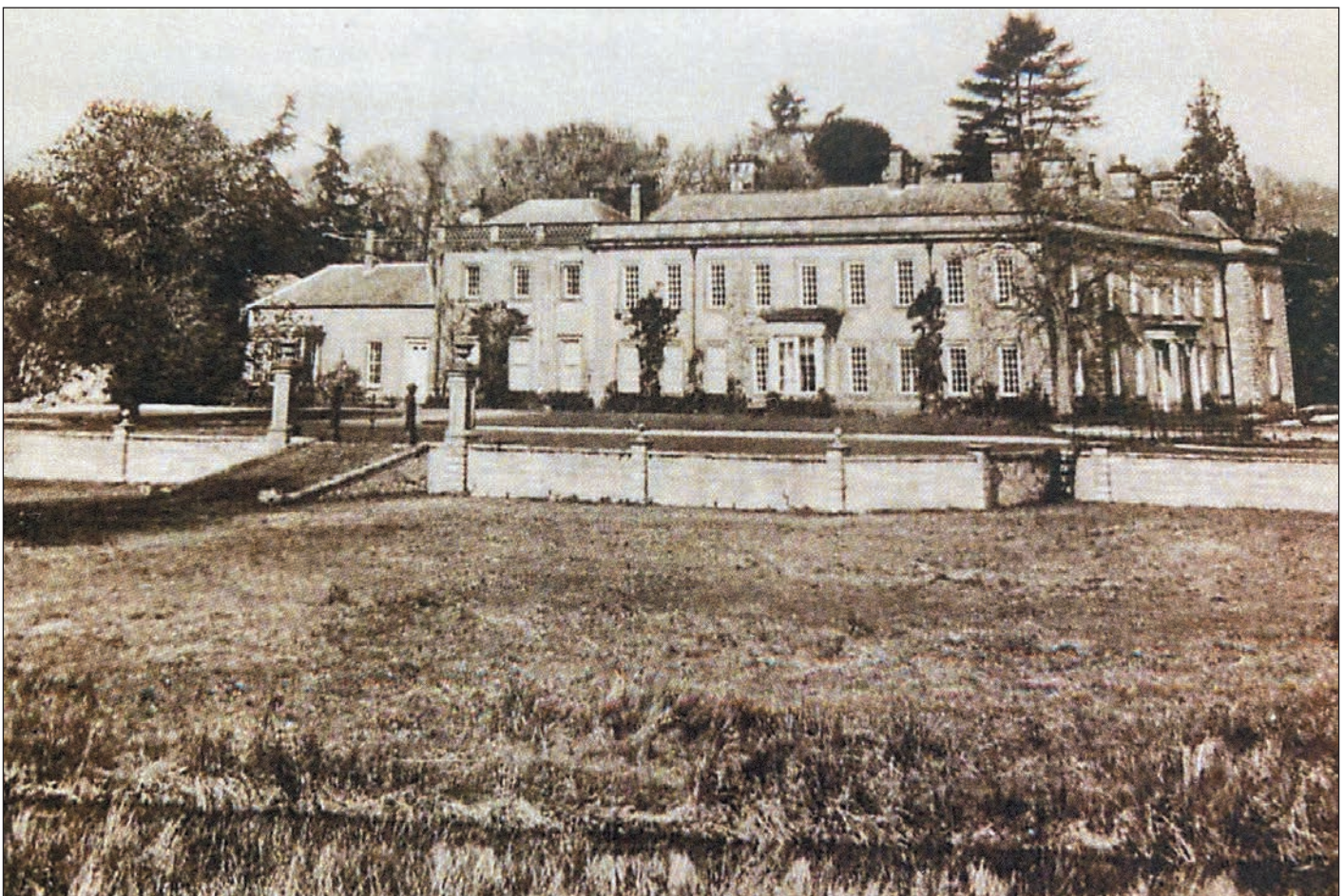
The National Library of Wales at Aberyswyth holds an archived collection of correspondence written or received by the Venables family. It is available for research to personal visitors to the Library or by residents with a Welsh postcode. Other researchers online can glean the main theme of letters from a very brief summary given with each item. It is evident from these short letter references that Richard Lister and George Stovin were very sympathetic to the bereaved Henry and arranged for him to spend time with family members and friends in an effort to ease his loneliness. In June 1864 Henry wrote to his sister-in-law, Mary Augusta Dalrymple Venables (the first wife of Richard Lister Venables), "that he goes to Preston for weekends."⁸ He was referring to Preston House at Faversham in Kent, the home of his long time friend, the widowed Richard Hilton.

One month later, on 9 June 1864 another link was formed between the Hilton and Venables when the same widowed Richard Hilton of Preston House was married at Clyro to *Dear Annie Hilton* of *Diary* fame. Her full names were Sarah Ann Elizabeth Maw, and she was the daughter of Henry Lister Maw and his wife, Sarah Ann (nee Peacock) of Crowle, Lincolnshire. The two families were related, Henry Lister Maw being a cousin to Clyro's vicar, Richard Lister Venables. Annie had been living at Clyro Vicarage for some time owing to a family rift, caused

it appears by her father's behaviour towards her.⁹ It is possible that Annie's father was suffering the results of a head injury incurred many years before when "he was hit by a shell whilst serving in the Navy, during the war with Burmah." A letter from Annie's mother, Sarah, written on 11 June, thanks the Venables: "she is very grateful for their kindness and concern for Annie."¹⁰ Annie's husband was considerably older than she and the father of a nine year old daughter Florence, but although the marriage was partly an arranged one, it gave Annie security, entry to a wide social circle, and a permanent home.

In August 1864 Richard Lister wrote to his brother George Stovin that "Henry has gone to Northumberland."¹¹ Henry visited Susan Catherine's brother, John Matthew Ridley at his home, Walwick Hall, the two men had been friends for a long time and both were in the legal profession. Susan was living with her parents, John and Bridget at High Park End and Henry most certainly would have been entertained by them and Susan during his stay, albeit quietly, since he was in mourning.

We learn next from the archived correspondence that in late August 1864 the newly married "Richard Hiltons are going to Llysdyham" to join Henry, while in September Henry would be hosting a "shooting and fishing party there." In Richard Lister's opinion, "Henry seemed much better since going to Northumberland."¹² In October Henry is travelling with Richard Lister on visits to Owestry and Chester, but then in a letter to George Stovin dated 2 November 1864, Richard Lister admits, "he is very concerned that Henry's pain, about which Sir John Fife had set his mind at rest, has returned."¹³ No further mention is made of Henry's pain at this time; Richard Lister is busy with engaging a new curate. This was, of course, Robert Francis



Eslington Park.

Photo: Teresa Williams Collection



Wark Bridge, opened 27 August 1858.

Photo: Mike Quinn via Wikimedia Commons

Kilvert who stayed at Clyro Vicarage in November 1864 and found suitable by Richard Lister, thus becoming his curate from 1 January 1865.

January and February 1865 were severely cold with heavy snowfalls and extreme frosts, said to be the worst since 1825. People were lost and died in the snow and farmers experienced a great loss of livestock with reports of 10 foot drifts leading to “fears of flooding when the thaw arrived.”¹⁴ Roads and railway lines were blocked and it was not until mid-March that the weather improved. Easter was celebrated on 16 April 16 that year and it was around that time when Henry proposed marriage to Susan Catherine. She accepted Henry’s proposal and on 29 April 1865 she wrote from High Park End to Richard Lister thanking him for “his letter of welcome into the family.”¹⁵ On June 24th 1865 he wrote to George Stovin that “Henry [was] to be married to Susan in a fortnight.”

The ceremony was slightly delayed, the archive listing several letters in July referring to “the grave illness of John Ridley,” Susan’s father. Henry’s two brothers were invited to travel to Northumberland for the wedding. Richard Lister reluctantly declined as his wife Mary Augusta has been ill and is still recovering from jaundice and dropsy, but George Stovin accepted. On 23 July 23 1865 George wrote to Mary Augusta describing this, his first visit to Northumberland.¹⁶ Two days later the marriage of Henry with Susan was celebrated at St Mungo’s Church, Simonburn. No press report of the ceremony has been discovered, simply the following notice which was

published widely in British city and provincial newspapers and, as shown below, in publications for the Colonies.

From: HOMEWARD MAIL for INDIA, CHINA, and the COLONIES, Saturday 29th July 1865

“VENABLES—RIDLEY: At St Mungo’s Church, Simonburn, Northumberland, on the 25th July, by the Rev’d Meyrick BEEBEE, M.A, Rector of Simonburn, assisted by the Rev’d Henry B CARR, M.A, Rector of Whickham, Joseph Henry VENABLES Esq, youngest son of the late Archdeacon of Carmarthen, Richard Venables of Llysdim in the County of Brecon, to Susan Catherine, youngest daughter of John RIDLEY Esq, of Park End, Northumberland.”

Henry and Susan went to stay at Llysdim following their marriage. No newspaper report of their return to Llysdim has been found unlike when on 19th December 1844 Henry brought back his first bride, Sophia (nee Hilton) to the house. On that occasion,

“A party of about two hundred persons including the Odd Fellows of Newbridge Lodge attired in their official costumes, met the bride and bridegroom at Pontyrithon, and notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of Mr Henry Venables, took the horses from their carriage and drew it about two miles to Llysdim Hall with Lewis’s excellent Penybont Band accompanying them, playing lively tunes nearly all the way, and with occasional loud bursts of cheering for the happy pair being heard.”

Sadly, Henry and Susan's stay at Llysdyinam was interrupted by a telegram advising them her father John Ridley had died at High Park End on 9 August at the age of 85 years. On hearing this news from Henry, Richard Lister and Mary Augusta travelled to Llysdyinam where they met Susan for the first time. In a letter to George Stovin, dated 18th August 1865, he declared "Susan charming. She and Henry are coming to Clyro to stay." The visit was possible because "the doctor had said 'Mary [Augusta] was better.'"¹⁷ It is not known exactly when Henry and Susan were at Clyro but presumably this could have been when Kilvert met her for the first time.

On 23 August 1865 Richard Lister writes again to George Stovin that "Mary is not well and they are to consult Sir Charles Hastings from Worcester, Henry also not well."¹⁸ (Sir Charles Hastings (1794-1866) was a renowned surgeon and life-long philanthropist. Born in Shropshire, the family moved to Worcester where he settled, preferring to practise locally than to seek an eminent career in London. In 1832 he founded the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, now known as the British Medical Association. In an effort to reduce the serious outbreaks of cholera he advocated the use of pumps in houses to bring in clean water. He was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1860.)

Mary Augusta's two doctors disagreed over her wellbeing and treatment but sadly during August and September her health declined rapidly. Richard Lister later wrote in a memoir:¹⁹

"Poor Mary got worse and worse, and in September, dropsy appeared and the illness became quite hopeless. George [Stovin] was very much with us and Henry and Susan came often from Llysdyinam. After a very sad time of watching and anxiety, all was over on the 5th of October."

The only newspaper found publishing an account of Mary Augusta's private funeral was *The Hereford Times* for Saturday 14 October 1865.

"CLYRO: The Funeral of Mrs Lister Venables.

The remains of this estimable and benevolent lady were interred at the parish church of Clyro on Monday last. The neighbourhood generally evinced great sympathy with the Rev. R L Venables, the beloved husband of the deceased, on account of his sad bereavement, and the tradesmen of Hay closed their establishments during part of Monday, the trade of the town being for the time entirely suspended.

The funeral was of a strictly private character. The remains were followed to the grave by the Rev. R L Venables, Captain Adam, Henry Venables Esq., George Venables Esq., as chief mourners; and the Master of the Rolls, Rowland Venables Esq., the Rt. Hon. Viscount Hereford, Rear Admiral the Hon. Walter Devereux, the Rev. Henry Dew, Walter Baskerville Esq., the Rev. W L Bevan, Captain Dew, R.N., J W P Lyde Esq., and the Rev. J (sic) Kilvert."



Llysdyinam Hall. The house was remodelled in the 1930s.

Photo: Nicholas Green

The parish registers record that the officiating minister was the Rev. W L Bevan of Hay.

Richard Lister was now in the same bereaved situation as Henry had been previously to his marriage to Susan, and he received the sympathy and company from his brothers which he had given to Henry. His clerical duties, settling Mary's estate, concerns over his mother's wellbeing and visits to and from relatives and friends filled the weeks into 1866. On 8 December 1865, Richard Lister wrote to his brothers, "that he is very grateful for their company this autumn."²⁰ The archived correspondence shows that Henry and Susan spent time at Clyro, Llysdim, Cambridge Square, London, and in Northumberland. In October 1865 Henry 'took the oath' at Brecon, qualifying as a county magistrate. Richard Lister visited Scotland, had problems with servants and worried about harvesting his crops. It was not until the summer of 1866 that Henry's health was mentioned once more, when Richard Lister tells George Stovin that "Henry is not well with a lump on [his] side."²¹

Worse was to follow. Henry and Susan were visiting Annie and Richard Hilton at Preston House, near Faversham, when Henry wrote to Richard Lister on 16 July 1866. A summary of the archived letter's content reads:

"He is far from well – and his eye is infected from an insect bite. He and his wife [Susan] are to return to London and later to travel to Llysdim."²²

(A note by Richard Lister says this was the last letter he received from Henry.)

Henry died at Llysdim on Monday, 15 September 1866. After less than 14 months of marriage, Susan was widowed. The following paragraphs are the only record found, apart from a death notice published in newspapers countrywide.

From: BRECON COUNTY TIMES, Saturday 22nd September 1866

"NEWBRIDGE-ON-WYE: Demise of Joseph Henry Venables, Esq.

We regret to announce the demise, at the age of 52 years, of Joseph Henry Venables Esq, of Llysdim near Newbridge-on-Wye. Mr Venables was the youngest son of the late Archdeacon of Caemarthens (sic) and brother of the Reverend R Lister Venables, Vicar of Clyro, Chairman of the Quarter Sessions of the County of Radnor, and of George Stovin Venables, Esq, Q.C, Parliamentary Barrister.

Lord Resesdale, the Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords, placed great confidence in his judgment on many difficult points of parliamentary usage and he will be much missed by a large circle of professional brethren and clients, who could always rely on his great experience in cases of legal difficulties."

Henry's funeral was held at Clyro on Saturday 20th September 1866. No press report has been found, but the Clyro Burial Register records that Kilvert was the 'Officiating Minister,' an appointment which surely showed a measure of the regard in which he was held by Richard Lister.

The consequences for Susan were tragically similar to the situation of Elizabeth Kilvert following the Diarist's death. Susan had no house of her own as Llysdim did not belong, it appears, exclusively to Henry and a letter written on October 2 1866 by Susan's mother, Bridget Ridley, confirms that like

Elizabeth Kilvert, Susan was in the process of returning to live at High Park End, her home before marriage. Bridget's letter to Richard Lister gave him her "thanks for his kindness and sympathy on the death of her daughter's husband, Henry, his brother, and hopes the families will continue to keep in touch."²³

I am certain that the reply from Clyro Vicarage reassured Bridget quite definitely that their friendship would continue. And it did, letters at the National Library of Wales in the 'Venables's Collection' are proof that Susan was a well-liked and accepted member of their family circle, making and receiving visits from them and maintaining a correspondence with Richard Lister and his family and George Stovin for more than the next twenty years.

In Part 2 of this account, to follow, we show how Susan was sustained by her religious faith following Henry's death; her philanthropic interest in schools and churches in more than one community, her lasting friendship with the Venables family, and last but not least, Kilvert's references to her in his Diary.

REFERENCES AND FOOTNOTES

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- ⁵ NEWCASTLE JOURNAL, Saturday 16th September 1854 – Simonburn Floral Show
- ⁶ NEWCASTLE JOURNAL, Saturday 13th September 1856 – Simonburn Floral Show
- ⁷ NEWCASTLE COURANT, Friday, 3rd September 1858 – Opening of Wark Bridge, North Tyne
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- ⁹ National Library of Wales 'Venables Collection' – Letter B3065, Sarah Maw to R.Lister V. June 1864
- ¹⁰ THE COURIER (London), 2nd January 1827 – Henry Lister Maw, R.N. (Father of 'Dear Annie Hilton')
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- ¹² National Library of Wales 'Venables Collection' – Letter B1343 – R. Lister V to George S. Sept 1864
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- ¹⁴ National Library of Wales 'Venables Collection' – Letter B1364 – R. Lister V to George S. Feb. 1865
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THREE KILVERT PLACES

A visit to Rhosgoch Mill

I decided to explore the lane running parallel with the brook towards Painscastle and discover the old Rhos Goch Mill. This was Kilvert's first visit to the mill on 26 March 1870: he was enchanted with what he saw.

The mill was not going and there was a great quiet about the place broken only by the dripping of the water from the wheel, the rippling of the brook, and the subdued voices of the people in the house coming through the open door and the old porch. There is something very fascinating to me about an old fashioned flour mill on a brook. So this is the place that I have heard old Hannah Whitney talk of so often, the place where the old miller sleeping in the mill trough used to see the fairies dancing of nights upon the mill floor (Vol 1, p67).

In November 2022, the Painscastle Local Interest Group heard a talk from the current owner of the Mill and they later made a visit. What follows is based on their notes, with photographs from KS members Ann Dean and Val Dixon.

A mill at Rhosgoch has been recorded since 1506, owned by the Crown and leased to various tenants until 1784, when it was taken over by the Biddle family, who sold it to James Powell. Janet Russell, who has restored the Mill from its previously dilapidated and unsafe state, used to visit

her grandmother there, and bought it from her uncle, a member of the Powell family. The building has been documented by archaeologists as 'a late medieval building rebuilt in the 17th century'. There were five generations of Powells working the mill between the 1780s and the 1960s, and it was probably a



Rhosgoch Mill.

Photo: Ann Dean



Rhosgoch Mill plaque commemorating the Powells.

Photo: Ann Dean



Outside Rhosgoch Mill showing the wheel.

Photo: Val Dixon



Rhosgoch Mill machinery.

Photo: Val Dixon

William Powell whom Kilvert met (the diarist just noted his surname). There were actually two mills on the site: a corn grist mill and a fulling mill. Maps and a sign name the site as 'Rhosgoch Mills'. It was not unusual to have two mills on the same site, but it was unusual to have them in the same building. Evidence has been found of two lots of mill machinery and two wheels. The two mill operations were able to share the water supply: the fulling mill needed water to shrink woollen cloth into a tighter weave by pounding it, and the corn mill needed water to turn the wheels to drive the millstones. The water supply to the mill came from the Dingle, where a weir raised the level of the water to give a direct source of water to the mill. The water supply to the mill was not particularly powerful so a large pond was needed as a head of water. The house is now happily a home again, with its fascinating surviving machinery. All that could be seen of the brook and pond last year were the dried water courses and retaining wall, as the pond would have to be dredged, and permissions to reconnect obtained, to restore the 'rippling' water that delighted Kilvert. *There was a good deal of water and suddenly I came across the mill pond and the picturesque old mill with an overshot wheel.*

Many thanks to Painscastle Local Interest Group for use of their notes, to Ann Dean for liaison, to Ann and Val Dixon for photographs, and to Janet Russell for permission to use photographs of the Mill and its machinery.

The Kilvert Society hopes to visit Rhosgoch as part of our AGM weekend next April.

Bryngwyn Church

Eva Morgan tells us the history of one of the Kilvert Pilgrimage churches.

I established my interest in St Michael's Church, Bryngwyn, on my first visit during the Kilvert Pilgrimage Walk in 2013. While talking to Mrs Evelyn Bally, the churchwarden, who is a descendant of the Crichton family of Wye Cliff, with whom Kilvert often socialised and to the Powells of Dorstone Rectory visited by Kilvert after the Snodhill Castle picnic, I mentioned that I may have some Powell family connections buried at Bryngwyn. But surprise, surprise, when I looked at the list she provided there were the details, not of the Powells, but of the grave of my maternal grandfather William Morgan's first wife, Elizabeth Morgan née Mills, and her baby son, John Thomas Morgan. William's parents, James and Mary Ann Morgan née Lloyd are buried at Bryngwyn as well as several of their children; hence William brought his young wife and their baby to lie alongside them. When I am there I always think of my grandfather bringing that little coffin and then that of his young wife there for burial. He had such a sad life, losing two wives and two children before he married my grandmother in his 50s and had three daughters with her. My mother said that he was more like a grandfather to them as he was unwell all her life and died when she was 17.

He, William Morgan, was widowed with a three year old daughter when he moved from Upper Bridge Court, Brilley, to Old House, Bredwardine. This farm, on the Bredwardine side of Dorstone Hill, below Arthur's Stone, was visited by Kilvert in January 1874, some time before William's arrival there. In Bredwardine, William Morgan met and married, in February 1894, *nice Sarah Abberley who was neatly dressed, waiting in a clean bright tidy kitchen to give her father his tea when he came in whom Kilvert had met, as he had her sisters on other occasions, when he called on the family at Upper Cwm, Bredwardine some years previously on 6 September 1878 (Vol 3, p416-7).* William buried his second wife, Sarah Morgan née Abberley, who died aged 46 and his 16 year old daughter, Gladys, in 1905 and 1906, at Bredwardine near Kilvert's grave and that of Sarah's mother.

William was himself buried in 1929 with his third wife Mary Ann Morgan, née Watkins, my maternal grandmother, (who died on Christmas Day 1942, nine months after I had been born on her last birthday in March), in the newer graveyard near Mary Ann's Watkins' New Farm, near the grave of Mrs Elizabeth Kilvert.

To return to Bryngwyn Church, two carvings on stones set into the south east corner of the exterior wall show a pair of peculiar male and female figures, their heads touching at the corner. The significance of the figures is unknown but it cannot be a coincidence that they are aligned perfectly, one head touching the other. The church guide suggests that the carvings represent dancing figures, though when they were carved and what they signify is an intriguing mystery

In 1818, Jonathan Williams wrote in his *History of Radnorshire*: 'Bryngwyn church consists of a nave, chancel, a low tower containing two small bells, and a porch. The east window consists of three lights, divided by stone mullions supporting trefoil arches. The space above, under the pointed arch of the window, is filled up in the same manner. In the southeast angle of the exterior wall of the chancel (the corner of the church nearest the gate, on the path side) is fixed a long stone, on the east side of which is sculpted a female figure and on the south side a male, without any inscription'. Jonathon Williams thought it was one complete stone, not two. Kilvert may have noticed the sculptures, though if he did, we have no record of it. He described the churchyard as very overgrown with nettles, and apparently with bones scattered about!

St Michael's is said to be the Church lying at the third highest elevation in Wales, and due to its prominent position has excellent views of Clyro Hill and the Black Mountains and over the Begwyns to the Brecon Beacons. It is built in a circular churchyard which may indicate an ancient Llan site of spiritual significance. 'Michael' means 'who is like God' in Hebrew and in British mediaeval art is shown holding scales in which the souls of the departed are weighed.



The mysterious carvings of 'dancers' at Bryngwyn Church.

Photo: Val Dixon

The church is built on a 13th century foundation. The upright stone, ascribed to the 7th to 9th centuries, now in the chancel was moved from the churchyard in 1958 and is said to be an Ogham stone, an ancient Christianised pagan stone with Ogham script. Tradition preserves the memory of a narrower chancel arch than the present one (19th century), probably late Norman. Part of the chancel roof dates from the 1500s. The large porch, characteristic of Border work, is old and retains the original oak roof. The incised stone set upright in the porch is that of a priest as the Cross has Ogee terminals and a chalice, and a missal or book of the gospels is shown on either side of the shaft. It was taken from the sanctuary at the restoration; it may be the tombstone of a medieval priest. A Burgundian coin, dated 1384-1404, was found under the floor during the restoration, probably dropped by one of the Earl of Warwick's soldiers who took part in a battle at nearby Painscastle.

A closed western turret contains two bells hung for ringing in a late medieval nailed ironwork. The smaller bell bears no inscription, but on the evidence of shape, is from the early 13th century, so one of the oldest existing in Wales. The larger bell is 24" in diameter, and is unfortunately cracked in the crown. It was cast by a founder whose initials were WG and dates from the middle of the 16th century.

Kilvert visited Bryngwyn church with his brother on 13 June 1870. The account appears only in the June-July 1870 Notebook,

now in the National Library of Wales. The church was in a semi-derelict condition:

Perch was considerably astonished at the ruinous state of Bryngwyn Church, its crazy roof and walls and broken windows...Jackdaws were fluttering and chattering in the sun about the ruinous church and to and fro from the roof and turret and the great yew...Perch took a sketch of the broken shaft of the old cross and the carvings thereupon. I put a big bone on the top of the cross shaft and struck it off with my stick. The bone went whirling and whistling up into the air and fell some distance away among the tombs.

On 25 February 1871, Kilvert met the new rector of Bryngwyn, the Revd John Hughes. *He seemed a pleasant, sensible man, anxious to do what is right and needful at Bryngwyn, but with a full sense of the difficulties and uphill work before him* (Vol 1, p305).

The church was well restored by W Chick of Hereford in 1874-7 and new church plate provided in 1876. John Hughes was rector until 1899 and the altar was given in memory of him and his wife by their children.

With my thanks to Evelyn Bally and Adrian Chambers for their help.

The Peterchurch Fish

Keith Harwood is an angling historian and was intrigued by this Kilvert story.

On Tuesday 25 April 1876, the Reverend Francis Kilvert, curate of St Michael's Church, Clyro, near Hay-on-Wye, and occasional angler, walked to St Peter's Church at Peterchurch, Herefordshire, in the hope of seeing the famed Peterchurch Fish, a painted plaster relief inside the church depicting a fish with a gold chain around its neck. Unfortunately, he was disappointed, as he himself relates in his *Diary*:

The noble spire of the fine Norman Church rises gradually in the midst of the valley, the white houses of the village are gathered round it and hard by are one or two poplars rising with golden green spires against the blue sides of the distant hills. The Church is approached over a broad rude stone pitched causeway, quaint and ancient, which borders and then bridges the broad fair stream of the Dore which flows beneath the churchyard and the great steeple of St Peter's Church. The Church has been well restored but I was disappointed to find the old picture of the Peterchurch Fish gone from the interior wall.

Shortly afterwards, on his return journey, he came across an old man at work in a cottage garden and discovered a little more about the missing fish:

We exchanged greetings and gave the time of day across the dingle, and I asked him about the picture of the Peterchurch Fish. 'The Church,' said the old man, 'was restored three years. I cannot justly say whether the picture of the Fish is on the wall now or not. I have only been to Church once since the Church was restored. There was a collection at the Church and I went. I don't go to Church a lot. I don't remember seeing the Fish on the wall then. The picture of the Fish was on the wall furthest from the door as you do go in. They do say the Fish was first seen at Dorston (Dorstone) and speared there, but he got away and they hunted him down to Peterchurch and killed him close by the Church. He was big as a salmon and had a gold chain round his neck. They do say you can see the blood now upon the stones at Dorston where the Fish was speared first' (Vol 3, p266-7).

It appears from the old man's description that the Peterchurch Fish may originally have been an image of a salmon and we know that during the nineteenth century and earlier salmon were regularly speared as they made their way upstream to spawn in the Wye and its tributaries, an event that Kilvert himself witnessed on 25 November 1878, while watching from Rhayader Bridge and which he described as *a most picturesque sight*.

Whilst enjoying a short break recently at Holme Lacy House, I followed (by car) in the footsteps of Kilvert and visited Peterchurch and the beautiful church of St Peter's. I suspect the scene has changed little since Kilvert's day and the church spire is visible for miles around. However, the spire, which was originally built in 1320, fell into disrepair, and in 1972 was replaced, somewhat incongruously, by one fashioned out of fibreglass.

The churchyard is well worth exploring since it contains the grave of Robert Jones VC (1857-1898). Jones was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions at the Battle of Rorke's Drift in January 1879. After leaving the army, he settled in Herefordshire and worked as a farm labourer. Sadly, he committed suicide at the age of 41 and his headstone was positioned facing away from the church; his grave is the only one in the churchyard to do so. En route to the Jones' final resting place is an ancient yew tree, which has recently been dated at over 2,000 years old.

Nowadays, when not being used for church services, St Peter's Church houses the Hub, a community development project, which comprises a café, library, exhibition space and information point.



The Peterchurch Fish.

Photo: Keith Harwood

Inside the church, high up on the south wall of the nave, is a painted plaster relief of a fish with a gold chain around its neck to which are added the names of the churchwardens, Edward Sneed and John Medlicott, and the date 1828. Beneath the belly of the fish is the name of James Loyd, presumably the name of the artist who painted the relief or possibly the name of the person who dedicated it. The adipose fin clearly shows that the fish was a member of the salmonid family and its appearance is that of a brown trout, not a salmon. The fish has clearly been restored and re-painted since 1876 and this may explain why Kilvert failed to see it when he visited the church.

What is the significance of a fish with a gold chain around its neck? Various theories have been put forward to explain this mysterious fish. Some authorities claim that the fish was supposed to live in a pool at Dorstone further up the valley and that the local people tried to capture it and steal its chain. The fish, however, managed to escape and made its way to Peterchurch where it was subsequently killed and its chain removed. Some people claim that the gold chain around its neck is a pun on the name of the river Dore (d'or in French means 'of gold') and the valley in which Peterchurch is situated is known today as the Golden Valley. Others argue that the fish may have been placed there by a local fisherman in thanksgiving for a large catch or that it has something to do with the name of the church, St Peter's. St Peter was known to have been a fisherman and, according to local legend, is reputed to have visited the area. In Christian iconography, the fish is a powerful symbol and the ancient Greek word for a fish ΙΧΘΥΣ is an acronym for 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.' Others, too, say that the gold chain around its neck represents the link between heaven and earth. Another story says that the fish was a brown trout and was caught in a well in the nearby village of Dorstone and had a gold chain around its neck. Finally, some claim that monks from the nearby Dore Abbey went fishing and were in need of both food and gold. They subsequently caught the fish with a gold chain around its neck, thus accomplishing both tasks in one.

Whatever the truth of the matter, St Peter's Church, in the charming village of Peterchurch, is well worth a visit.

The Kilvert mulberry tree at Brobury House Gardens

The owners of Brobury House Gardens reported sadly in July that their mulberry tree, a feature of the main lawn, has broken apart. The tree is said to have been planted by Kilvert when Brobury was the kitchen garden of Bredwardine vicarage, before the house was built. Brobury House Gardens are open to the public: see broburyhouse.co.uk

Brobury House.

Photo: Trevor Rickard via
Wikimedia Commons



WHAT THE PAPERS SAID IN WILTSHIRE

From: DEVIZES & WILTSHIRE GAZETTE, *Thursday 20th October 1853*

“A Church is about to be erected in the hitherto much neglected hamlet of Kington Langley, near Chippenham. The want of a church and schools in this district has long been felt, the inhabitants, numbering upwards of 600, being distant nearly two miles from the Parish Church at Kington St Michael. The land for the site of the church has been given by Walter COLEMAN Esq., and subscriptions to the amount of £1,000 have been received by E.C. CLUTTERBUCK Esq., of Harnish Park, who has kindly undertaken the offices of Treasurer and Secretary. It is hoped that a sufficient sum will soon be raised to enable the work to commence.”

From: THE WILTSHIRE INDEPENDENT, *Thursday 15th February 1855*

“Death: On February 11th aged 75 years, the Reverend Robert ASHE for 48 years Rector of Langley Burrell. Mr Ashe was also patron of the living, value about £400, population 700.”

From: THE WILTSHIRE INDEPENDENT, *Thursday 22nd February 1855*

“The Rectory of Langley Burrell near Chippenham in this County has fallen vacant by the death of the Incumbent, the Patron, the Reverend Robert ASHE, Clerk, of Langley House who held the Incumbency for nearly 50 years.”

From: SALISBURY & WINCHESTER JOURNAL, *Saturday 16th June 1855*

“Death: On Monday 11th June at Langley Burrell, Wilts, Robert, son of the Reverend R M ASHE, aged 19 months.”

From: DEVIZES & WILTS GAZETTE, *Thursday 19th July 1855*

“On Monday last the Reverend Robert KILVERT was instituted by his Worship the Lord Bishop of Gloucester to the Rectory of Langley Burrell, Wiltshire, vacant by the death of the Reverend Robert ASHE, on the presentation of the Reverend R M ASHE, the patron.”

From: THE WILTSHIRE INDEPENDENT, *Thursday 5th February 1863*

“CHIPPENHAM: The annual meeting of the Church Pastoral Aid Society was held on Monday afternoon last at the New Hall when the Reverend B WINTHROP ably presided. The Reverend H A BARNE, M.A., vicar of Faringdon attended as a deputation and most thoroughly interested his audience on behalf of the society he pleaded for; he also alluded in a most kindly manner to the illness of the Reverend Robert KILVERT, the respected Secretary, and asked on his behalf the prayers of all, that he might, D.V., be speedily restored to health. The attendance at the meeting was thin, probably due to the dampness of the evening.”

NOTE: A year later, Robert KILVERT resigned as Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, after having held the position for 29 years. The reason was given as ‘ill-health.’ The Reverend A STRONG praised his valuable services and nominated Joseph BAILEY Esq., as his successor.

From: SALISBURY & WINCHESTER JOURNAL, *Saturday 9th February 1867*

“KINGTON ST MICHAEL:

Mr Herbert PRODGERS of Kington House has purchased a site and generously undertaken to build schools for this parish. Plans have been prepared by the eminent architect, Mr Pierce St AUBYN, for school and classrooms, with a master’s house. They will stand at the south end of the village, near the church, and when finished will present a very handsome line of buildings. The site was previously occupied by a group of old cottages, unfit for habitation.

One of these was the house in which John BRITTON was born, and part of this cottage has been preserved and is now supported by a new wall into which is inserted a stone shield bearing John Britton’s name and the date of his birth.

The work of this school, seconding and strengthening the efforts of the most excellent vicar of the parish, will, no doubt, in a brief period of time redeem Kington St Michael from the character which John Britton gave it in his day as ‘*A rude and truly illiterate village.*’”

NOTE: The new school was opened in August 1869. Mr and Mrs Herbert PRODGERS gave the children of the parish a Treat, with their mothers and elderly villagers enjoying a tea and cake meal. A church service was held, the Reverend A HEADLEY (Rector of Hardenhuish) and Reverend E C AWDRY (Vicar of Seagry) preaching and saying the prayers, respectively. At the end of the proceedings, according to the press report, “Canon JACKSON called for three cheers for Mr and Mrs Prodgers which were heartily given.”

From: THE NORTH WILTSHIRE HERALD. *Saturday 19th September 1874*

“KINGTON ST MICHAEL: A VILLAGE CONCERT:

Under the above modest title was given an unusually pleasant entertainment on Saturday evening in the newly built handsome school room of this village. With the exception of two excellent songs, both encored, by the Reverend A LAW and the Reverend J CLARK, and the Overture to ‘Esther’ (Handel) played by Mr BRADSHAW, organist of Chippenham, the concert was got up entirely by the inhabitants of the parish. The Church choir, consisting of village school children, sang in the first part some pretty hymn tunes, reflecting great credit on their master.

The great treat of the evening was, however, the exquisite harp playing of Mrs Herbert PRODGERS, the accomplished wife of the squire of Kington. The same lady also sang, with great piety and sweetness, ‘*Angels ever bright and fair*’ by Handel.”

Thanks to Teresa Williams.

LETTER

Dear Editor,

To comply with our rules on notice for the annual meeting, all that's needed is a return to the previous practice of printing the agenda, minutes and treasurer's report in March's Journal as a matter of record.

In addition, it would be helpful if copies were left on all the seats at the annual meeting; relying simply on enclosing a loose-sheet copy with the March Journal does not really do the trick, as shown by how few brought it with them.

Yours,

Charles Boase

charles.boase@gmail.com

OBITUARIES

Mr Dudley GREEN

Mr Dudley Green of Charterhouse, London, died on 16 December 2021. He had previously lived in Clitheroe, Lancashire, and had been a member since 1990.



Dr G HOUSAM

Dr G Housam of Llandrindod Wells died on 21 March 2022. He had been a member since March 1988.

POSTSCRIPT: THE KILVERT PILGRIMAGE



A fine morning at Newchurch. Photo: Patsy Weston

The 25th Kilvert Pilgrimage took place on 30 July. Organiser Adrian Chambers announced that it will also be the last pilgrimage; he was warmly thanked at the beginning and the end of the day and presented by KS treasurer Richard Weston with a cheque on behalf of the Society to support much needed repair work at St Mary's, Newchurch.

The centrepiece of the pilgrimage was a harp recital at Bryngwyn, beautifully played by Eleri Rhiannon Dawkins. Her music was interspersed with poetry and extracts from the *Diary* read by pilgrims. The rain came down in the afternoon, but it cleared up for a while at Llanbedr Painscastle, and, after a sumptuous tea, the final leg of the walk took us to Llandewi Fach for a candlelit service led by the Revd Canon Janet Russell, where we filled the little church with music.



But it rained at Ireland. Photo: John Price

List of Kilvert publications

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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 Farmery 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 Bee Smallcombe. 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

Missions, Medicine and Military Men: Kilvert connections with India. 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 edition). All available from John Toman: john_toman79@gmail.com

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 0-907158-020-1

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

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