

THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE KILVERT SOCIETY



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THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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

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Forthcoming Events 2024-5

Wednesday 25 September

A visit to Oxfordshire. We hope to visit Wotton-by-Woodstock, home of Elizabeth Rowland (Mrs Kilvert); she and the Diarist married in St Mary's Church on 20 August 1879. If you are interested in this event and have not already done so, please email the Secretary for details.

2025

Friday 25 April

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford HR4 9BL

Saturday 26 April

At the Pilgrim Hotel, Much Birch HR2 8HJ

Morning: 10 for 10.30: Kilvert seminar

Afternoon: We plan to visit Rhosgoch Mill.

Evening: 7 for 7.30: The Kilvert Society Dinner at the Pilgrim Hotel.

If you wish to stay at the Pilgrim Hotel, please contact them in good time as they will hold their rooms for our exclusive use for a limited period. Please state you are part of the Kilvert Society weekend. Tel 01981 540742.

Further details of events to be announced.

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: *Moccas Park, June 2024.* Photo: Alan Brimson

Back cover: *Early autumn in the Malverns. A view from Worcester deanery garden taken on our visit in September 2023.*
Photo: Tim Lewis

From the Editor

I begin with a correction: the photograph of the Jarvis tomb on page 13 of the March issue named Mr Jarvis as John; he was George, as the text of the article, and the inscription on the tomb made clear. I think I momentarily mixed Jarvis up with John Jarndyce, a fictional philanthropist in *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens, and an example of the generous, but somewhat erratic nature of personal charity in nineteenth century England. Dickens was popular in his lifetime and I am surprised that Kilvert does not refer to him or mention his death in 1870 in the published *Diary*. If you are looking for a long read this winter, I recommend *Bleak House* or one of the other great Dickens novels about Victorian society (and, of course, the three-volume *Kilvert's Diary*, if you don't have it already.)

The photograph of the Jarvis tomb at Bredwardine came from one of the photograph albums in the Kilvert Society archive. We are lucky to have it and to be able to read its florid inscription praising the 'munificent benefaction' bequeathed to the parishes of Bredwardine, Staunton-upon-Wye and Letton 'by his last will' and stating that the tomb was built 'out of the ample fund appropriated to its use'. It appears that the trustees had more money than they knew what to do with from early on, as Huw Rees described in his *Journal 58* article 'Jarvis, Kilvert and the Bredwardine Journey'. There is now just a flat plinth in the churchyard, the table tomb having been destroyed (I understand by a falling tree in a storm, not by a disgruntled applicant to the charity).

This photo was one of many that are invaluable for our record of Kilvert places and people and we continue to be grateful to people who created the archive, and of course to contributors who add to it, including through the *Journal*.

Back in the spring, I saw the Royal Shakespeare Company production of 'Ben and Imo', a play about the making of Benjamin Britten's 'Gloriana' in 1953, for which William Plomer wrote the libretto. He got a mention, pronounced correctly (Ploomer). *Kilvert's Diary* must have been circulating around the Aldeburgh Festival set – Imogen Holst (Imo) made it her Desert Island book in 1972. A lucky find in a charity shop has added William Plomer's *Collected Poems* to the KS archive.

From the Secretary

I am pleased to announce The Kilvert Society has a new President elect, who succeeds the late Ronald Blythe FRSL.

Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles KCMG LVO has enthusiastically accepted the position.



Our new President,
Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles

Sir Sherard entered the diplomatic service in 1977 and his career progressed through many senior positions in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. From 2001 – 2003 he was H.M. Ambassador to Israel, 2003 – 2006 Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and from 2007–2009 Ambassador to Afghanistan, serving in Kabul at the height of the troubles there. In 2008 he took on the new role as special representative of the Foreign Secretary to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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about Francis Kilvert

In “semi-retirement” Sir Sherard is senior adviser to HSBC holdings and is also involved in many business and charitable organisations, an honorary fellow of Hertford College, Oxford, where he had obtained a first-class degree in Classics and a Liveryman of the Skinners and World Trades Companies. He is also President of the Jane Austen Society.

However, his most important qualification for our Presidency is that he has been a member of the Kilvert Society for 43 years, having joined in 1981. His great-grandfather was Captain Phipps

Cowper-Coles, who lost his life aboard H.M.S. Captain when it foundered off Cape St. Vincent in September 1870, so vividly recorded by Francis Kilvert, whose pupil was Samuel, son of Captain Phipps Cowper-Coles. Sir Sherard tells me he is actively seeking the wreck of H.M.S. Captain.

Many of our members will remember Sir Sherard when he gave an address at the A.G.M of 2011 speaking on “Kith, Kin and Kilvert: one family’s connection to the country parson.”

We warmly welcome him as President of The Kilvert Society.

From the Chairman

I have lately been reading ‘The Ballad of the White Horse’, an epic poem by G. K. Chesterton, which tells the story, in terms which Chesterton concedes to be less than factual, of Alfred the Great’s defeat of the Danes at the battle of Ethandune in AD 878. For Chesterton this was a battle that ensured the survival of Christianity in England. The poem opens with the following words:

Before the gods that made the gods
Had seen their sunrise pass
The White horse of the White Horse Vale
Was cut out of the grass

This contains within it something of a problem, one that persists throughout the poem. The horse in question is the chalk figure of the White Horse of Uffington in Oxfordshire which has been dated to the late bronze or early iron age and is thought by some to represent Epona, the Celtic goddess of horses and fertility. It seems, to say the least, odd that the Catholic Chesterton, in producing a poem with a fundamentally Christian message, should present the reader at the very start with a central image that he not only knows but states to be of pagan origin.

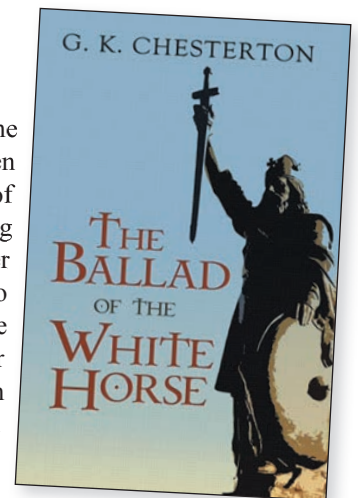
The poem begins with Alfred, after many defeats and facing the prospect of the annihilation of Wessex by the invading Danes, hiding on the island of Athelney in the marshlands of Somerset. There he receives a visitation from the Virgin Mary who urges him, in terms reflecting the peril of his position, to renew the struggle against the Danes. Taking heart from this, Alfred seeks out allied chieftains, a Saxon, a Roman and a Celt. With these he joins battle with the Danish army at Ethandune, the site of which Chesterton shifts from Edington in Wiltshire, where it is believed to have taken place, to the Vale of the White Horse in Oxfordshire. Though at first the fight does not go well for Alfred, ultimately with the help of a sword wielding Virgin Mary the men of Wessex prevail, and the mood of victory is celebrated not only by the them but also by the White Horse itself:

The mother of God goes over them (i.e. the Danes)
Walking on wind and flame
And the storm-cloud drifts from city and dale
And the White Horse stamps in the White Horse Vale
And we shall all yet drink Christian ale
In the village of our name.

At the end of the poem the White Horse is thrust into an even more bizarre role. In Book VIII of the poem, entitled ‘The scouring of the White Horse’, Alfred after the battle instructs his followers to ‘keep the White Horse white/as the first plume of the snow’, in other words keep the chalk figure on the hillside clean and pure white.

It seems that Chesterton would have us believe that the horse, unquestionably pagan in origin, has somehow become a symbol of Christian Wessex/England purified of the pagan Danes, any weeds encroaching on it representing the threat of encroachment by future bands of pagans. The symbolism of all of this is at best confusing and at worst stretched to the point of incomprehensibility.

This bizarre and not very successful amalgam of pagan and Christian imagery does, however, put me in mind of Kilvert’s enigmatic statement, written on 20th June 1871: ‘An angel satyr walks these hills’. The phrase, a plain oxymoron, stands entirely on its own and without context. We must assume that whatever text accompanied it was excised by William Plomer. The phrase is especially striking because it hits the reader of the diary so unexpectedly. It is, however, important to note that the linkage of pagan and Christian imagery here is a product of Kilvert’s momentary fancy and not a conscious literary device as with Chesterton. It is therefore necessary to ponder what might have been Kilvert’s mood at the time of writing. He was in June 1871 thirty years of age, a young man of a highly sensitive temperament, emotionally less mature than his age might suggest. He was also a respectable Victorian cleric, bound by the social mores of his class. Whilst aware of the relative sexual freedom enjoyed by many of his parishioners he was forced to repress any such urges in himself. Is it surprising then that his imagination may at moments of heightened emotional intensity have summoned up images of satyrs in the vibrant and fecund countryside around the hills of Radnorshire? His modification of this idea to that of an angel satyr would perhaps represent an afterthought, a means of moderating and suppressing by an overtly Christian element the more troubling aspects of the original image. This, after all, was a stratagem to which Kilvert took recourse on more than one occasion. It gives us an insight into the workings of his mind in one fleeting and particularly telling moment. And that, after all, brings him closer to us.



EVENTS AND EXCURSIONS

The 2024 AGM and Seminar

The Kilvert Society AGM was held at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford on the evening of 26 April. The first hour was spent dealing with necessary Society business. The reward for our diligence was the splendid buffet provided by Sue and Mike Rose. After that, we became audience for a thoroughly enjoyable and informative evening by Dr Mike Alun Williams entitled 'Teddy Bevan: Brecon Cathedral's first Bishop'. A highlight was seeing pictures from a scrapbook compiled by Edward 'Teddy' Bevan in later life, with pictures from his childhood, and hearing a poem that soldiers wrote who had served with him in World War 1, when he was an army padre – they obviously greatly admired him. An article based on Mike's talk will appear in the March 2025 *Journal*.

On Saturday 27, we had our seminar, outing and annual dinner.

The Editor writes: I had a new book to read after I got home from the Kilvert Society annual seminar weekend: *Folklore of Herefordshire* by Ella May Leather. It was recommended by John Price at his seminar talk on Saturday morning. Next day, I found a mint condition copy on the little bookstall run by the National Trust at The Weir garden, located west of Hereford. John was right: it is a goldmine of information about Herefordshire legends, superstitions, songs, sayings and stories. John talked about the Revd "Wet" (William Edward Thomas) Morgan, curate of Llanfihangel-Helygen, Llanyre in Kilvert's day, and later vicar of Llanigon. Like Kilvert, he proposed for



Bishop Bevan, 'Teddy' Bevan in the Diary. His portrait looked down in the Bishop's Palace as Mike Williams talked about him after the AGM.

Photo: Editor



John Price talking about W.E.T. Morgan at our seminar.

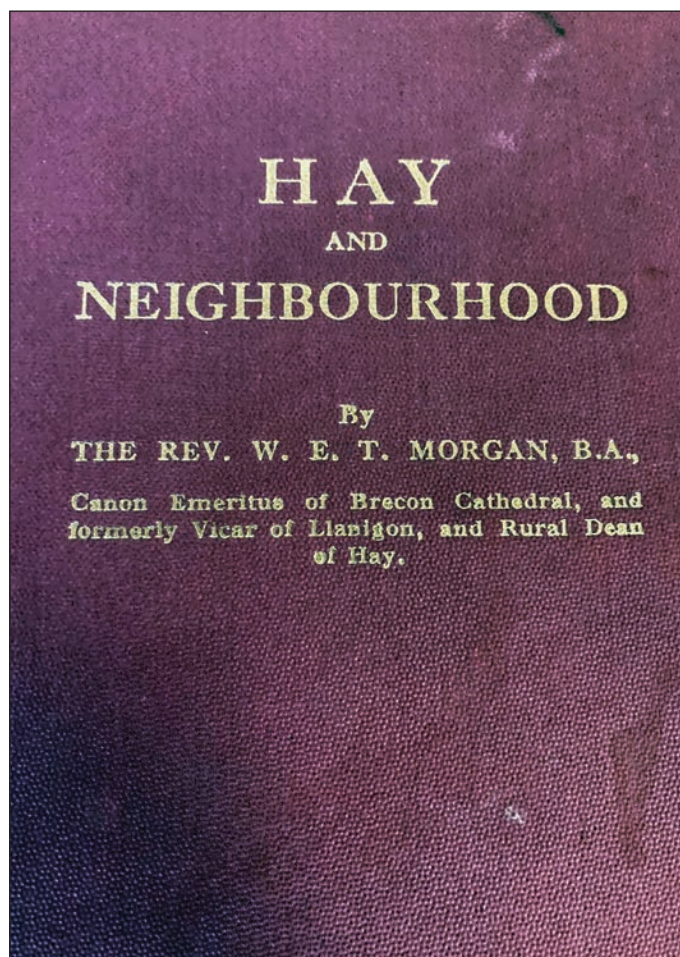
Photo: Editor

one of the Llanthomas sisters, Charlotte, and was turned down by their father. Unlike Kilvert, he lived into old age, dying at the age of 93 in 1940, and was able to remain friendly with the ageing Thomas sisters, including Kilvert's Daisy. We know that Kilvert collected local Radnorshire dialect words. This was an interest shared by "Wet" Morgan and our talk was interspersed with lists of Radnorshire words. John Price also showed us some Kilvert and Society related videos. Those of you who weren't able to be at the seminar and would like to know more about the Revd Morgan can refer to John's article in *Journal* 48.

On Saturday afternoon, our outing took us firstly to Newchurch, where Adrian Chambers, a long-time supporter of the Society, shared with us information about Kilvert's friend, the Revd David Vaughan. A convoy of cars, led by Alan Brimson, then drove to Llanishir. We did overshoot the entrance to the farm lane and had to take turns turning round, but this was all part of our Kilvert experience. The Diarist got lost on his visit on 16 March 1870, in his case on the way home.

It was getting dusk as I left Llanishir and after I had plunged about for some time in the swampy Wern up to my ankles in water I lost my bearings and missed the way, so that I might have been belated but that I heard the welcome clank of plough chains as the team came down home and Joe the Llanishir ploughman directed me up to the Holly House near which in the top of the steep bank I heard children's voices and Hannah and Aaron Gore were gathering 'chats'. They guided me to a 'glat' which I tumbled over. (Vol 1, p58)

Our visit to Llanishir is described on the following pages. We got back to our base at the Pilgrim Hotel, Much Birch and had a brief rest in a busy weekend before the Annual Dinner. This was a happy and convivial evening for those present, and those absent were not forgotten; as Sue Rose reminded us in her Grace before the meal we value all our members. Richard and Charles Weston each read us passages from the *Diary* evoking the beauty of the Kilvert country we had just driven through. "Great minds think alike", said Mike Reynolds: both he and Margaret Collins had chosen passages from *The Handkerchief Tree; the Journal of Frederick Grice 1946-83*. Frederick Grice was a Deputy-



The Revd Morgan's book about Hay: a copy from our archive.

Photo: Editor

President of the Society and there are a number of entries in his *Journal* about Kilvert Society events and people. Margaret read extracts about famous KS Secretary Oswin Prosser. Mike read about a group of friends visiting Thomas Hardy's Dorset, and ended with a poem Fred Grice wrote about that holiday.

We will meet again next year, on 25-26 April. More information will come with the next *Journal*.

The Revd W E T Morgan might have been Kilvert's brother-in-law had Mr Thomas been less obdurate about his daughters getting married. This teapot (the lid is missing) was decorated by Daisy Thomas, the sister Kilvert loved. It was given to the Society by Daisy's great-niece and is in our collection at Radnorshire Museum.



Llanshiver – an ancient farmhouse

By Mary Steele

Our Saturday afternoon outing in April began with a visit to Newchurch (see photo below) and then moved on to Llanshiver.

Faint sunshine on Bryngwyn Hill and a cold cheery gleam of water from the great peat bog below on the edge of which stands the grey cluster of buildings and the tall dark yew of Llanshifr. I went down there and waded across the yard to the house through a sea of mud and water.

It was a wet March when Kilvert visited Llanshiver in 1870, and it rained on our visit in April 2024. But, like Kilvert we were greeted with *tea and cake*. Owners John and Juliet Lewis made a large party of Kilvertians warmly welcome, allowed us to wander over their house to see where Kilvert visited, and gave us a lot of history of the farm.

Juliet showed us some of the research she has done. The 1871 census shows that *Mrs Morgan*, Kilvert's hostess, was Elizabeth Morgan, who lived at the farm with her husband Edward, their three daughters, and a widowed 81 year old uncle. Kilvert described the household thus:

On the settle sat a man perfectly still, silent and in such a dark corner that I could not see his face. On a stool in the corner sat little girl 'Ellen' holding a baby lately vaccinated, both sound asleep, and Mrs Morgan very anxious lest the girl should 'fall the baby'. Morgan anxious to get out to his ewes and lambs and a tall girl strode into the kitchen crying in a peculiar strident voice...

There were four servants, including Joseph Williams, 'Joe' the ploughman, met by Kilvert on his way home. Previous tenants at Llanshiver had been members of the Gore clan, two children of which family Kilvert also met on his return journey.

Other references to Llanshiver appear in Vol 1, p71, a couple of weeks after Kilvert's visit, where it is referred to as part of the story of the giant of Cefn y Blaen, and Vol 2, p149 when, two years later, on 13 March 1872 *I paused at the stonen stile above Llanshifr to look down at the strange dark old house among the springs, with its great dismal solitary yew and the remains of the moat in which the murdered Scotch pedlar was buried.* The gruesome story appealed to the morbid side of Kilvert's imagination.

Llanshiver is an ancient moated farm house. In the September 1977 newsletter, Ivor Lewis discussed its old alternative name 'Llys-Ifor' (the seat or court of Ivor). He also talked about approaches by footpath, as Kilvert got there. One wing of the present house dates from the 1600s and there is a Victorian extension. It is at the top of a hill, but sheltered in a hollow,

Newchurch old rectory where the Revd Vaughan had his school. Photo: Ann Dean





Llanshiver in c1903.

Photo: KS archive



Llanshiver in 2024.

Photo: Ann Dean

which may have been protection at the time of border raids in the Marches. The moat was mostly filled in during the 1960s and now forms part of the garden. Edward Morgan showed Kilvert what remained of it in 1870 *where the Scotch pedlar was hidden after being murdered for the sake of his pack while lodging in the house and where his skeleton was found when the moat was cleared out*. An archaeological dig of the moat is planned for this year, though they do not expect to find anything more sinister than sheep bones.

Elsewhere in his *Diary*, Kilvert commented on the kindness and hospitality of people in the hills near his beloved Clyro. We certainly experienced both in our afternoon excursion. We are so lucky to be able to find such richness from just one entry in the *Diary*.

Thanks especially to John and Juliet Lewis. Diana Clutterbuck drew my attention to a visit to Llanshiver made by the Society forty years ago, reported on in the September 1984 newsletter. Diana sent me the account she has written for her local history society, which helpfully added to my notes.



The garden, incorporating the old moat at Llanshiver.

Photo: Alan Brimson

WHAT THE PAPERS SAID – LLANSHIVER FAMILIES

1841 CENSUS – CLYRO, RADNORSHIRE: LLANSHIVER

Samuel GORE aged 53, farmer, born in County.

Margaret GORE aged 35, born in County.

Mary GORE, aged 10: William GORE, aged 8: Hellen GORE, aged 6: Thomas Price GORE aged 2: and Margaret GORE aged 3½ months. James GORE, aged 25: All born in County.

From: THE HEREFORD TIMES, Saturday 19th October 1850

“A STREET AFFRAY: William WATKINS of the Glen, Edward BISHOP of Bryngwyn, **William GORE** of Llanshiver and George MEREDITH of Pencestry, Radnorshire, were severally summoned by the Superintendent Constable for an affray in the streets of Hay on the 12th ultimo. The defendants pleaded ‘Guilty,’ and their general character being good and orderly, the Bench thought the case would be met by binding the parties over to keep the peace for three calendar months – Bound accordingly.”

INSCRIPTION on ALTAR TOMBSTONE (laid flat) {FIND A GRAVE ANCESTRY WEBSITE}

SAMUEL GORE of Llanshiver in the Parish of Clyro

Who died February 18th 1854 aged 66 years.

‘Farewell dear Wife my time is past

My love was true while life did last

Now I am gone no sorrow take

But love my children for my sake.”

By 1861 the next resident at LLANSHIVER was **William GORE** [bapt. 26th April 1826 at Clyro]

“1861 CENSUS – LLANSHIVER, CLYRO PARISH

William GORE Head Mar. 28 yrs – Farmer of 237 Acres employing 23 Men. Born – Radnor. Clyro

Mary GORE, Wife, 28 yrs – Farmer’s Wife.....
Born – Radnor. Clyro

Samuel GORE, Son 7 yrs.....
Born – Hfdsh. St Michael-on-Arrow

David GORE, Son 5 yrs.....
Born – Hfdsh. Painscastle

Elizabeth GORE, Daughter, 3 yrs.....
Born – Hfdsh. Brilley

Mary GORE, Daughter, 10 mos.....
Born – Radnor. Clyro

William MORGAN, 32yrs, Unm. General Servant (deaf & dumb since birth) Born – Radnor. Clyro

Thomas WILLIAMS, 21 yrs, Unm. Carter.....
Born – Radnor. Clyro

John POWELL, 15yrs, Unm. General Servant.....
Born – Radnor. Clyro

Sarah WILLIAMS, 16yrs, Unm. Housemaid.....
Born – Clyro

Elizabeth JONES, 29 yrs Unm. Nurse.....
Born – Hfdsh. Dorstone.”

By 1871 the next resident at LLANSHIVER was **Edward MORGAN** [1830-1898]

1871 CENSUS – LLANSHIVER, CLYRO PARISH

Edward MORGAN, Head Mar. 40 yrs, Farmer 300 Acres, employing 4 Men, Born Radnor. Llandewi

Elizabeth MORGAN, Wife, 40 yrs, Farmer’s Wife.....
Born – Radnor. Newchurch

Elizabeth MORGAN, Daughter, 12 yrs, Farmer’s Daughter.....
Born – Radnor. Newchurch

Eleanor MORGAN, Daughter, 7 yrs, Farmer’s Daughter.....
Born – Radnor. Newchurch

Mary Anne MORGAN, Daughter, 1 yr, Farmer’s Daughter.....
Born – Radnor. Newchurch

Edward MORGAN, Uncle, 81 yrs, Retired Farmer.....
Born – Radnor. Nantmel
+ Four servants

By the time of the 1881 Census, **Edward MORGAN** had moved to Brilley, Herefordshire.

He died at Yatton, Herefordshire on 30th January 1898, leaving £1,565 19s. Buried in Brilley Churchyd.

Elizabeth MORGAN, his wife survived him until 4th July 1905 and is buried with him at Brilley.

From: HEREFORD TIMES, Saturday 10th August 1850 “SOUTH WALES CIRCUIT: RADNORSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES:

Bryngwyn Burglary: Thomas BENYON aged 38 and John DARCY aged 30 years indicted for having, on the 22nd of June last, burglariously broken and entered the house of Theophilus GORE of the above Parish, and stolen therefrom a quantity of Bacon, Flour, Bread and other articles. Mr MILLS appeared for the prosecution but the prisoners were undefended.

Theophilus GORE deposed: ‘I am a farmer residing at Llanshiver, Bryngwyn. I was the last up to bed on the Saturday night, came down on the Sunday morning at between 3 and 4 o’clock and saw the house had been broken into by way of the kitchen window. He and a neighbour, James WILLIAMS, followed footprints for at least a mile, then called on my brother, Edward GORE and he accompanied us to Layton Barn, about 5 miles further on, the footprints being noticeable to within half a mile of that place; we found several people in the Barn, a man and woman downstairs in the stable, and six men, a woman and a child in the loft room, among them the prisoners at the bar, never seen them before.’

There followed an explanation by Mr Theophilus GORE of measuring the shoes of BENYON and DARCY as footprints showed a shoe with large nail impressions and BENYON’S shoes were a match showing 26 large nail impressions and identical shoe measurements. This last evidence was given by Mr **Edward GORE**.

Food was discovered by Mrs GORE and she recognized an apron which she had darned, also a straw hat together with clothes which were stained by cheese colouring. The food

WHAT THE PAPERS SAID – LLANSHIVER FAMILIES

found looked identical to that which had been stolen. The prisoners had been committed to Hereford Gaol while their shoes were examined and measured: now the Jury found each 'Guilty.' BENYON had a previous conviction under the name of Thomas DAVIES at Hereford in 1846 so he was sentenced to be transported for Life and DARCY for Ten Years."

From: HEREFORD TIMES, Saturday 1st March 1862
"AN AFFRAY AMONGST THE FAIR AND GENTLE ONES: Sarah WILLIAMS v Mary GORE, both of CLYRO.

Complainant in the first case being sworn, said, 'I am the wife of James WILLIAMS, and was living on the 24th of January last at the Holly Bush in the parish of Clyro; on that day I was at work at Keven-y-blaen (sic) Farm House for Mrs BEAVAN; defendant, **Mary GORE**, came to the house and after abusing me to Mrs BEVAN (sic) and calling me bad names, she came to me in the Dairy opposite and repeated the abuse and struck me in the face.' (The evidence is unfit for publication).

Anne MEREDITH, being sworn, said: 'I recollect the 24th of January last: I am servant to Mrs BEVAN of Keven-y-blaen; Mrs GORE came to the door and asked for the mistress – Sarah WILLIAMS was at work in the Dairy and had a jug of water in her hand: Mrs GORE came to her and abused her and called her names.' This witness corroborated the evidence of the complainant. She then went to her, and struck her in the face and there was much bad language in both sides. –

Mrs Mary BEVAN called, and was sworn, said: 'I am the wife of William BEVAN of Keven-y-blaen, and I recollect the 24th of January last; I was in my house when Mrs GORE came by my invitation' – (evidence collected): 'I did all I could to separate them and after a few minutes I succeeded.'

The defendant said: 'I deny the charges, they have given the wrong evidence.

[The cross summonses was then heard and the four belligerents changed places.] The complainant, **Mary GORE**, having been sworn, then said: 'I am the wife of **William GORE** of **LLANSHIVER** in the parish of Clyro; on the 24th of January last I went to Mrs BEVAN'S, having heard she had accused me of stealing a goose from a neighbour named EVANS, who is a tailor; I went to Mrs BEVAN for an explanation: on

leaving her I met Sarah WILLIAMS, the defendant who called me names, abused me and struck me, I never struck her at all; she got me on the ground.'

Louisa GORE was called and sworn. She said: 'I am the wife of **James GORE** of New Gate in the parish of Newchurch.' – she corroborated the evidence and said that Sarah WILLIAMS got hold of Mrs BEVAN by mistake and Mrs BEVAN called out, 'Oh! Sally, Sally, it's me, Sally!' 'I saw Mrs GORE down on the floor and Sarah WILLIAMS beating her. (This witness seemed to think the whole affair to be 'rare fun'.')

The court was then cleared and on re-admission the judges gave in favour of Mrs BEVAN, whom the Court considered had only done her duty in endeavouring to quell the riot.

The other parties were ordered to pay their own costs: **Mary GORE** – 16 shillings and sixpence, and Sarah WILLIAMS – 11 shillings and sixpence."

NOTE: In the 1861 Census, the BEAVAN family at Kevenyblain (sic) were William 42, farmer 180 acres, employing 2 labourers and one boy, born Llanvihangel and Mary Beavan 45, born at Colva. Children: John 11, Merrick 7, Arthur 3 and Mary 10 months. Three lodgers, Housemaid and a Nurse.

From: BRECON COUNTY TIMES, Friday 1st March 1907

"COUNTY of RADNOR

The following FREEHOLD FARMS,

The property of R H BASKERVILLE, Esq., are for Sale
by Private Contract.

Three in the parishes of Llandewi-fach and Llanbedr in
the parish of Clyro:

Cefn-y-Blaen and **LLANSHIVER** –

Freehold farm known as **LLANSHIVER** – with Farmhouse
and buildings and about

237 Acres of arable and Pasture Land.

One in the parish of Cregrina.

For further particulars, selling price and orders to view,
Apply to Mr V HELME, Estate Office, Clyro, Hay,
Or to Messrs Cheese & Armstrong, solicitors, Hay."

Thanks to Teresa Williams.

Cefn-y-Blaen

Cefn-y-Blaen (misspelt above by the Hereford Times and the 1861 census) was visited by Kilvert on 26 March 1870 when he heard from William Pritchard about *the old house of Cefn y Blaen and the large famous room which he says was twenty yards long and was used for holding a Court of Justice in for the Country around the time of Charles I.*

On 28 March, he noted:

Williams says the petty chief great landlords were called 'Normandy Kings'. One of them lived at Cefn y Blaen, one at Llanshiffr; another at Great Gwernfydden...At Cefn y Blaen there were then 40 men each 7 feet high.

(Vol 1, p69 and 71).

Summer at Moccas

A long anticipated visit for Kilvert Society members, including Mary Steele, who reports.

Our June visit took us to Moccas to visit the church, the Park and Moccas Hill wood, where members subscribed in 2021 to donate trees for a replanting project by Natural England.

The sun shone down strongly as 21 members gathered outside the church of St Michael and All Angels, Moccas, but it was cool inside. Director of Music Lyndon Eatough-Smith had generously given up his morning to explain to us the workings of the church's famous organ. He treated us to a lively lecture-demonstration showing us the great range of sound that can come from the 574 organ pipes and also letting us see the recently restored Bailey Hydraulic Engine.

After this, we had our picnic lunches in the shade of the church and then drove to Moccas Park, where KS Chairman Rob Graves had obtained permission for us to enter the deer park. Rob read us the famous *Diary* entry about the old men of Moccas (Vol 3, p263) and we strolled among the ancient oaks and sweet chestnuts. After a while, our convoy of cars drove up the hill to Moccas Hill Wood. This is now named Gillian's Wood and forms part



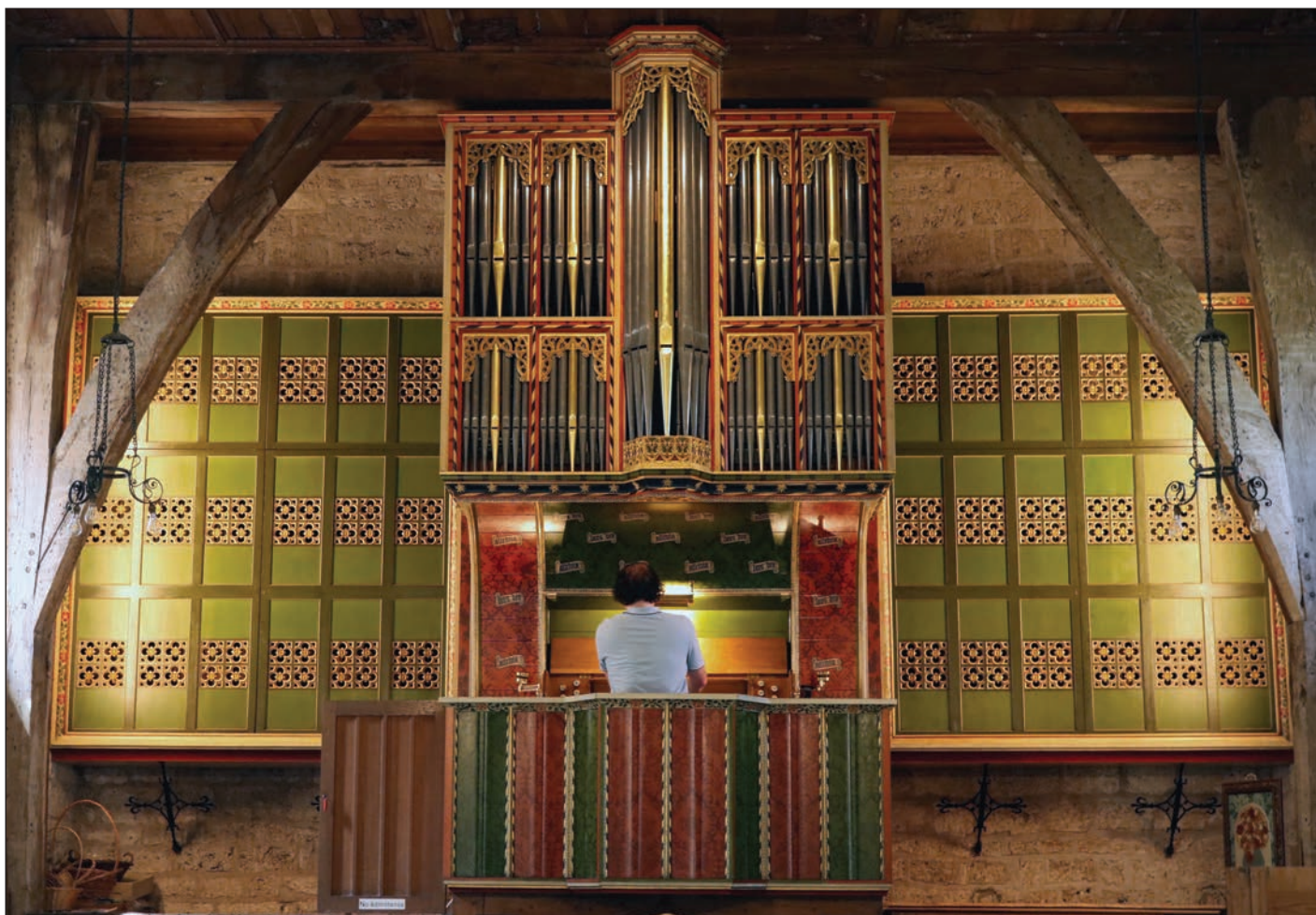
Moccas organ: the Bailey Hydraulic Engine.

Photo: Editor



KS members gathered at Moccas church.

Photo: Nicholas Green



Lyndon Eatough-Smith playing Moccas church organ for us.

Photo: Alan Brimson

In the shade of a tree at Moccas Park, listening to a reading.

Photo: Editor





A Kilvert Society tree in its protective cage at Gillian's Wood, surrounded by foxgloves and fern.

Photo: Editor

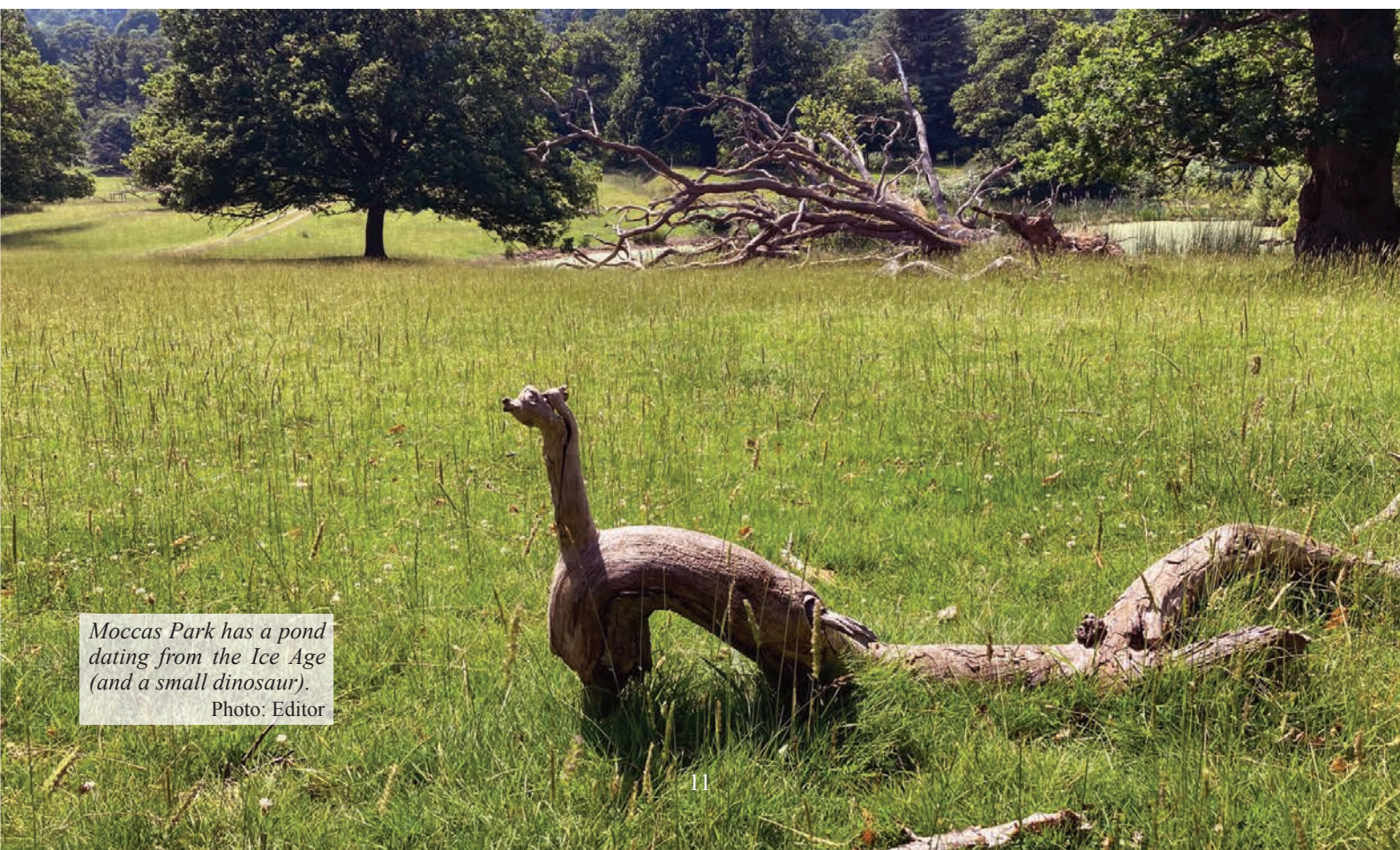
of an extended National Nature Reserve, together with Moccas Park and the new addition of Woodbury Hill Wood, bought for the Woodland Trust by the local Bulmer family and named in memory of Gillian Bulmer. Natural England is responsible for creating and scheduling NNRS and Gillian's Wood has recently become part of the King's Series of National Nature Reserves.

William and I walked up to the top of Moccas Park, whence we had a glorious view of the Golden Valley shining in the evening sunlight with the white houses of Dorstone scattered about the green hillsides 'like a handful of pearls in a cup of emerald' and the noble spire of Peterchurch rising from out of the heart of the beautiful rich valley which was closed below by the Sugar Loaf and the Skyrrid blue above Abergavenny. (Vol 3, p263)

This is Kilvert walking with his brother-in-law William Smith on 22 April 1876. The Sugar Loaf was visible in the panoramic views of a June afternoon heat haze. Society members' trees are scattered widely over the site in a perfect place to celebrate Kilvert's love of nature and his delight in what we now call Kilvert country. It was too hot to walk far, and the fern was high, but if any fit local member would like to do a photographic walk of Kilvert Society trees in winter or early spring, we would love to see the results.

Kilvert and William Smith *came tumbling and plunging down the steep hillside of Moccas Park, slipping, tearing and sliding...* We negotiated the modern hazard of meeting a lorry on the single track lane, and returned to Moccas village, to the church hall. Although we were there early, local resident Julia Whittal swiftly arrived to serve us delicious tea and cakes while we relaxed and savoured our Kilvert tea and our day.

With thanks to Rob Graves for organising the day, to Julia Whittal, to Lyndon Eatough-Smith, and to local member Lord Lisvane who kindly put us in touch with Lyndon and who writes about the organ on the next page.



Moccas Park has a pond dating from the Ice Age (and a small dinosaur).

Photo: Editor

Letter: Moccas Church Organ

May I refer to the article about Moccas Church in your September 2023 issue?

Moccas is a splendid little church, and was rightly enjoyed by our fellow-members. However, the report in the Journal contained some factual errors.

First, the organ is certainly not “as big as a cathedral organ”. Following an expert restoration by Nicholsons of Malvern, there are 8 stops on the Great, 5 on the Swell, and one pedal stop (14 in total).

Compare this with the organ of Hereford Cathedral: Great: 16 stops; Swell: 13 stops; Pedal, 14 stops. In addition, the Cathedral has two further manuals: Choir, 10 stops, Solo, 8 stops (61 in total). There are 53 non-speaking stops (couplers, pistons, &c). By comparison the Moccas organ is very modest.

The article asserts that the organ “works by water pumps, which are now electric”. Not so. The organ has a hydraulic engine, powered by water being pumped round a closed system – an extremely rare arrangement, and possibly unique in this country.

Having played the instrument for more than 40 years, I have now benefited from the spectacularly successful restoration by Nicholsons, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other donors, as well as by a local appeal. Nicholson’s website, and Moccas PCC’s own website, have fascinating accounts of the restoration.

While writing, might I nail the canard in an earlier issue of the Journal that Andrew Pope lived at Blakemere House? He did not. The Matthews family owned the Blakemere Estate for two centuries and more, before it went to Henry Haywood by marriage to Jane Matthews. I think it certain that Kilvert would have visited our house but alas we have no documentary evidence.

Yours faithfully,

Robert Lisvane

Chairman of the Royal College of Organists, 2021-2024

Blakemere House, Blakemere, Herefordshire.

Sir George Cornewall

The Editor looks at Diary references about the owner of Moccas in Kilvert’s day.

In his talk to the 2023 Kilvert seminar, David Whitehead drew our attention to the importance of Sir George Cornewall of Moccas Court in the life of Kilvert when the Diarist was at Bredwardine. Sir George was rural dean, so the local senior clergyman. He was the largest landowner in Bredwardine, which, combined with his clerical position, made him the most influential figure in the parish next to the Miss Newtons, who owned the living. Sir George was also patron of the living of Monnington, held by Kilvert’s brother-in-law, William Smith.

David Whitehead talked about the *gipsy party* of Friday 30 August 1872 (Vol 2, p252-4), which began with a *sumptuous luncheon* at the home of the Miss Newtons in Bredwardine, and continued with a picnic in Moccas Park hosted by Sir George and Lady Cornewall. It turned out to be worth



Sir George Cornewall.
Photo: KS Archive

reading this with the index to the three-volume *Diary* in hand, which shows that this is the first mention of Sir George in the published *Diary* and the first recorded meeting with the Miss Newtons, though there are earlier references. Of course, William Plomer could have omitted previous meetings with Sir George and the Miss Newtons; he was editing volume by volume and the importance of these people may only gradually have become evident. As it is, we are left with the question of why Kilvert was invited to this festivity. It wasn’t through his brother-in-law, who wasn’t appointed to Monnington until 1874. Mr Houseman, vicar of Bredwardine was there: had he recommended this currently jobless young curate to the attention of his patrons? Three days later, Kilvert left Clyro *for ever*. Possibly Sir George Cornewall had heard about this clergyman who appeared to have been overlooked by the Bishop of St David’s, and decided to take a look at him. On 1 December 1874,



The tomb of Sir Reginald de Fresne in the chancel of Moccas church.
Photo: Nicholas Green

not long after his appointment to Monnington, William went to a clerical meeting at Mr Phillott's, the Rector of Stanton-on-Wye, and came back not very deeply impressed by the brilliancy of some of the Herefordshire Clergy (Vol 3, p115-6). Was Sir George talent spotting for future reference? On this occasion, Sir George came across as friendly and relaxed, arriving in black as he had just been to a funeral, but with a white straw hat and a black ribbon. He made himself useful by cutting bread and butter.

The next time the *Diary* refers to Kilvert meeting Sir George is some time later, on Saturday 10 April 1875 (Vol 3, p165), when the Diarist walked to Moccas with its curate, the Revd Rhys Bishop, and Sir George was in the church at his favourite occupation of playing the organ he had installed. Kilvert became very interested in the beautiful tomb of Sir Reginald de Fresne (*Fraxinus=Ashe*) the Crusader, perhaps an ancestor of my own. Kilvert became rather obsessed with this possible ancestor, as, much later, on New Year's Day 1878, he recounted his theory again to churchwarden James Ashe. A few days later, on 12 January 1878, while back in Wiltshire: *I called at Langley House to see if Mrs Ashe could give any information about the connection of the Ashe family with the Moccas Estate about which Sir George Cornwall is much interested. She had unfortunately mislaid the only book which would throw light on the subject, a book compiled and worked out by Major Walter Ashe from authorities in the British Museum* (Vol 3, p357-8). One wonders if Sir George's great interest was mostly being polite in the face of Kilvert's enthusiasm.

Most references to Sir George in the *Diary* come after Kilvert's appointment to Bredwardine and Brobury. Sir George proved to be an attentive neighbour:

We had for our early dinner Sir George's hare and brace of pheasants (Vol 3, p349). [Kilvert's parents were visiting].



There was a look of deep calm upon his face. (Vol 3, p165).

Photo: Alan Brimson



Moccas Court.

Photo: Nicholas Green

Kilvert met Sir George at meetings of the Jarvis Charity, of which they were fellow trustees, and on 15 January 1877, having learned that Kilvert had walked to a Hardwick parsonage to a meeting of the Wye-side Clerical Association *Sir George drove me home again at 5, wrapped in a horsecloth* (Vol 3, p359). As major landowner in the parish, Sir George helped with church repairs: *Sir George Cornwall sent me £13.10 towards the repair of Bredwardine Church Tower, very handsome* (Vol 3, p393). He also sang at the concert held in Bredwardine school for the church tower restoration fund (Vol 3, p401).

He was supportive as a neighbour and a senior clergyman. Friday 20 December [1878] *Advent service in Bredwardine Church at 7 p.m. Sir George Cornwall walked over from Moccas to preach, coming through the field and supporting himself in the slippery places with a spud walking stick. Between 30 and 40 people in Church which we thought a fair congregation considering the weather and the icy roads* (Vol 3, p 440).

Tragically, Sir George's last duty for Kilvert was to preach at the Sunday service held at Bredwardine the day after the funeral of the Diarist. It was reprinted in the Kilvert Society publication *Looking Backwards*,¹ and was described by the Revd David Lockwood as 'too theological, too impersonal and too

long.'² Perhaps we have taken insufficient notice of Sir George Cornwall because he does not reach our hearts in his only recorded words known to us about Kilvert. But he was clearly taking an active and helpful interest in his fellow clergyman. The Revd J R Williams summed him up in the Kilvert Society Commemoration Service of June 1980. He noted that Sir George was a "Squarson", a squire-parson who "endears himself to the reader of the Diary...Sir George and Lady Cornwall were kind and thoughtful neighbours to the young incumbent of Bredwardine."³

NOTES

Thanks to David Whitehead for drawing our attention to the importance of Sir George Cornwall at the 2023 seminar. David Machin wrote about Sir George Cornwall and Moccas in *Journal 41*, p356-7.

¹ *Looking Backwards*, edited by C T O Prosser, (Kilvert Society 1969).

² Francis Kilvert by David Lockwood. (Seren 1990), p157.

³ Kilvert Society Newsletter, Feb 1981, p3.



The view west from Moccas church with Cornwall graves.
Photo: Nicholas Green

Susan Catherine Venables

Teresa Williams tells the story of the last decade of the life of the Diary's Mrs Henry Venables.

Part 2 of this article (*Journal 58*) described Susan Venables' meetings with Kilvert, as reported in the *Diary* and in Venables correspondence, up to the shock of Kilvert's death in September 1879. Susan heard the news at her home in Northumberland. There is an archived letter from Susan to Lister dated 26 September 1879, in which she says she has been ill and writes of local excavations of a Roman site taking place at Cilurnum, but, according to the letter summary, makes no mention of Kilvert or his sudden death.¹

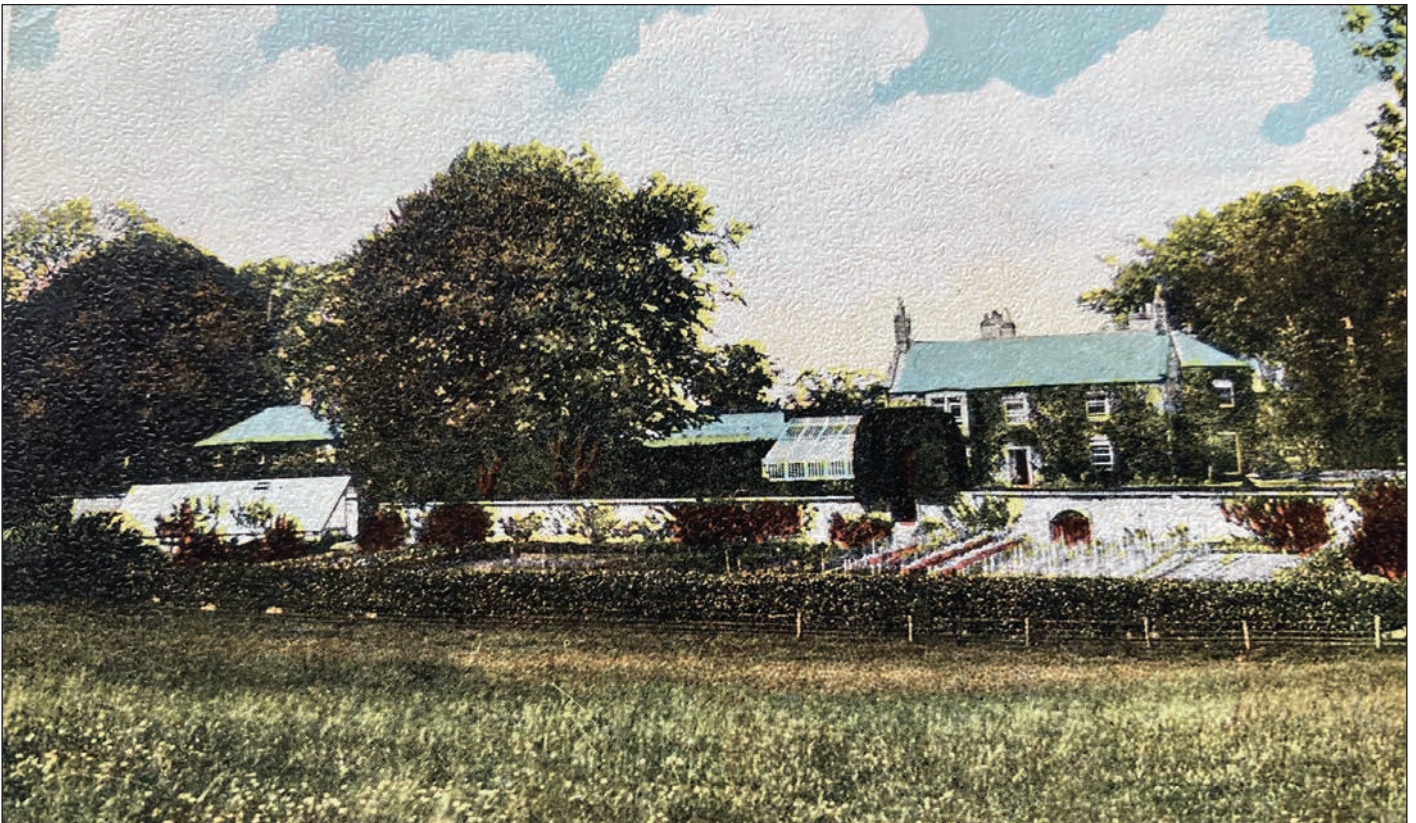
Susan continued to contribute money and her time to local events, including fund raising towards 'care for the poor' of Simonburn village, during the severe weather. She and her mother, Bridget Ridley of High Park End, attended the annual meeting of the friends and supporters of the Church Missionary Society on 26 November 1879. *The Hexham Courant* reports that "the audience was riveted by the graphic description of the Society's work among the tribes of Western Africa."

The Morpeth Herald of 27 November 1880 records the death on 21 November at High Park End House of Bridget Ridley at the age of 91 years. Susan, once again, was in mourning. The

following year the 1881 Census records Susan, now aged 59, at Low Park End, the household cared for by one male and four female servants, including a ladies' maid, Sarah Dee, who was also listed in the 1871 Census. At High Park End, Susan's brother Thomas and sister Mary, are the occupants, cared for by five servants. Susan continued to entertain at Low Park End in the summer of 1881, inviting Sir Charles and Lady Harriette Elliot, repaying the hospitality she received at their home in 1878.

In October 1881, her brother-in-law George Stovin Venables wrote of his plans for the new church at Newbridge-on-Wye, the culmination of many years planning. Although the cost of the new building will be borne by him, the letter summary says that there is opposition to 'the idea of a new church from someone who everybody had thought would be supportive.' He said that Richard Lister Venables had received advice that a letter from the Church Commissioners appeared to be in favour of the scheme, so hopefully the building work could begin.⁴³

The online subscription newspaper archive and the NLW summarised archive letters reveal nothing definitive of Susan's activities during 1882, but the following year was one of much



Low Park End.

Photo: Teresa Williams collection

socialising. She travelled to stay at Llysdyman Hall in June, and on 12 July 1883 attended the consecration ceremony of the new Church of All Saints at Newbridge by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of St David's. He announced at the service that due to illness, George Stovin was unable to attend, an occurrence he deeply regretted. The newspaper reports explained the background history:-

“Divine worship had been held in the National Schoolroom at Newbridge, the parish church being situated at Llanyre, two and a half miles away. However, through the exertions of the Rev. R Lister Venables of Llysdyman, Mr George Stovin Venables, Q.C., the Rev James J Evans, Vicar of Llanyre, and others, an iron church was erected, which has been regularly used since. Twelve months ago a new parochial district was formed by uniting a part of the Llanyre parish with the hamlet of Llysdyman on the other side of the Wye, the new district being designated All Saints and the Rev. J E Lloyd, M.A., of Hay (formerly curate in charge of Holy Trinity Church, Llandrindod Wells) being appointed as the incumbent.

The edifice was from the designs and under the superintendence of Mr S W Williams, architect and surveyor of Rhayader, Messrs W Bowers & Co., Bath Street, Hereford, being the contractors. The church is in the form of a Latin cross, the transept forming respectively the vestry and the organ chamber. The tower is situated at the north-west angle of the nave. The nave is 51 ft long and 20 ft 6 ins wide. The ends of the choir stalls have been filled in with very handsome panels carved by Mrs Lister Venables.” [The communion vessels were also gifted by Agnes Venables and dated from 1869 when she had first envisaged the future building of a church at Newbridge,]

Susan's brother, John Ridley gave the pulpit for the new church. Susan was the donor of the eagle lectern, carved in Munich by Messrs Meyer & Son, and of three east windows. A dedication on one window to her late husband, read as follows:-

*‘Giving thanks to God for the dear memory of
JOSEPH HENRY VENABLES,*

*Who was born December 3rd, 1813 and died September 5th 1866 –
Susan Catherine, his Wife, dedicates this window.’*

The newspaper report gave details of other memorial windows dedicated to members of the Venables and Pearson families, including a south window in memory of Henry George Lister Venables, the son of Agnes and Lister, who died on 11 January 1876, aged 19 months. His death is not mentioned in the published *Diary* as it occurred during the ‘short gap’ caused by destroyed notebooks.

Many of the archived letters bear no ‘year’ date, but sequence of letter numbers and events mentioned can help in accurately dating the letters. It is believed that it was in July 1883 that Susan stayed with the Bevan family at Hay Castle. She has travelled from Llysdyman Hall, her visit there providing her “with great enjoyment.” Her letter of the 14th tells of “the kindness of the Bevans and other friends to her and that they, in turn, were anxious to have news of Lister and Agnes.” She says she has been to Clyro, which is “so changed for the worse.” After this visit, she returned to her home as George Stovin planned to arrive on 3 August for one of his summer visits. He wrote to Lister that “Susan has at last hired a pair of horses.” George Stovin must have found this very useful for their visits to local friends during his stay at Low Park End, many of whom he had known for all his life through the Ridley/Venables connections in London and Kent.³



Ovingham village.

Photo: Teresa Williams collection



All Saints Church, Newbridge-on-Wye.

Photo: Nicholas Green

On 1 September, a fine autumn day, Susan attended the 10th annual Wark Floral and Horticultural Society Show with her sister Mary. These events were always supported by the local clergy and gentry, making the occasion 'a day to remember' for the prizewinners and their families.

The Newcastle Journal for Friday 2 November 1883 shows yet another example of Susan's generosity to Simonburn Church. She had given a screen, carved in oak by Messrs Meyer of Munich, (who had executed her gift of the eagle lectern at Newbridge). The newspaper reported, "The screen lies across the eastern extremity of the chancel behind the Communion Table. The arms and monogram of her family and her late husband are carved on shields of oak and walnut. Two brazen altar flower vases have also been given together with an Utrecht velvet altar cloth exactly matching the one donated in 1877." The article praised the "munificence of Mrs Henry Venables."

George Stovin Venables was nominated High Sheriff of Radnorshire in a ceremony in the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice on Monday 19 November 1883, the day being "the morrow of St Martin's Day, the day for nominations in England and Wales. The list of names read by the Queen's Remembrancer, Sir Frederick Pollock," also contained that of Mr Charles Evan Thomas of the Knoll, Neath, nominated for the County of Breconshire.

On Friday 21 December 1883, the *Newcastle Journal* reported on the "Public opening of a Bridge erected across the Tyne, between Prudhoe and Ovingham the previous day." The foundation stone of the north pier had been laid in June 1883 by Susan's nephew, John Hilton Ridley. This bridge was vitally important as "previously the only means of communication between the north and south sides of the river at that part of the Tyne had been by ferry boat, a dangerous journey in stormy weather or times of flooding." The article gave the total length of the bridge as "530ft with 63 ft spans, with the roadway above the height of the summer water level being 25 feet. After the bridge was declared open by Mr Ridley, a trolley drawn by two horses was driven across from the Ovingham side, followed by a great crowd of people."

A luncheon was served at which two gifts were presented to Hilton Ridley, a gold ring and an inscribed solid silver salver. Speeches and loyal toasts followed with a display of fireworks in the late afternoon and in the evening a Ball was held at the Ovingham Inn. Hilton's father and Susan's brother, John Matthew Ridley of Walwick Hall, was among those attending the event. Unfortunately, the summary of the letter she wrote to Lister Venables describing the event, does not make it clear if she had been at the bridge opening.⁴

From archived letter summaries, we learn Susan visited both Llysdyman Hall and George Stovin's home in London during the summer of 1884. On one occasion she "broke her journey at Hay." It does not mention, however, whether she visited Hay Castle and again stayed with the Bevan family.

In June and July, George Stovin was very busy making arrangements for his installation as High Sheriff; he writes about "the sword, cocked hat and uniform" he will be wearing and reminds himself not to forget about supplying "cotton gloves for the Police." The ceremony was to be at Presteigne on 25 July. He travelled to Bedale in Yorkshire afterwards and wrote from there to Lister on 31 July to thank him for his help and say he would be going to Northumberland on 3 August.⁵

In July 1885, Susan invited George Stovin to Low Park End for his usual summer holiday. Also there that year, apparently on a return visit, was Sir Franklin Lushington, Chief Magistrate of the Metropolitan Police Courts in London, and a great friend of the Venables family. The Lushington family was large. Franklin, or 'Frank' as he was called, had 12 siblings. George Stovin stayed fairly regularly at the Maidstone home (named Park House) of one of Frank's brothers, Edmund Law Lushington, whose wife Cecilia, was the sister of Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Susan had been invited to accompany George Stovin; she, of course, knew many of the family through her marriage.⁶

On 3 April 1886, in a letter to Lister, Susan thanked him for an account of the funeral ceremony of the Duchess of Norfolk, an aunt to Agnes Venables, from whom she received the middle name of 'Minna.' Susan's letter regrets the way the "old houses are going down, the continuing increase of Radicalism" and speaks of a settlement in Katanga, Congo of missionaries from the non-conformist sect the Plymouth Brethren, the first white settlers in the copper and mineral-rich region previously explored by David Livingstone.⁷ In June, she and her sister Mary went to Llysdyman with George Stovin, not staying in London first because of the heat. In August he and Frank travelled north to Susan's home in Northumberland.

1887 was the 50th year of Queen Victoria's reign and the *Morpeth Herald* for 26 February reports that "the Duchess of Northumberland had asked Mrs Henry Venables to act as President in the collection of 'Women's Jubilee Offerings to the Queen' in the parish of Simonburn." This was a countrywide effort and Mrs Venables eventually "transmitted to the Duchess the sum of £4 18s 6d collected from 157 women and girls." Susan travelled to London in time for the Jubilee celebrations, staying at 67 Curzon Street with George Stovin and according to him, "had a good seat at the Athenaeum" [Club] premises from which she saw the Queen's Jubilee procession on its way for the thanksgiving service. Following her trip to London, Susan visited Llysdyman, and later that summer George Stovin and Frank Lushington travelled north for their usual holiday.

In the early summer of 1888, Agnes was ill, so Susan, already in London, was forced to delay her holiday at Llysdyman. However, by 28 June Agnes had improved and Susan went to Llysdyman Hall, with George Stovin following on 3 July. An archived letter summary dated 27 June refers to his "Plans to go to [Low] Park End later this summer." However, no letter from George Stovin written at Susan's home that summer has so far been traced and it appears that he left Llysdyman returning to his London home where he became ill. On 27 July Susan wrote to Lister from York, describing the train journey there, her activities and concern for Agnes's continuing bad health. She thanked him for years of kindness to her and hoped for their sake they would be able to go to Cannes as arranged. She was also concerned "about George's health." During September as he continued to decline, Susan wrote to him regularly from Northumberland.⁵⁰

Agnes wrote to Lister on 22 September about George Stovin's man-servant, Lansley, who was now caring for him, and how "Lansley's devotion to his master" had been so apparent to the staff at Llysdyman Hall. Sadly, George Stovin's health did not improve and he died at Curzon Street on Saturday 6 October 1888 aged 78.⁶

Susan's brother, John Matthew Ridley travelled from Walwick Hall, Humshaugh, for the funeral which took place on Wednesday 10 October 1888 at All Saints Church, Newbridge-on-Wye. According to the Parish Burial Register, the Vicar, the Reverend J E Lloyd officiated. No report of the ceremony has been found in digitised newspapers online.

Susan wrote to Lister on the day of the funeral but there is no summary of the letter's contents. In a letter dated 15 October 1888, the summary says, "She cannot believe George is dead." In a further letter to him on the 26th, she wrote that she is thankful for the letters but finds writing tires her. She longed to hear that they are safely in Cannes." [This refers to a visit they were planning.] On 13 October, Frank Lushington wrote to Lister, thanking him for an account of the funeral and mentioning how Henry Lushington had been George's oldest friend.¹¹

By 30 December 1888, Frank, writing to Lister and Agnes said he was "concerned about Susan's illness of which he had heard from Miss Ridley," Susan's sister, Mary, had moved to Low Park End late in the previous year to nurse Susan. On 14 January 1889 Frank was still worried that Susan remained ill, and on 31 March, John Matthew Ridley wrote, "Susan's heart is affected and she has taken a turn for the worse." He wrote again on 8 April that "it is heartbreaking to see Susan so ill." A week later on Monday 15 April 1889, Susan died at her home, Low Park End, Simonburn, aged 65 years.¹²

Her funeral ceremony was widely reported, the following account is from the *Newcastle Journal* for Friday 19th April 1889.

THE FUNERAL OF MRS VENABLES, LOW PARK END, SIMONBURN

Yesterday, in the sunshine of a perfect April day, all that could die of Mrs Susan Catherine Venables of Low Park End, was laid to rest in the God's Acre of the ancient church of Simonburn, where she had been baptised and married. She sleeps almost beneath the shade of the great sycamore trees, close to the church she loved so well, and to which she had been so munificent a benefactress.

Her memory deserves something more than the mere record of her name and age in the obituary. Mrs Venables was the youngest daughter of Mr John Ridley of High Park End. Many in North Tyne remember the kindly and hospitable old squire, and more still his much beloved wife, Mrs Bridget Ridley, who, with eye little dimmed and generous heart as responsive as ever to the call of charity and kindness, passed away only eight years since at the great age of ninety-two. In 1865, Mrs Venables married Mr Joseph Henry Venables, an eminent Parliamentary counsel, son of the Archdeacon of Carmarthen. Her married life was but a brief one, and then like one of old, preferring to 'dwell among her own people,' she came to that beautiful home on the banks of North Tyne which none who have visited are likely to forget. Here she dwelt for more than twenty-two years, the type of an English gentlewoman, gentle, loving and sympathising with all. Not only did she exercise a large and kindly hospitality, but every good and charitable cause found in her a generous



The grave of Richard Lister Venables at Newbridge-on-Wye. The grave of George Stovin Venables is behind it.

Photo: Nicholas Green



A postcard view of the interior of Simonburn Church, the church which Susan Catherine Venables helped restore and beautify and where her funeral was held.

Photo: Teresa Williams Collection

contributor. Many of her gifts are unknown save to herself, and those whose hard lot was brightened by them.

Mrs Venables was, as has been said, a most liberal benefactress to Simonburn Church. Besides contributing largely towards its restoration, the chancel, which will bear comparison with that of any country church in the diocese, is so full of her gifts that it may almost be her monument. Carved screen, altar cloth, super altar, candlesticks, vases, chancel and sanctuary lamps, all from the same open hand. Fit and right, it was then that her coffin, covered with white spring blossoms, and beautiful wreaths sent by friends and relatives, including one from her grandnephews and nieces, the children of General Hill, - meet Easter emblems of her pure spirit – should be borne to and reverently laid before the altar rails where she had so often knelt.

The service was conducted in the church and churchyard by the Reverend James Allgood of Nunwich, and the Rector, the Reverend Canon Percy Rogers. There followed as chief mourners, her three brothers, Mr T. Ridley of Parkend, Mr J M Ridley, Walwick Hall and Mr M A Ridley, Hawkhope Hill; her nephews and nieces, Mr J H Ridley, Mrs J H Ridley, Mr M Ridley, Mrs M Ridley, Major-General Hill and Mrs Hill. The church was nearly filled with mourners, among whom were Major-General Hill and Mrs Hill, Admiral Waddilove, Mr Geo. Waddilove, Mrs Percy Rogers, many of the tenantry of the Parkend estates, and the villagers and school children who have lost a kind and ever generous friend.

We leave her sleeping with her kindred in the quiet churchyard. There was a great sadness in parting, but the brightness of the service of hope, the budding trees, telling of Easter aspirations, the flowers which loving hands had strewed in profusion on the coffin and around the grave, robbed death of all its gloom, and seemed to say, in the words of the great Master, 'Weep not for me.'

Susan's brother, John Matthew Ridley of Walwick Hall, wrote to Lister on 21 April 1889 describing the "funeral service

and [her] plan for endowing the School at Clyro." He mentioned tracing some family names back to 1375, he reminisced about old times and his friendship with Lister's brother, Henry Venables and outlined the terms of Susan's will.¹³

Frank Lushington, in a letter dated 23 April, wrote of how "Susan's death was a great loss to her brother and sister, Thomas and Mary Ridley," [then aged 73 and 76 years respectively]. He spoke of his "sadness of never going to either Park Ends again." Sadly, it was the end of an era for Frank of enjoyable holidays with a warm welcome and pleasant, comfortable hospitality by Susan and the Ridley family in Northumberland.¹⁴

Agnes Venables received a final letter from Susan's sister, Mary Ridley in December 1891, saying "she is confined to bed, and sends greetings." A note has been added to the letter by Lister that "Mary Ridley died on 30th December 1891."¹⁵

Susan Catherine Venables (née Ridley), mentioned just six times in the published *Diary*, was, nevertheless, a figure in Kilvert's life for fourteen years, from the beginning of his curacy at Clyro until his death at Bredwardine. Unfortunately, we shall never know whether there was a particular reason for her to buy a clock for the Diarist or how many times her name might have been edited out from the *Diary* manuscript by William Plomer. Susan's undoubted position within the Venables's family and social circle at Clyro and Llysdim Hall, was that of a truly generous and valued friend, not merely a relative by marriage.

REFERENCES

- ¹ NLW – Letter B1127
- ² NLW – Letters B891 and B2400
- ³ NLW – Letters B3050 and B1655
- ⁴ NLW – Letter B3052
- ⁵ NLW – Letters B1709, B1710, B1724 and B3143
- ⁶ NLW – Letters B3121 and B1769
- ⁷ NLW – Letters B3053 and B1833
- ⁸ NLW – Letter B3123 – (VENABLES COLLECTION)
- ⁹ NLW – Letters B1921, B 1924, B1929, B1930 and B1131
- ¹⁰ NLW – Letters B3024 and B1810
- ¹¹ NLW – Letters B1136, B1137 and B1138
- ¹² NLW – Letters B833 and B834
- ¹³ NLW – Letters B1003 and B1004
- ¹⁴ NLW – Letter B838
- ¹⁵ NLW – Letter B3115

Over the hills to Glascwm

Bridget Ashton has walked in Kilvert's footsteps

On Sunday 7 May 1871, Kilvert wrote: *There is usually one day in the Spring when the beauty of everything culminates ...* (Vol 1, p 329.)

A few days later, on Monday 22 May, he decided to visit the Vicar, Mr Marsden, at Glascwm, a tiny village ten miles north of Clyro. Nearly a century later, on Saturday 7 May 1966, I too walked over the hills to Glascwm, recording my expedition in my youthful diary. Let's venture back into those days. What was his route, and mine? And what did we see when we arrived?

Kilvert's route, 1871

Unfortunately, William Plomer edited out the route of the Kilvert's walk over the hills. He included details of a delay caused by an annoying and unexpected visitor, but then merely states – The diarist walks to Glascwm. (Vol 1, p 343). After a careful look at the map, and considering likely road conditions of the time, I now guess that Kilvert headed north along familiar country tracks to Rhosgoch and Bryngwyn. From there, he probably went on to Harbour, thence north and west to Glascwm. This is a total of at least ten miles, and having had to offer his visitor lunch, he couldn't have started before early afternoon.

Bridget's route, 1966

I was a twenty-one-year-old student at Hereford College of Education. On a lovely May morning I decided to head for the hills, following paths some of which I knew from my childhood. I wasn't following Kilvert's footsteps because at that time I knew nothing of him.

Saturday 7 May 1966

"I hitched out along the familiar A438 as far as Clyro, had a great couple of lorry drivers, and got into the swing of being a hitchhiker again for a bit. However, I felt like walking today, in the mountains.

From Clyro village I climbed, puffing and panting, really out of condition, until eventually I got used to it again and began striding out. There were lovely views south from Clyro Hill, down to the Wye valley, Hay, and up into the Black Mountains, and I could see Mynydd Troed and Pen-y-fan right into Wales. Once over Clyro Hill, I met a different scene, the green quilted wild and rounded hills of Radnorshire. There was Bailey Bedw, Top o' Lane and Painscastle, the countryside of my childhood. Then I went down to Rhosgoch and up to Hondon where my



Glascwm looking south, showing the hills over which the Diarist passed.

Photos taken by Bridget Ashton in September 2023.

father used to take the bees to the heather in those long gone days. Up into the hills, really into new country now, I tracked miles of heather, bracken and whinberries in really desolate hills, then down into the green narrow valley of Glascwm.”

Kilvert at Glascwm

On arrival, first he went to Mr Marsden’s Vicarage. Kilvert’s diary:

Monday 22 May 1871

The girl was quite a new servant and didn’t know where the front door was, having never had occasion to answer it before as village visitors always come to the back door ...

‘Go to the front door, girl,’ said the Vicar. ‘Please sir, where is it?’ said the girl innocently ...

I met the old Vicar magistrate in the hall with his stout frame, ruddy face, white hair, stern long sweeping eyebrows and a merry odd twinkle in his eye.

Before heading for the church, Mr Marsden gave me some splendid Herefordshire cider and some bread and butter. Then he and Kilvert walked down the pretty lane between the Vicarage and St David’s church.

The church long low and whitewashed, an unbroken line of roof without a tower or bell-turret of any kind. An immense chancel and an equally large belfry and a small nave. The belfry is the village school, fitted up with desks, forms and master’s desk and a fireplace.

Mr Marsden entertained Kilvert with merry stories, how he stripped the church and made the parish pay for a new roof; how he would put his head out of his window and “holla” to the noisy people at the village pub so that they flew like the wind; and the funniest story of all about a curate whose Welsh was so imperfect that when he was publishing the Banns, he made an embarrassing translation error: ‘*Why these two backsides may not be lawfully joined together in Holy Matrimony.*’ Everyone in Church hid their faces.

Mr Marsden told me that only 4 years ago died the last old woman who could speak her native Radnorshire Welsh, her northern tongue which she had learnt as a child from her mother and grandmother, never having lived out of her own parish. No one else in the parish could talk Welsh to her except Mr Marsden.



St David’s Church, Glascwm.

Photo: Bridget Ashton

Bridget at Glascwm

I headed for my overnight accommodation at the youth hostel.
My diary:

Saturday 7 May 1966

“There were white shining farmhouses, a tidy little church, a triangular shaped green, and a post office.

The youth hostel is the old school, tiny and utterly charming. It’s a long time since I was in a hostel, almost a year since I was in a British one, and the familiar bits and pieces were very pleasant to see and smell again.

I found a book, the *Trapp Family Singers*. I cooked two eggs, a bit of cheese, ate them with two apples and an orange.

I went for another a walk for a couple of miles, heard a cuckoo on the hill, also a grouse saying Go-back, Go-back, Go-back. There are lots of sheep with darling lambs everywhere. This place is really the place to come to get away from twentieth century pressures.”

Kilvert returns to Clyro

He had a ten mile walk back home.

Monday 22 May 1871

Mr Marsden walked with me up the long slope of the road leading eastward out of the cwm towards the Harbour. We stopped now and then to look back at the sunny sycamore-embosomed village and the blue hills and cwms beyond, westward.

Bridget returns to Hereford

The youth hostel had been the village school between 1901 and 1946, having come and gone between Kilvert’s visit and mine. No more lessons in the belfry of the church.

Sunday 8 May 1966

“I woke to the call of the cuckoo and the bleat of lambs, accompanied by the steady drip of the rain. My breakfast was meagre, so I was really hungry and lacking in energy to climb those hills. However, I forced myself up endless miles of round broad-backed mountains. It was so beautiful and isolated, with the curlew calling and irate seagulls swooping over the mountain tops. By the time I reached the valley that separates these hills from Radnor Forest, I was very hungry, so hitched back to Hereford. Radnorshire is the most beautiful part of the world to me and I’d like to go back there eventually.”

This is what we love to do, isn’t it? To glimpse again those long-ago times, captured in *Kilvert’s Diary* and my less famous diary.

NOTE

The full entry for Kilvert’s visit to Glascwm appears in the *Diary*, Vol 1, p343-7. Bridget’s diary entry appears in her book *Hit the Road, Gals*, published in February 2024 (Book Guild).



Kilvert looked back as he left Glascwm. The church tower can be spotted on the centre left among the trees.

Photo: Bridget Ashton

Kilvert connections with Norfolk and Suffolk

Mary Steele looks towards East Anglia and starts with a puzzle

J Kilvert W Long 1864

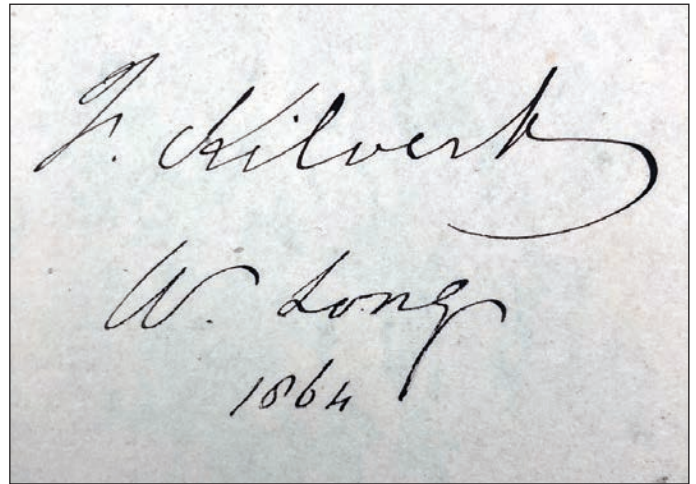
I would love to solve the problem of who is the 'J Kilvert W Long 1864' (see photo) who owned a copy of *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers*. It is not Kilvert's Uncle John, who died in 1861. Could W Long be Weston Longville, which takes us to the parish of another famous clerical diarist, Parson Woodforde? I am reading the initial as 'J' but Kilvert scholar Frederick Grice read it as 'F' (see below).

The book was donated to the Society by the Revd AJ Costin of St David's, and Frederick Grice wrote about it in the May 1980 newsletter (p 8):

'We hoped at first that this might be one of the diarist's own books and that the critique on the back, written on the flyleaf, might throw some light on his theological views. Unfortunately the comment is not in Kilvert's hand but that of his uncle, and it contains so many learned allusions (it seems a quotation from some theological authority) that it is clearly the work of a more erudite mind than the diarist.'

The initial could be 'F', but Uncle Francis Kilvert died in 1863, the year before this inscription was made. I do not know what comparison was made to identify the text as his handwriting.

I had a look through old newsletters and found a piece by John Hodkin in the June 1995 newsletter (p4) which did produce a link between the Kilvert family and Parson Woodforde, but only via the Pitcairn surname, and not in Norfolk.

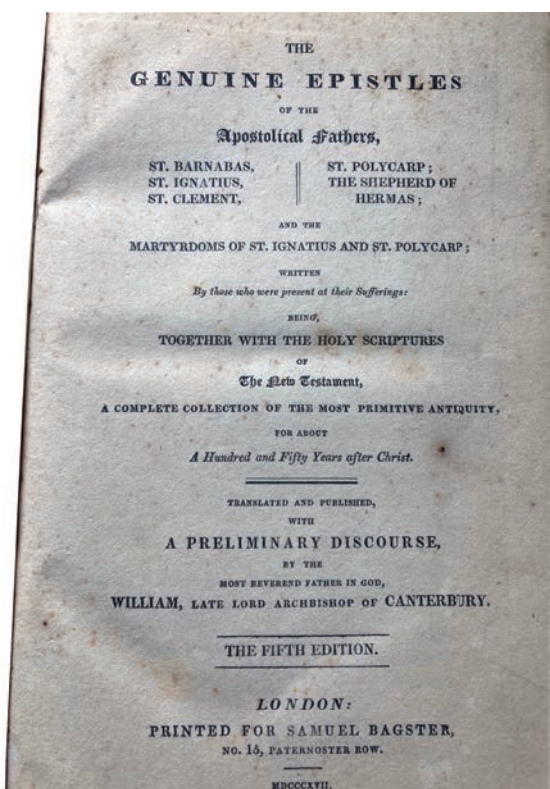


The signature inside the KS copy of 'The Genuine Epistles'.

Photo: KS Archive

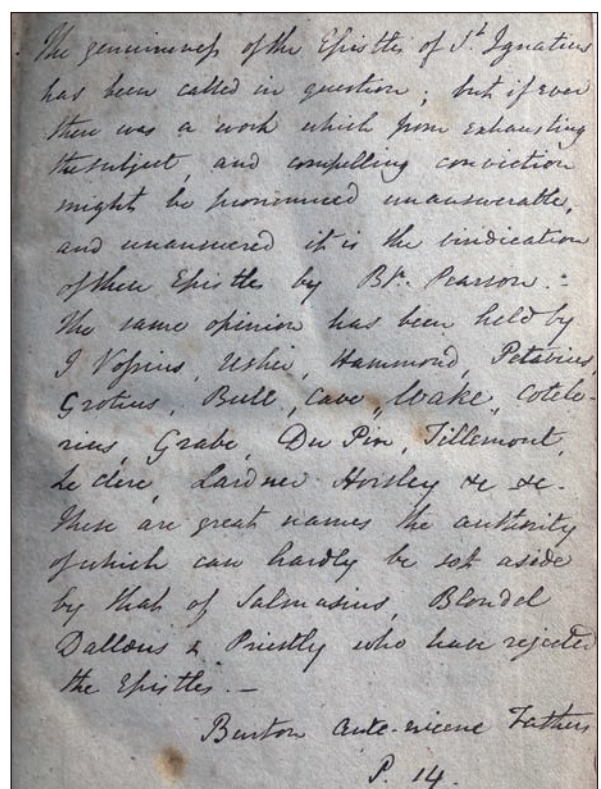
23 March 1774 'I met Harry Rodbard this evening at the White Lion at Bath, and we supped and spent the evening together. There was a gentleman by the name Pitcairn with Harry, a Wiltshire clergyman, but he did not sup with us.'

This link was confirmed in the next newsletter by a Mr I Pitcairn of Suffolk, and is interesting, especially for followers of both diarists, but it does not help with this inscription. Do readers have any suggestions?



Title page.

Photo: KS Archive



Handwritten comments at the front of the book. Photo: KS Archive

Father Ignatius

‘One prevailing idea was that Mr Wentworth’s brother...intended to establish a great brotherhood, upon the Claydon model...This idea pleased the imagination of the town, which already saw itself talked of in all the papers, and anticipated with excitement the sight of English brothers of St Benedict walking about in the streets, and people from the “Illustrated London News” making drawings of Grange Lane.’¹

The paragraph from Mrs Oliphant’s book *The Perpetual Curate*, published in 1864, shows how much publicity Ignatius was garnering in the 1860s, making it possible to be dropped into a novel as a topical allusion.

The place referred to is Claydon in Suffolk and was where Ignatius founded the English Order of St Benedict in 1862, in rooms lent by the Revd George Drury in the village rectory. After a while, the wing of the house he was using was ‘required as a nursery’² and he moved to Elm Hill in Norwich in 1863.

The first attempt by Ignatius to found a religious community, the Society of the Love of Jesus, was while he was a curate in Plymouth and was founded after Ignatius became ill. He went to Bruges to convalesce, where he studied the Rule of St Benedict, and when, back in England, he was curate of St George-in-the-East, London, he assumed monastic dress until his vicar objected. He then started calling himself ‘Father Ignatius’. He moved to East Anglia, where the Bishop of Norwich refused him a licence to preach, but a couple of the local clergy were sympathetic. Local people were impressed by his preaching but objected strongly and sometimes violently to his ritualism.

Ignatius stayed at Norwich until he was dispossessed of his Elm Hill property in 1866 due to a flaw in the title deeds; a precursor of the impracticality over project management that Kilvert noticed in the building of Llanthony Abbey.

Confirmation old and new

In the much-quoted entry about Andrew Pope’s unfortunate re-confirmation (Vol 1, p73-4), Kilvert begins by saying that Bishop Atlay *has a new fashion of confirming only two persons at a time, kneeling at the rails*. What was the old fashion of confirmation?

Karl Showler addressed this issue in his 2005 article on Bishop Atlay.

‘This compared with the old practice of mass confirmations. For example, in 1846 Bishop Monk confirmed 1500 at one service. In some places the Holy Spirit was deemed to pass to the confirmees through a long pole which the bishop held as the candidates touched it. Elliott Binns’ *Religion in the Victorian Era* (page 43) noted that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Manners Sutton (1755-1828), simply stretched his hands over the disordered mass of candidates who struggled to be near the bishop, there being no attempt to put the candidates in any order. Manners Sutton had, prior to being raised to the Primacy, been Bishop of Norwich from 1792 to 1805.’³

Also in East Anglia, the location of this article, Ronald Blythe described an old-style confirmation at Long Melford.

‘My grandmother told us about her confirmation in this stupendous Suffolk church – c 1873. The Bishop of Norwich arrived in a carriage on a summer’s day and was received by

the rector. A thousand children, boys on the right, girls on the left, filled the nave, boys in starched collars, girls under blue veils. A marquee not much smaller than the nave billowed on the green outside. When the moment of confirmation arrived, the churchwardens carried a long plank covered with purple cloth to the Bishop and bowed. The Bishop rose, placed both hands upon the plank and the three of them walked slowly down each aisle. As the plank passed, the children bowed their heads and were confirmed. Then they all poured out to tents and tea and a silver band, manifestly members of the Church of England...’⁴

Church bells in Sudbury

This East Anglian connection was found by Teresa Williams in her searches of local newspapers for Kilvert references.

The Ipswich Journal for Saturday 22 April 1876 published an account of ‘The Reopening and Dedication of All Saints’ Bells at Sudbury in Suffolk.’ The report says two services were held and, at the first, the hymn following the sermon was one ‘Composed by the Reverend Francis Kilvert and used at the dedication of a ring of bells in Devonshire.’ The first verse was published and is as follows:

All hail Creation’s mighty Lord!
Whose powers and skill untold
In number, weight, and measure, form’d
This wondrous frame of old.

Teresa noted that there is no clue given as to the identity of which Francis Kilvert is meant, nor where in Devon the hymn was previously used.

Our late President, Ronald Blythe, was educated in Sudbury and would have heard these church bells. Ronald Blythe was a distinguished chronicler of Suffolk life and President of the Kilvert Society from 2006 until his death in 2023. Dr Blythe was acquainted with Muriel Kilvert, (1917-2009) niece of the Diarist and resident of East Anglia when she wasn’t leading an eventful life working abroad or travelling worldwide. In September 2012, Ronald Blythe wrote to the *Journal*:

‘As you know, I was a neighbour of Miss Kilvert when she lived near Framlingham. I found that remarkable – that Francis’s niece should be accompanying me to the Deanery meetings when I was lay-chairman. And when some of my co-members could have stepped straight out of the *Diary*; Suffolk ladies and gentlemen and parsons’.⁵

There are no entries in the *Diary* referring to Kilvert visiting East Anglia, but the connections prove to be interesting and varied.

REFERENCES

- ¹ *The Perpetual Curate* by Mrs Oliphant. Virago, 1987 edition, p520-1.
- ² Information from a Norfolk Record Office blog *A history of Elm Hill* (2019) which includes memories of a lady who remembered Ignatius and his monks, and the stir they caused.
- ³ *Bishop Atlay of Hereford, Kilvert’s Diocesan* by Karl Showler. *Journal* 17, p16-18.
- ⁴ Ronald Blythe *Word from Wormingford* (Viking 1997), p30.
- ⁵ *Journal* 35, p191.

The Fishing Vicar

Reviewed by David Horner

THE FISHING VICAR

by Keith Harwood

Medlar Press, 2023. £26

ISBN 978-1-915694-08-0.

Illustrated with archive photographs.

I realised why I had been asked to write a review of this book by the esteemed treasurer of the Kilvert Society when I reached page 235 of its 308 pages.

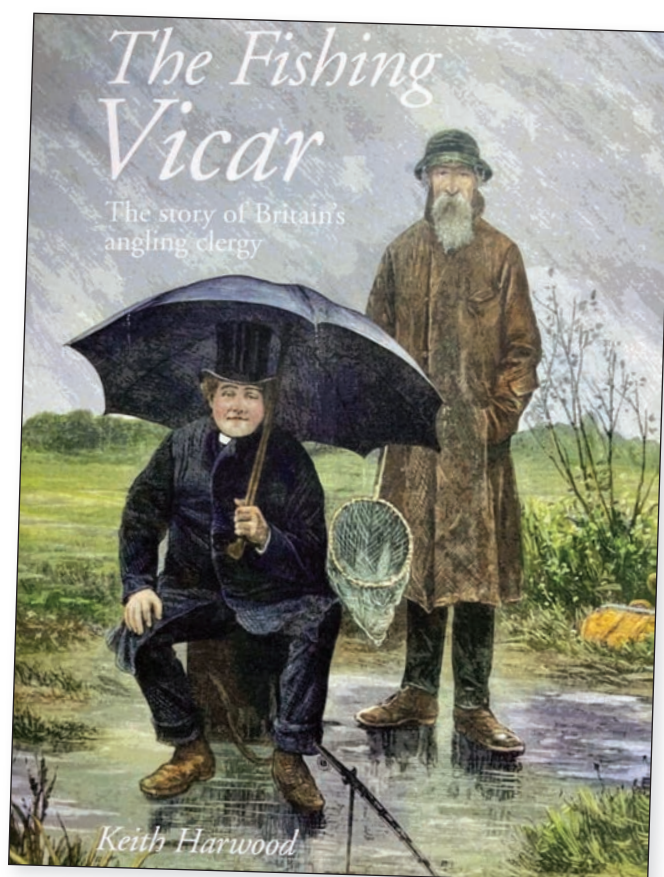
Keith Harwood's book is as much about the gentlemanly life of the well connected parsons of the 18th and 19th century as it is about fishing. As he states in his introduction

'For hundreds of years the vicar of a rural parish, with only a couple of hundred parishioners and far less bureaucracy to deal with than today, often found plenty of time on his hands to pursue his hobbies and pastimes. Many were educated at the leading public schools and proceeded to Oxford or Cambridge, followed by ordination as a priest. To these young men, country pursuits such as angling were a normal part of their upbringing and it is not surprising that they continued to indulge in these pursuits following their ordination. Many of their parsonages were close to the house occupied by the lord of the manor who often owned or rented stretches of river or stream. Many of these landed gentry, in the hope of securing a better after life, were on good terms with the local clergy and would give them permission to fish their waters. In fact, the well educated country parson had more in common with the lord of the manor than with his parishioners. Friendships made at school or Oxford also led to invitations to fish waters further afield.'

One of our fishing vicars, the Revd James Woodforde (1740-1802) has a society in his memory and kept a daily diary for 45 years. In the 1920s, a five volume abridged version was published by Oxford University Press. The Folio Society published a more manageable one volume abridged edition in 1992, entitled 'The Diary of a Country Parson'.

William Barker Daniel (1754-1833) was one of several parsons criticised for not carrying out his duties as a minister of the Church of England. He published *Rural Sports* in 1801, which proved to be very popular with the hunting, shooting and fishing fraternity. Volume 2 dealt with angling and was accepted as the definitive work on the subject.

The Revd Richard Dumford, who kept a detailed fishing diary from 1809-1819, had the living of Chilbolton, where his vicarage sat beside the River Test: as Keith Harwood states 'he must have thought he had died and gone to heaven.' His work in the parish cannot have been too onerous as he managed to fish at least half the days in any given month.



The Revd William Bilton (1798-1883) published *The Angler in Ireland* in 1834, detailing an angling tour of the south and west of Ireland which lasted from May to September. His description of fly fishing is as true today as it was when he wrote it.

'This mode of angling requires considerable skill and practice: the tackle employed is of the neatest and finest description. Great tact and experience are necessary to suit the flies to the character of the fish, the stream, the season, the day and next, no small manual dexterity to throw them lightly across the stream to the very spot you want, and keep them moving naturally near the surface of the water. This exercise of judgement and skill is as necessarily gratifying in this as in all other pursuits.'

One of the most aristocratic vicars was George Hely-Hutchinson (1799-1883) whose grandmother was Baroness Donoughmore of Knocklofty. He seems not to have been the most conscientious of ministers, leaving much of the day to day running of his parishes to his curate. He spent a great deal of his time riding with the Duke of Beaufort's foxhounds and shooting and fishing on a number of local estates. I suspect that Trollope used him as a character in several of his novels.

The author of *The Water Babies*, Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) will be a name known to many. Amongst other jottings, he wrote of the beauty of the Yorkshire Dales whilst fishing on Malham Tarn and the River Wharfe.

A name less familiar, but extremely well known to fly fishers to this day, is Canon William Greenwell (1820-1918), as the fly he invented, 'Greenwell's Glory', is still one of the most popular trout flies.

Not all Victorian fishing vicars neglected their parishes, and the Revd George Clark Green was an incredibly talented individual. A well loved vicar in Modbury, Devon, he was known worldwide as a naturalist with an outstanding collection of butterflies and stuffed birds. He was a gifted artist and an accomplished angler as well as being something of a social reformer. But he does seem to be an exception to the rule.

‘A Reluctant Angler but Keen Observer’ is the chapter heading on our own Francis Kilvert. His father and brother were enthusiastic anglers, however, and diligent readers of the *Diary* will have noted that Kilvert accompanied his father on fishing excursions, including to the River Arrow in June 1872 (Vol 2, p205-6). He is included in this book as he was a keen observer of life in the Wye valley, and of the many people who lived by and fished on the river.

The final chapters of this book take us into the early 20th century and feature, among others, the Revd Edward Pole (1888-1972). He caught prodigious quantities of fish and was banned from one hotel for the vast number of fish he caught in one day. In 1948, he caught over 1200 trout, a figure which most fishermen today would not catch in a lifetime.

In conclusion, this extremely well researched book gives an interesting insight into part of our social history, where well educated clerics – often second sons of the landed gentry – were able to enjoy a privileged life of leisure indulging in country pursuits, one of which was fishing. They then had time to write extremely detailed diaries, many of which were published. As Keith Harwood mentions in his chapter on the Revd Henry Newland, *piscator non solum piscatur* – there is more to fishing than catching fish.

IN THE MEDIA

In March this year, the Open University called upon ‘citizen researchers’ through the pages of the newsletter of the Alliance of Literary Societies. The Open University is leading on a new project called Coastlines, which ‘explores how Britain’s coast has been written in the past and how it might be written for the future. It maps a coastal literary canon and uses it to inspire newly commissioned writings. It creates a new literary geography of the coastline to make it available to walkers along the Coast Path.’ The project was beginning by concentrating on the Isle of Wight, planning to feature the material at the 2024 IOWLitFest and to publish it locally in support of the literary festival in 2025. They were looking for short pieces of literary material that can be keyed to specific places along the coastal path. The *Journal* editor responded by pointing to Kilvert’s two holidays on the Isle of Wight, both in Vol 3 of the three-volume *Diary*, suggesting the section from 13 July 1875 (Vol 3, p208-9) describing Kilvert’s walk to Bembridge as the

right word length for inclusion. Professor Nicola Watson of the Open University replied:

“Thank you so much for sending us this! Our researches so far had discovered Kilvert at Shanklin, but had not extended to Bembridge – I am really delighted to meet him round by the windmill, and even more that he writes of looking out at the Channel Fleet at Spithead, We will of course be acknowledging you and the Kilvert Society.”

In April, the *Brecon and Radnor Express* reported that long time member KS Mike Reynolds celebrated his 80th birthday with fellow bellringers by ringing a quarter peal at St Michael’s Church, Llanfihangel Rhydithon, where he is captain of the belltower.

On 1 June, the *Guardian* featured a photo essay on *Cartes de Visite* based on a book by Paul Frecker. They are described as ‘a photographic craze that seized the imagination of the British public at the beginning of the 1860s... Queen Victoria

was one of the format’s biggest fans.’ Initially a way of distributing family portraits to friends, the phenomenon extended to images of royals, celebrities and larger-than-life characters. ‘It really was a fervour: crowds often formed to ogle displays in stockists’ windows to the extent that pavements were blocked and traffic was impeded.’ The original use of *cartes de visite* for family portraits has been very valuable to the KS in giving us pictures of the Diarist, his family and people in his life, for example in the photo album which is now in our archive and cared for by Chippenham Museum, and the collection of photos that came from Australian contact Norm Lawlor and featured in *Journal 44*.

The recently reopened National Portrait Gallery in London has a display from its extensive collection of *cartes de visite* in its collection of Victorian portraits. Included on what it calls its ‘wall of fame’ is Father Ignatius, well known to *Diary* readers, and Gustav Doré (Kilvert visited Doré’s Picture Gallery on 21 May 1873).



Mike Reynolds reading at the 2024 Annual Dinner.

Photo: Editor

LETTER

Dear Editor,

When the annual meeting last April agreed to tweak the constitution in case the dreaded day came when the Society ceased to exist it made me wonder about the best use for our cash in hand (currently about £13,000).

It seemed to me that we could hardly do better than ask Sean O'Donoghue, the Hay bookseller who reprinted the Diary, if his special clearance offer of a few years ago of sets for £20 (or less) was still available.

If so, we should buy up his stock and sell the sets on at that bargain price to spread the good news of the Diary as much as we can (our publications price of £72.98 incl postage is absurd).

In Journal 41, Harvard's Alan Seaburg noted the astonishing fact that of the 650 public libraries in the world stocking the three-volume Diary, 430 were in the United States. Perhaps we should find out if there are public libraries in Britain lacking their Kilvert and give them a set.

Charles Boase

Vauxhall House, Monmouth

The Secretary replies:

The committee have been in recent discussions with Sean O'Donoghue with a view to purchasing further copies of the 3 volume sets of Kilvert's Diary.

Sean wants the Society to buy his total stock of approximately 200 sets but, this raises certain problems for the Society. Where would we store them all? In 2023 we did appeal to members for secure, dry storage space for this very purpose; we had one response, a very kind offer of the use of a member's attic. After consideration this was thought to be impractical as a box of 2 x 3 volume sets weighs 7lb, so the total weight of over 6cwt could have resulted in structural ceiling damage. Commercial storage is prohibitively expensive: for example one quote was for £85 per month.

The committee also considered the logistics of distributing 3 volume sets free to libraries and educational institutions. The cost of postage and packaging of £9 plus the original cost of the sets purchased would have serious financial implications for the society. Also, each set would have to be individually packed, addressed and posted (x 200 sets).

Although we would all agree with the sentiments expressed by Mr Boase, he has not considered the wider consequences to these questions, long deliberated by the committee. The initial cost of purchase, storage, consideration of the weight, the logistics and transport, the cost of free distribution in time and money.

We offer for sale the 3 volume sets for £60.00 for members and £70 for non-members, including postage and packaging. There is also available the excellent single volume Penguin Vintage Classics edition at £9.99 from book sellers.

The committee would welcome any positive comments or suggestions on this matter.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Welcome to new members. Contributions to the Journal are warmly welcomed. The editor's details are inside the front cover.

OBITUARIES

Lord CORMACK

Lord Cormack's death aged 84 was announced on 25 February 2024. He had been a member since June 1996.

Patrick Thomas Cormack was born in Grimsby on 18 May 1939 and was educated in the town and at Hull University. After a career in teaching, he was elected Conservative MP for Cannock in 1970 and in 1974, after a boundary change, for South West Staffordshire. He was knighted in 1995 and awarded a life peerage on his retirement from the House of Commons in 2010. He was married, with two sons.

His major interest was in championing Britain's cultural heritage, especially its historic churches and cathedrals, and for 35 years he was chairman of the all-party heritage committee. He wrote several books including a biography of William Wilberforce. He campaigned to save the Hereford Mappa Mundi from being sold in 1988. He also promoted legislation to support historic churches whose small congregations could no longer financially support their buildings. He was a member of the General Synod from 1995-2005 and served as president of the National Churches Trust.

The Society has been informed of the deaths of the following members:

Mr John LAWRENZ

Mr John Lawrenz of Southall, Middlesex died on 1 July 2024. Mr Lawrenz had been a member since 1978.

Mr David MEYLAN

Mr David Meylan of East Bridgford, Nottingham, died on 29 January 2024. He had been a member since May 1964.

List of Kilvert publications

FOR SALE FROM THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Three-Volume Diary, packed in slip case

Members price £60 post free in UK (£70 post free to non members).

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

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

kilvertsociety@gmail.com



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

A companion to the Diary.

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£10+£4 p&p (£8 overseas)

Cheque with order to the Journal Editor, 1 Saffron Rise, Eaton Bray, Dunstable LU6 2AY



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

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

SOCIETY PAMPHLETS ON LOAN

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

Collected Verse by the Reverend Francis Kilvert.

Kilvert's Poetry A study by Bernard Jones.

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

Francis Kilvert Priest and Diarist by Frederick Grice.

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

Kilvert's 'Kathleen Mavourneen' by Eve 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 Legands 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 Glasgwm; 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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