

THE
JOURNAL



OF THE
KILVERT SOCIETY

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THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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

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From the Editor:

In this issue there are two items to which I would like to draw your particular attention.

Firstly, Adrian Harvey has, as he promised, provided the abridged version of his talk on the Webbs of Hardwick, which so enlightened and entertained us on the Saturday of the AGM weekend. My thanks to him for labouring over this reduction of what was a lengthy seminar. It appears on page 7. Secondly, the Winter Event. For a long time now the committee has been pondering how to bridge the long gap between the September weekend and the AGM weekend of the following year – six months when there are no Society events and no opportunity for members to meet.

An attempt was made, you will remember, to arrange something for early this year but there were only about a dozen expressions of support, perhaps because no definite venue was mentioned and perhaps too because insufficient notice was given.

Anyway, there will be no excuses now – below you have the date, the time and the place. Thanks to the kind offer of our London member (and guide at the Gallery) Hilary Rosser, a day out at the Dulwich Art Gallery, which Kilvert visited on at least two occasions, is planned.

This should particularly suit those members, metropolitan or otherwise, who always complain that Hereford is too far west (the Far West!) for them to travel to attend Society events there! Please come in respectable numbers to support this piece of enterprise. It is hoped that the Winter Event will now become an established part of the Kilvert Society calendar – its continuation depends on you.

Please use the enclosed booking form so that our secretary, our guide Mrs Rosser and the Gallery know how many to expect.

Don't forget however that before then there is the September weekend – a walk in one of the loveliest parts of the Radnorshire Hills and a service at Newchurch. If we get an Indian Summer weekend it will be a perfect occasion.

P.S. I have just heard, as the *Journal* goes to press, that the Society's publication of John Toman's talk, given at this year's AGM, is now available. *The Books that Kilvert Read* is priced at £1.50 or £2.00 if posted – from the Publications Manager.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS**September Weekend:****Saturday 28 September**

Walk in the Llandewi Fach-Begwns area led by the Revd Dr Humphrey Fisher.

Meet at the Baskerville Arms, Clyro at 12 noon. Lunch can be taken there or bring a picnic if you prefer. After lunch drive to Painscastle where the walk begins. Stout footwear advised.

Sunday 29 September

Service at Newchurch at 3 pm conducted by the Revd Dr Humphrey Fisher.

The service will be followed by tea at a nearby location.

If there is sufficient demand a coach may be arranged – see the enclosed booking form.

Winter Event:

This has now been arranged for Wednesday 26 February 2003 at the Dulwich Picture Gallery (see article in the June *Journal*).

Members should make their own way to Dulwich to arrive by 11.30 am at the latest. Coffee is available in the Gallery café, which opens at 10 am. For travel possibilities see the accompanying map.

Once again if there is sufficient demand a coach may run from Hereford

The suggested programme for the day is as follows:

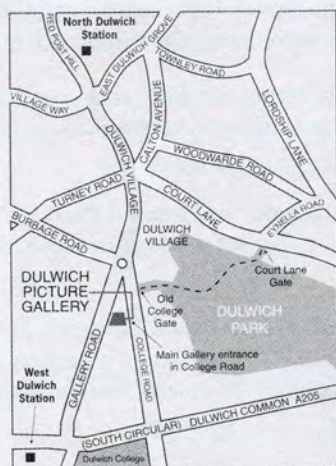
11.30: Guided tour of the permanent collection, with special reference to Kilvert's favourite paintings, led by Hilary Rosser. The visitors' book containing Kilvert's signature will be available for inspection.

Lunch: A group lunch may be arranged in the Linbury Room if numbers are sufficient, otherwise the Gallery café is available.

Afternoon Members free to choose between:

- i) More time looking at the permanent collection and/or exploring Dulwich Village and park – weather permitting.
- ii) Visiting the special exhibition of work by Arthur Rackham.
- iii) Again, if the weather permits Mrs Rosser will lead a short tour of about 45 minutes around the exterior of the Gallery and the adjoining Foundation buildings, including the Chapel.

Please note: Visitors will be responsible for their own admission charges (£3 each on a group ticket) and the cost of coffees and lunch (light lunch £8.50 approx. or a 2-course cooked meal at approx. £11.50).



The best way is by train:

Victoria Station to West Dulwich
A twelve-minute journey leaving Victoria at 8 and 38 minutes past the hour, usually from platforms 1-8. Turn right out of West Dulwich station. Take the first left, which is Gallery Road. The Gallery is along Gallery Road and on the right – a fifteen minute walk from the station

London Bridge to North Dulwich
A thirteen-minute journey with several trains an hour from platforms 14-16 (call 08457 484950 for more details). Turn left out of North Dulwich station and walk through Dulwich Village to the Gallery – a fifteen minute walk from the station. Do not alight at East Dulwich station. The Gallery is nowhere near it

Dulwich Picture Gallery
Gallery Road, Dulwich Village,
London, SE21 7AD
Telephone 020 8693 5254
Fax 020 8299 8700
www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

Where are we?

The Gallery is located in the beautiful eighteenth century village of Dulwich, three miles south of Vauxhall Bridge. Visitors can enter either through the main entrance on College Road or from Gallery Road

By road:

The Gallery is in Dulwich Village, just off the South Circular (A205). There is ample unrestricted parking around the Gallery. Parking for two disabled cars is available in the car park next to the Gallery in Gallery Road

By bus:

P4 from opposite Brixton Tube or Forest Hill and the Horniman Museum or Lewisham Bus Station. The bus stops in College Road outside the Gallery (but you must request it to stop)
3 to West Dulwich Station
37 to North Dulwich Station

A booking form is enclosed.

Autumn Lecture Course in Hereford:

This autumn, under the auspices of the University of Birmingham, our vice-president Laurence Le Quesne is giving a series of ten lectures on Kilvert. Each lecture will deal with a different theme, for example: Kilvert as Diarist; the Church in Rural Society; Clyro Village in the 1870s (using the 1871 census records); Politics and Public Affairs; Travel; etc.

The lectures will take place on Tuesdays between 2 and 4 pm at the WRVS Learning Centre, 26 Vicarage Road, Hereford beginning on 1 October. The fee for the course is £60. If you require further information please contact Mr Le Quesne. Telephone: 01743-351993.

THE HAY FESTIVAL

By Ann Dean (Hereford)

My grateful thanks to all those who were in any way involved in the Society presence at Hay. The weather could have been better, although we did manage one or two hot, sunny days. A diary was kept by those involved. Who knows, maybe one day these words will be famous!

Howard and I did the first stint on a sunny Saturday. Dressed, as we were, in Victorian costume, the weather was very hot. There were several comments from passers-by. A man and his daughter stopped to chat, the man's wife being a life member; the latter turned up a few minutes later and bought a book – *More Chapters from the Kilvert Saga*. The family was pleased to see the Society represented at the Festival.

Liz and Anne Wheeldon had horrendous weather on bank holiday Monday and had to call off at lunchtime. Definitely no passing trade!

Sue and Michael fared better on Tuesday. The weather was sunny and hot. Michael writes 'Quite a lot of interest from people browsing. One copy of *Francis Kilvert, Priest and Diarist* sold, and about five *Journals/Cleric's Trail*/membership forms taken. Several interested people plus visit from a life member from Brecon.'

David and Marjorie did Wednesday: 'A wet and windy day. We had one or two enquiries and a visit from a professor in South Wales who has a stock of *Society Journals*, kept in a strongbox!' (And rightly so – ed.)

Colin and Val Dixon, Thursday: 'Weather to start overcast with drizzle. One or two stopped to read notice. A *Journal* and membership form given to someone who had read the *Diary* many years ago.' Colin and Val gave away several application forms and *Journals* and had a chat with a lady interested in Ashbrook House.

Friday: Michael Reynolds writes: 'Very miserable day with drizzle and rain all the time I was here. Arrived 12.30 pm everything dripping wet. Slowly got cold, wet feet and no interest in our stand. (Is he trying to make me feel guilty?) Very quiet 4pm folded the tent and stole away. Good luck for tomorrow – back to farming, I think.

Jeff Marshall and Patsy Weston had a sunny final day. Jeff wrote: 'Good! Made a new member, John Reese, owner of Kilvert's School in Clyro. He would be willing to host a Penny Reading!' An idea for the Saturday of next year's AGM?



The Society's stand at the Hay Festival with Patsy Weston and Jeff Marshall
(Photo by Ann Dean)

Thanks to John and Kath Wilks for looking after the money and to everyone, especially those who got wet, a thousand thanks. Special thanks to our 'banner monitors' David and Marjorie Elvin who faithfully walked up and down Hay with our banner for display on site. Thank you both very much! (And thank you too Ann for making all the arrangements. – ed.)

The committee would like feed-back from those of you who visited the site, we can then plan comprehensively for next year.

A DAY IN LANGLEY BURRELL

By Sue Matthews (Calne)

About sixty members and friends of the Society met on Saturday 29 June at St Peter's church, Langley Burrell for a walk around the village in the footsteps of the Diarist.

The walk, led by our committee members Jim Hall and Sue Matthews took us through the grounds of the Manor House, where an inspection of the newly refurbished stable block was made. On then to Manor Farm where a relevant *Diary* entry was read by the farmer, Jack Spencer. We then continued to Maud Heath's Causeway and Kellaways Bridge. At St Giles' church, Kellaway, Mr John Curtis gave a short talk on the history of the building. A very enjoyable walk around Kellaways Mill gardens followed, by kind invitation of Mrs Rosie Walker. (See various *Diary* entries on Kellaways, e.g. 23 May 1874 and May Eve 1875 – ed.)

After lunch at the Brewers Arms the walk continued to Kilvert's parsonage where we were able to stroll around the grounds. Finally, back to St Peter's for Evensong. The vicar of Langley Burrell, the Revd Wendy Sanders, led the service which included Prayers of Thanksgiving for The Queen's Jubilee. The preacher, the Revd John Day, gave a sermon to commemorate the life of Francis Kilvert. The Revd Dr Gordon Edwards and Jeff Marshall read the lessons.

Following the service a splendid tea was served in the village hall by ladies from the church. The party then divided, with some going on to visit Draycot church and others to Hardenhuish church. A very enjoyable day was had by all.

(Our thanks to Jim and Sue and to all those who helped with the arrangements for this excellent day out, blessed also with fine weather. – ed.) Photos by Ann Dean.



On Maud Heath's Causeway



Manor Farm



The Old Mill



Tea in the Village Hall

PILGRIMAGE TO KILVERT'S RECTORY

LANGLEY BURRELL, WILTSHIRE

By the Revd Pamela Lee Cranston (Oakland, CA)

In September 2001, the *Kilvert Journal* published a fine photograph of Kilvert's Rectory, (newly refurbished), in Langley Burrell. Seeing it reminded me of my first visit to that Rectory in 1994, when the house had nearly grown derelict.

In the fall of 1994, during a three-week vacation from California to England, I decided to make a Kilvert pilgrimage and persuaded my friend, Nicoli, to join me. On 4 October, St Francis Day, we set out in search of Kilvert's Rectory in Langley Burrell. We drove east from Bath to Chippenham, hunting for the village. After a few wrong turns off the A4, we finally found the correct road.

We stopped in the village of Langley Burrell, which was hardly a village – more like a hamlet with a few houses – in desperate need of right directions. The first woman we flagged down had never heard of Kilvert's place, or of Kilvert, for that matter. We stopped a second woman walking two black dogs; she knew it and pointed down the lane. 'I don't think you'll be able to see much', she said, 'it's entirely surrounded by trees and the gate is locked'.

'We'll see what we can do', I said with determination.

This part of Kilvert country is still full of hedgerows thickly populated by flocks of small birds, who chirp with an exuberant racket. My ears felt as if they had been enchanted. Langley Burrell hosts a few farmhouses, an old pub, a town hall, two rows of modern semi-detached houses made of grey stone and no sign of a store. Kilvert's rectory, she said, was off the main road, about a half-mile down.

We walked until, hesitantly, we found the place. We stopped at a narrow gravel track in front of a crooked iron gate, wrapped tight with rusty chains. Before us stood four acres of green pasture looking towards a dense stand of trees and underbrush. This lane to Kilvert's house was cordoned off with barbed wire on both sides. It looked impassable. But I was not going to let an old gate stop me, after travelling so far to reach Kilvert's doorstep!

Nicoli and I drove around by a road opposite a small factory to the right of the field. There, Nicoli found a wooden easement over the pasture fence so we climbed over and began our trek through the high grass to where the barbed wire was. Hoping the owner was out, I decided to chance it and asked Nicoli to hold up the wire while I rolled under it. I encouraged her to come along, but she declined. So I braved it alone.

As I walked down the scruffy lane towards Kilvert's Rectory – a dusty remnant of the white, chalky pony track Kilvert and his family drove down daily – I imagined I was walking backwards in time.

From the open road and the green fields, the woods suddenly began to thicken. Overhead, the light was dimmed by the profusion of unchecked foliage. The centre of the lane was thick with ferns and ivy. Wild pink and white cyclamens sprouted on the side of the road. Clearly, it had never been paved and looked as if it was rarely driven upon. I felt as if I had suddenly stepped into the nineteenth century.



Langley Burrell Rectory
(Photo by courtesy of Humberts of Chippenham)

But this romantic reverie was dashed when, presently, I came into a clearing and saw a red BMW sitting in the driveway. I noticed someone sitting in the front seat. I thought it was a woman at first, but when I went up to the car, I saw it was an elderly man, (age 70 I later learned). He was very thin and had long uncut grey hair; he looked as if he badly needed a shave. The car looked rather battered and the seats, front and back, were piled to the roof with loads of newspaper and bags of trash. I'm afraid I told a lie: 'I think I'm lost', I said.

'This is private property', he snapped.

'Oh, I am so sorry. Is this Kilvert's Rectory?'

'Yes, why do you want to know?'

'Because I am a member of the Kilvert Society.'

'Are you from America?' He asked, scrutinizing me.

'Yes, the San Francisco Bay area', I smiled. 'Actually, I'm an Anglican priest. So sorry to bother you.' I said, this hoping to allay his fears. I made as if to move on, fearing he would have me arrested for trespassing. (And rightly so!)

'I'm sitting here', he said, ignoring my offer to leave, 'waiting for burglars to come.'

Utterly fascinated, I dared not move. He continued, 'There's been an awful lot of them. Neighbourhood boys who try to vandalise my place. I've lived here thirty years. It used to be quiet, then they put that blasted factory over there.' He pointed beyond the trees from where we had come. 'The Bishop of Bristol bought this property in the 1840s because the old Rectory by St Peter's Church in Langley Burrell, wasn't suitable enough. The Kilverts moved here in the 1840s, didn't they?'

'Something like that', I mumbled. I studied my recluse and noticed he had a beakish nose and a sharp thin face.

He climbed out of his red car, motioned me forward and swept his arm to display the vista. 'Originally the property used to be 500 acres. I planted all those trees over there. Now they've reached a full height.' Sensing he liked company and feeling bold, I said, 'My name is Pamela. May I ask your name?'

'I'm David. I used to be an architect. Unfortunately this place has gotten a little dilapidated but you can look at the house if you want. I'm afraid there isn't much to see.'

'Thank you. I won't be long.' I left him by his BMW and walked a few yards round the corner to Kilvert's Rectory. It was an old Georgian mansion made of grey stone. Except for a corner of the second storey, huge overgrown shrubs and trees obscured virtually all of the three-storey building up to the roof. The front door was covered with brush as well and the only way to it was through a tunnel of green foliage. Three junked cars sat abandoned in front of the house. One was a yellow Citroën. The place looked fairly ruined, with holes poked in the upstairs windows. I would have loved to explore inside but I sensed that this was impossible. The place looked so derelict, I wondered if David ever slept inside the place. I took two photos and when I turned back, I saw him at the top of the drive supervising me.

David had all the characteristics of a true English eccentric: gentility and independence mixed with the right doses of crankiness, paranoia and general seediness. Like a male version of Miss Havesham.

I soon rejoined him. 'I went to one of those sadistic public schools like the one Kilvert's father ran at Hardenhuish which Augustus Hare complained about. They beat us and never taught us anything', he told me. I tried to understand how he came to these circumstances. I could see he obviously once had enough money to own a BMW. During the course of our conversation he boasted of having once restored the interior of Kilvert's Rectory, but clearly that was all gone now. I wondered what had happened to the place, and to him.

'Where are you off to after this?' he asked cordially.

'Avebury', I said. 'I have a friend waiting for me up the road. I really must go, you've been very kind.'

'Have you seen Kilvert's church?'

'Not yet, but we saw the village.'

'Oh, I wouldn't bother with that. But the church is quite nice.' As we strolled back towards Nicoli, I commented on how lovely the wild cyclamen were.

'They were planted by my friend Ursula Codrington, who is Vita Sackville-West's executor. Unfortunately she is very infirm. Quite sad really. People come to ask her all sorts of things about Vita but she can't respond, so they must come to me. You see, I knew them all in the '50s. Vita and Harold and their crowd.'

I knew enough about the Bloomsbury group to know that Ursula was Vita's secretary at Sissinghurst and that she was there with her when Vita died. Later, I read in Harold Nicolson's diary that it was Ursula who closed Vita's eyes, then went down to tell him the sad news. Immensely interested in his Bloomsbury connections, I asked, 'What was Vita like?'

'A lovely woman, of some height. She had a fruity voice.'

'Was it high-pitched?'

'No medium.'

'Did you see the BBC programme about her and Harold and her affair with Virginia Woolf?'

'Yes, I thought it was horrible. Nobody has ever got it right about her.'

'So, she wasn't intense?'

'No, kind. Awfully kind. No one has ever been like her.'

By this time, we reached Nicoli who was waiting patiently for me in the field. There were introductions all round. I told him I would write, which I later did. We shook hands, smiled and said warm good-byes, then I rolled back under the barbed wire fence and walked across the pasture towards our car.

Following David's directions, we drove up to St Peter's Church, Langley Burrell. We turned up a gravel road and suddenly found ourselves transported to another world. There, nestled in a quiet grove, surrounded by low moss-covered stone walls, was a perfect medieval stone church and lush green churchyard. The place seemed enclosed as a secret garden. Overhead, a thrush sang and rustled invisibly in the trees. The graves were kept neat and clean. The grass was well-trimmed and rose bushes were planted to look like lollipops on a stick; these, along with geraniums and violet pansies, lined the gravel path all the way around the church.

Shafts of yellow sunlight poured through the trees and lit up the grass to an electric emerald green. Inside, the old Norman church was cold but simple, big enough to seat sixty. On the left, (right? – ed.) just before the chancel there was a beautiful new modern organ made of unbleached pine with pipes fitted on the sides which jutted out like angel's wings. Someone had placed vases of flowers discreetly in the windowsills, in front of the altar and on side tables. Everywhere the place breathed the touch of love, beauty and simplicity. It spoke of an era when time was much slower.

Outside, looking towards the Ashe mansion behind the church, we found the grave of the Revd Robert Kilvert (Francis' father). He was buried alongside his wife, Thermuthis. The grave had a simple stone cross over it with a verse from

Hebrews: 'He being dead, yet speaketh'. I found this quite touching, because I realized it was the same one inscribed on the grave of his son, who died at age 38, before his father. His death clearly broke his father's heart.

Langley House stood less than a hundred yards beyond the churchyard. A narrow path went directly from one to the other. I had known of the tensions between the Ashes and the Kilverts but this struck home to me when I saw how close the manor house was to the church. Mr Ashe, squire of the manor and also a priest, made sure he controlled the parish as if it was his own chapel – no matter who was in charge. For thirty years, the Kilverts suffered under the domination of the Ashes, but Fr Robert Kilvert (and later Francis) had no choice but to put up with it.

Now these petty church bickerings have long since ceased. And here I was, left standing in this magical place, this oasis of sanctity, feeling time stop. Somewhere behind me, I heard the persistent song of a hermit thrush calling from the bushes.

THE WEBBS OF HARDWICK

By Adrian Harvey (King's Cople)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The following is a somewhat abbreviated version of the main part of my paper on the Webbs of Hardwick which I delivered to the Kilvert Society at their kind invitation during their AGM weekend in April this year.

I should like to preface it with the acknowledgement I made then. Shortly after beginning my researches on the Webb family in 2000 I discovered that much work had already been undertaken by two other researchers. I chose the Webbs as the subject of my talk only after obtaining the agreement of these researchers, whose many years of dedicated work seemed to me to entitle them to the main credit for making such a remarkable family better known.

Mark and Janet Robinson, themselves members of the Kilvert Society, began their research when they came to live at *The Haven*, formerly Thomas Webb's vicarage at Hardwick. They have devoted much study to the Webb family papers and this work continues. I am very grateful to them for their support and for generously sharing with me so much information without which my talk would have been inestimably poorer.

They are currently engaged as major contributors and co-editors in the preparation of a book on Thomas Webb. This will be of the greatest value to all who are interested in the Webbs and their circle, containing as it will detailed biographical information, and an assessment of Thomas Webb's stature as an astronomer.

In the three-volume Plomer edition of *Kilvert's Diary* there are ten entries which refer to Hardwick vicarage and the family who lived there, the Revd Thomas Webb and his wife Henrietta; Thomas and Henrietta were childless but often had as guests Henrietta's nieces and nephews, including Helen and Louisa Wyatt, Helen Wyatt being the 'Helen of Troy' of the *Diary*.

Seven of the ten entries date from 1870-71 when Kilvert was at Clyro, the remaining three from 1878 when he was at Bredwardine. Some of the entries are substantial, particularly that which describes the Hardwick Bazaar on 28 August 1870, one of Kilvert's best set pieces.

In addition to the entries in the Plomer version, there are two additional entries in the three surviving manuscript volumes, both in the June-July 1870 Diary. Finally, although Kilvert does not mention the Webbs or the Wyatts in his description of the ball at Clifford Priory on 5 April 1872, it seems from his dance card, reproduced in Frederick Grice's *Francis Kilvert and his World*, that he was engaged for dances with both Helen and Louisa Wyatt.

It is clear from a close study of the internal evidence in the published parts of the Diary that these almost certainly fail to reflect the closeness of Kilvert's acquaintance with the Webbs. This fact can be explained by examining what we can deduce of Plomer's editorial method. As Dafydd Ifans has noted, Plomer – quite sensibly in presenting only a third of the original manuscript to the general reader – would exclude entries which involved repetition. He may therefore have left out the description of the choir lunch at Hardwick (14 July 1870) because its tone and setting resembled that of the Hardwick Bazaar. In any case Plomer naturally wanted to show the full social diversity of Kilvert's contacts.

It is also clear from internal evidence that Kilvert's friendship with the Webbs was established well before he began keeping his diary in 1870. For students of the Webbs the disappearance of the full manuscript is a great loss. That Kilvert did not begin keeping his diary before 1870, however, constitutes an even greater loss, since between 1859 and his death in 1869 the Hardwick household also included the Revd John Webb, Thomas's father. John and Thomas were both most remarkable men, linked by close emotional bonds and common interests.

Though Thomas Webb was a native of Herefordshire, the Webbs can be traced to a gentry family flourishing in and around Salisbury at the end of the Middle Ages. At the end of the sixteenth century we can identify a senior and a cadet branch of the family. John and Thomas belonged to the cadet branch. The senior branch was staunchly Roman Catholic,

its members related by marriage to families involved in the Gunpowder Plot and in the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745. Despite this the senior branch received a baronetcy in 1644. It was a younger brother of the first baronet who was the Royalist Colonel (later Major-General) William Webb referred to with some admiration by Thomas Webb in *Memorials of the Civil War in Herefordshire*.

The cadet branch appears to have been living in London by the end of the seventeenth century. John Webb's father, William, was the fourth son of a second son and was a druggist. His uncle, Thomas, was a prosperous surgeon and his grandfather (William's father-in-law) was also a doctor. John was born in 1776, eldest of eight children, and was educated at St Paul's School (of which he became school captain) and then (like Kilvert) at Wadham College, Oxford. In the two years between 1798 and 1800 he graduated, was ordained and married Sarah Harding, who came from an old Birmingham family.

During his first twelve years as a priest John Webb had a series of clerical appointments, mostly curacies and mostly in the west Midlands. The longest of these was as curate of Ross-on-Wye between 1802 and 1809. It was here that Thomas Webb was born in 1806. Thomas was the only surviving child of John and Sarah, a daughter born in 1801 having died in infancy. Then in 1812 John became rector of Tretire with Michaelchurch, an appointment which he held till his death 57 years later.

Tretire was a small and very remote parish some miles west of Ross and was not particularly generously endowed. It was a surprising choice of living, John's sister-in-law is on record as having believed that he should have sought a fashionable London living which, for a man of his obvious great abilities, could eventually have led to a bishopric. John, however, may have believed that, despite its isolation, Tretire, which only recorded on average four baptisms and three burials a year, would allow him scope to pursue his many intellectual and cultural interests.

Certainly, John showed a quite eighteenth century hard-headedness in the way he managed his finances. Though his father had not apparently been wealthy, his wife brought with her a marriage portion. In 1813 his bachelor uncle Thomas, the surgeon, died. John was one of the main beneficiaries of his will; he was left an annuity, about £5,600 cash, his uncle's library and one of his uncle's two houses in Hoxton Square. (As a matter of interest, this house was at that time let to one Daniel Tolkien, who was probably an ancestor of the author of *The Lord of the Rings*.) For much of his clerical career John was also a pluralist, holding the living of St Mary and St John in Cardiff. During his lifetime his money was partly invested in the acquisition of two farms in Herefordshire (one in Peterstow and one in Hardwick) and about half-a-dozen other houses and cottages. This is the basis of the obviously comfortable, even affluent, lifestyle at Hardwick that emerges from *Kilvert's Diary*.

John Webb was (as indeed was his son, Thomas) a polymath. He was a talented amateur painter and musician. It must have been in the latter context that he met, in Birmingham in the early 1830s, the composer Sigismund von Neukomm. Though largely forgotten now, Neukomm was a talented, prolific, widely travelled musician with many influential connections. Born in Salzburg in 1778 he had been Haydn's friend and favourite pupil. He was the pianist to Prince Talleyrand and travelled with him to the Congress of Vienna. Here one of the high points of the Congress was the performance in St Stephen's of Neukomm's *Requiem Mass for Louis XVI*, an event attended by all the European dignitaries assembled in the city.

John Webb provided Neukomm with a libretto for an oratorio *David* first performed at the Birmingham Festival of 1834. Though the local music critic did not like the work at its first performance, it was repeatedly performed through the 1830s.* The Birmingham audience was so enthusiastic that for some weeks in 1834 Neukomm was known as 'The King of Brummagem'. We know this from Neukomm's correspondence with his friend Mendelssohn. It was presumably through Neukomm that John Webb met Mendelssohn and, had Mendelssohn not died prematurely in 1847, he and John intended to collaborate in the composition of further oratorio.

John Webb's main interests were, however, antiquarian. From 1819 onwards he produced editions of a wide range of medieval historical texts, which were published by the Society of Antiquaries and the Camden Society, of both of which bodies he was an influential member. At least as early as the 1830s he had begun to collect materials for a history of the Civil War in Herefordshire.

John's wide range of interests and high standards of academic objectivity were passed on to his son. Thomas was not sent away to school but was educated by his father at home; John seems to have taken a number of pupils from local gentry families at Tretire rectory. Thomas went on to Magdalen Hall, Oxford, where he read maths and physics. After graduation he was ordained, and for nearly 30 years held a number of curacies in south Herefordshire, latterly acting as curate at Tretire.

Though he was a keen antiquarian, Thomas's main interest was in the natural sciences and more particularly in astronomy. He wrote monographs on optics and on the sun as well as many articles. What was most important about Thomas was the method and precision of his observational techniques. These brought to amateur astronomy a professional discipline. His most significant work, *Celestial Objects for Common Telescopes*, first published in 1859, had run to five editions by 1899 and was in print, though much amended, for a considerable part of the next century. The observatory constructed

later at Hardwick, which Thomas used, both for his own work and for the edification of his friends, is of course mentioned by Kilvert.

Thomas was married in 1843 to Henrietta Wyatt, the daughter of the Duke of Beaufort's agent, who lived at Mitchel Troy, near Monmouth. Henrietta is as much a presence in the pages of *Kilvert's Diary* as is her husband. She was an accomplished artist, as can be seen from the door panels she painted which survive at *The Haven* and from the illustration of Brampton Bryan in *Memorials of the Civil War in Herefordshire* for which she probably executed the drawing. The last reference to the Webbs in *Kilvert's Diary* describes how Thomas Webb visits Kilvert, who is recovering from an illness at Bredwardine, and presents him with a sketch made by Henrietta of Chillon Castle. (*Diary* 21 Nov. 1878 – ed.)

It is at first sight surprising that Thomas should have accepted the living of Hardwick in 1856. Some time after 1845 John Webb had purchased the advowson of Tretire presumably so that his son could succeed him as rector there. The district church at Hardwick within the parish of Clifford had been built and endowed by the Penoyre family of the Moor. The first incumbent the Revd William Timothy Napleton Stallard Penoyre had died prematurely in 1856. It is clear from the will of the older Thomas Webb – the surgeon of Hoxton Square – that the Webb and Penoyre families had been friendly since at least the generation of John Webb's father and uncle. Thomas Stallard Penoyre was one of the executors of the will of the older Thomas Webb and one of John's younger brothers was named after him.

In any event, when three years after Thomas became vicar of Hardwick, John decided to retire from full-time clerical duties, it was to Hardwick he moved to live with his son and daughter-in-law. The vicarage was at the same time substantially extended. This saw the establishment of the household to which Kilvert must have been introduced when he first came to Clyro in 1865 – Thomas, Henrietta and John, a small number of much valued servants, and frequent visitors, particularly the family of Henrietta's brother, Osmond Wyatt.

John Webb remained intellectually alert and active well into his ninety-third year. But after a serious fall he became ill and died in February 1869. At his death he had published one comparatively short article on the Civil War in *Archaeologia*. He left two much more substantial works unfinished. One was an edition of a seventeenth-century account of the military exploits of Colonel John Birch, the able but unscrupulous parliamentary officer who captured Hereford by a trick in December 1645; he had spent much of the last year of his life working on this and had nearly completed it. The other was a lengthy account of the Civil War in Herefordshire which was completed only up to April 1645.

Nothing so much measures Thomas's energy and devotion to his father as that he decided to finish what John had started. It took him ten years. *The Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch* appeared in 1873 and *Memorials of the Civil War in Herefordshire* in 1879. These ten years almost exactly coincided with the period covered by *Kilvert's Diary*. Kilvert provides valuable confirmation that Thomas and Henrietta had a most active social life and eagerly undertook the organizational and administrative tasks associated with the duties of a dedicated parish priest. The Hardwick registers show that Thomas continued to officiate at the great majority of burials and baptisms. At the same time he continued his astronomical studies, including the painstaking preparation of new editions of *Celestial Objects*. Thomas was modest about his abilities as a historian but he did himself less than justice. He deserves much of the credit for the fact that *Memorials of the Civil War in Herefordshire* proved, in its scope and accuracy, to be arguably the best local civil war history to appear in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Henrietta Webb died in 1884 and her husband in the following year. They had never had children. In his will Thomas left his real estate to the son of a first cousin; there were legacies to a number of friends, servants and members of Henrietta's family, including one to Helen Wyatt – 'Helen of Troy'. The residue, amounting to some £20,000 was left to carefully selected charities, many of them local. Thomas prefaced his will with a most significant sentence: 'I am actuated by the desire to carry out what I believe to be the wishes of my late dear father.'

* *The Oratorio also had tremendous popularity in America, in Boston the Handel and Haydn Society performed it twelve times in 1836 and fourteen times in 1839. An advertisement in Boston at the time read: Oratorio of David: Neukomm's celebrated sacred dramatic oratorio of David now performing with unprecedented success by the Handel and Haydn Society has been published by them and may be obtained at Ditson's Music Store, 107 Washington St., by the dozen or single. (-ed).*

SOME MEMORIES OF THE DIARIST'S UNCLES, BROTHERS AND SISTERS

By Muriel Kilvert (Woodbridge)

UNCLES

1. **Francis Kilvert** (1793 – 1803). He was at Worcester College, Oxford; BA 1819, MA 1824. Married Elenore Adelaide Sophia de Chièvre, and had three girls. The second was known as Maria like her aunt who had lived in Worcester, and it is her funeral that is so well recorded in vol. I, p.220 ff.

Francis edited the *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Bishop the Rt. Revd Richard Hurd*.

2. Richard. (1794 – 1867). Went to Canada and married and had one son. His son was a member of the Canadian Parliament. A number of lakes north of Winnipeg were discovered; they had no names, and so lakes were named after the MPs. One of the lakes is therefore called Kilvert Lake on the map. When I was driving around the world, I met with relations of this Kilvert.

Furthermore, of this family, Philip Kilvert and his sister Sarah (Sally) came to England in 1940 in the Canadian Army, and they looked me up. We made friends and established our relationship.

3. John. (1797 – 1861) served in India. He married Marianne Becks and had eight children. Dr John Kilvert (1875 c 1953/54) married Mary Rintoul but had no issue. He trained at St Thomas' Hospital and served in Derby Hospital for many years. He was the police doctor in Derby and made contributions to the treatment of cancer in the early days. He and his wife were my friends.

(4. Robert (1804 – 1882) was at Oriel College, Oxford; BA 1826, MA 1829. Father of the Diarist, married Thermuthis Coleman and is well recorded in the *Diary* etc.)

5. Edward. (1807 – 1867). He was at St Alban's Hall, (aged 32); BA 1843. He was an artist, and chaplain to an establishment in Madras in 1846.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

1. Thermuthis Mary b. 1839, m. Revd R.W. Smith, Rector of Monnington-on-Wye, and had Florence Mary b. 1872, Hastings b. 1874, Thomas Perceval b. 1875 and Frances Essex Theodora b. 1880. Perceval was ordained, but left the Church and became a recluse in Kingstag, Dorset, where he grew exotic plants and was visited by specialists from Kew. I became aware of this when I was a Wren at Sherborne, and visited him and became his friend. It was he who had the original diaries (which I saw) and sent them to Jonathan Cape. He carved and gave me his pipe-stand of a pair of rabbits, and invited me into his 'den' where he had arranged supports for books, three or four at a time for reference. He prepared chess problems for *The Times* and could read in Greek, Latin, and I think Hebrew, as well as French and German etc. He had lowered the floor of his cottages so that he could stand up! He had carved a Greek welcome to his home.

2. Emily Jardine b. 1842 m Samuel Wyndowe and had five children.

3. Frances My great-aunt Fanny, who became a Clewer Sister. She used to spend her leave from the sisterhood with us, and I remember her as a tall lady in her habit. As a child of four or so, I hoped to see her without her veil, to find out if her head was really shaven! She upheld my mother's authority, when I prevaricated, saying that obedience without question was required.

3. Sarah Dorothea Ann m. Captain James E Pitcairn RN and they had two sons: 1880 Robert Francis, and 1882 James Edward, and a daughter Gertrude Stevens.

4. Edward Newton, (Perch) my grandfather. (1849 – 1913) m. Eleanor Pitcairn (sister of Jamie). They had Thermuthis Marion b. 1879, my auntie May who had a London University degree and taught in a school which it was understood she would inherit, but So, she worked for the LCC in charge of children, and died in 1951. In 1881 was born Robert Edgar, my father, d. 1922. He married in 1912 H Stephanie Maton; they had Robert Wynne b. 1913, Muriel Leigh b. 1917 and Lesley Frances b. 1920.

My father, Major Robert Edgar Kilvert of the Royal Marine Artillery won the DSO following the Battle of Jutland and was later mentioned in Dispatches. He was in charge of the naval guns in Belgium, where he contracted typhoid. He died in 1922, having been landed from the Battleship *Barham** in order to reach the naval hospital and to try to save his life. (From the *Globe and Laurel* (Journal of the Royal Marines) of October 1916: *Captain Robert Edgar Kilvert RMA was in command of 'X' Turret during the action, and as Commanding Officer of the Marine Detachment, is recommended as having specially contributed to the general efficiency of the ship and recommended for early promotion.*)

* *The Barham was the flagship at Jutland of Rear-Admiral Hugh Evan-Thomas, it led the fifth Battle Squadron which included the battleships Valiant, Warspite and Malaya. Hugh (then only Thomas) was the little boy mentioned by Kilvert as playing football with him at Mitcham (see Diary 22 January 1870). (I am indebted to Colin Dixon for this information – ed.)*

Robert Wynne was at Oriel College, Oxford, BA 1936 and MA 1957: he became a priest and was a canon in Portsmouth Cathedral, died 1993. He and his wife Marguerite had two children, John and Susan. John and his wife Alison have Matthew and Robert, and Susan and her husband, Werner Fraenzel, have Anna and Jenny.

Muriel Leigh (me) WRNS, then Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, BA 1951, MA 1957, Headmistress of Unity High School, Khartoum, Sudan; Bishop's College Colombo, Sri Lanka; Runton Hill, Norfolk 1958 – 1972; World Tour 1972 – 73, driving a fire tender.

Lesley Frances b 1920, with three children, Maria, John and Charles.

My grandfather kept scrapbooks (which I have). He was very fond of my father and proud of his service in the Royal Marine Artillery. My grandfather, Teddy (Perch) and R.F. Kilvert, the Diarist, were particularly good friends and enjoyed each other's company; they went on excursions together, sometimes wild ones! They were both good and well-informed naturalists, and enjoyed walking in the countryside and exchanging their observations of the natural world.

Teddy (Perch), like his brother R.F. Kilvert, was a naturalist and had a way with snakes. On one occasion he took a snake to Somerset House (where he was a civil servant, proving wills) in order to curb a fellow civil servant!! I enclose an extract from *The Times* written by him, which records his identifying snakes found 'close to London'. There is also reference to snakes in an old stable in Baker Street which he was called on to identify. Alas, he suffered from glaucoma, and became almost blind. He was at my parents' wedding but returned home before the wedding photographs or the reception. (Perhaps R.F. also suffered from glaucoma – we know he had poor sight).

Family trees detailing fully the relationships outlined above are available for consultation in the Society's archives.

SNAKES CLOSE TO LONDON

By Edward Kilvert

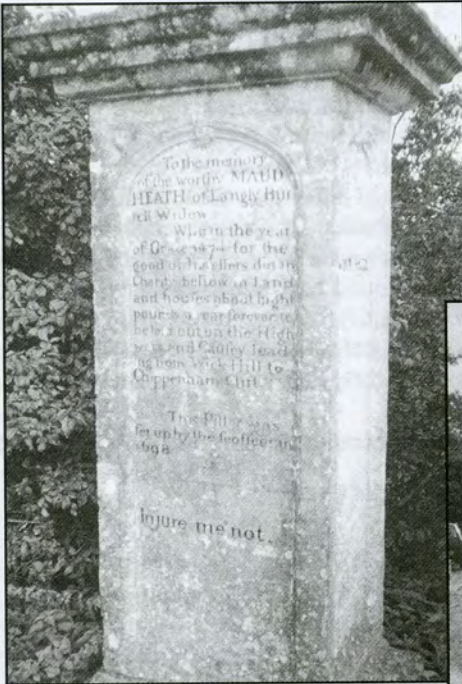
It may interest some of your readers to know that, notwithstanding the increase of the London area, there still remain places within easy reach of the most centrally-domiciled citizen, where nature may be seen in her most solitary mood. Within seven miles of the Marble Arch, perhaps within five miles as the crow flies, in a field adjoining a cross-country road, are the ruins of an old pottery kiln. All the outbuildings and most of the main structure have fallen, and little now remains but the central chimney and portions of the round tower-like kilns or ovens. The fallen parts are grown over by the blackberry bramble, and close adjoining is a pond of about an acre and a half in extent, showing where the earth for manufacturing the pottery was obtained.

An ordinary place, you will say; and so I thought, until one day in passing, I saw a crowd of boys eagerly occupied in digging in a heap of decayed manure; and on approaching them, found that they had discovered a number of chains of eggs of the common snake (*Tripidonotus natrix*). On further digging, I found that the heap was full of eggs, just on the point of hatching. Making a mental note of the fact that where there are snakes' eggs there must have been snakes to lay them, I resolved on the first warm day in the ensuing spring to visit the spot.

The day arrived, and armed with a pickle-jar with a hole in the bung, and accompanied by an incredulous but half-terrified friend, the place was reached. As the first heap of bramble and brickwork was reached, a sudden startling, hissing rush, and a disappearing tail, told us we had not been sufficiently stealthy. Advancing to another part of the ruins, and keeping a little separate, I saw my companion stop as if he had been shot through the heart, and heard him say, or rather shudder out, in tones between a cry and a groan: 'Oh here's a fearful great snake!' On running up I saw that, instead of one snake, there were three lying coiled one on the top of each other, and getting my stick under them, I jerked them out one after the other on to the grass. (My friend said afterwards that he had never before seen three serpents flying in the air at one time). Keeping them in play, and introducing them one by one into the pickle-jar, we examined our catch and found that we had one very large, dark-coloured snake, probably a female, and two smaller and more brightly coloured ones, which I supposed to be males. Further examination of the place showed us that it abounded with snakes, but having nothing to carry them in (the pickle jar being full), we caught no more that day. These snakes, with two others caught subsequently, I have kept in a cucumber frame in my garden for more than six weeks, and they appear to be in good health. They are now very sluggish, having within the last day or two disposed of thirteen small frogs. A large toad, which also lives in the frame, seems to regard the snakes with a certain amount of veneration, if not of fear; for whenever a snake, in travelling about the frame, approaches it, the toad assumes the most comical attitude, raising itself as high as possible on all four legs, it bends its head until the crown of it is almost touching the ground, in fact it stands as nearly as possible on its head. There is a snake which I should much like to catch, viz. the *Coronella lavis*. I am assured by many persons that it is to be found in Hampshire and other southern counties, where it is sometimes killed in mistake for an adder, which it does not really resemble. It has frequently been asserted, and apparently generally accepted as a truth, that the only true snakes found in Great Britain are the Common Snake (*Tripidonotus natrix*) and the adder or viper (*Peliurus berus*), the slow worm or blind worm (*Anguis fragilis*) being, of course, a lizard. Perhaps some of your readers may be able to tell me whether the *Coronella lavis* is to be found in England, and in what localities, and by what name it is generally known.

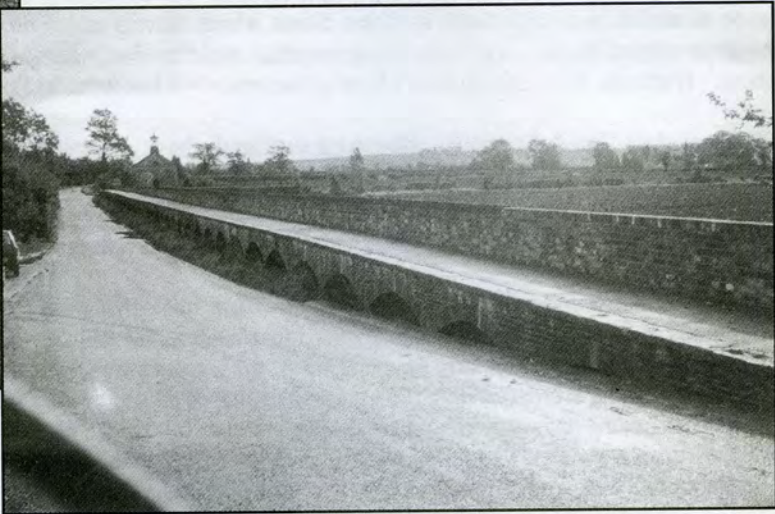
PHOTOGRAPHIC FEATURE

1. LOCATIONS



The Memorial Stone at the north end of the Kellaways section of the Causeway. The main memorial is a mile away on Wick Hill.

Maud Heath's Causeway at Kellaways, looking south, with the chapel at the far end.



(Photographs by Lyndall Hancock)

2. FROM THE ARCHIVES



The Llanthomas coach (now in the Museum of Welsh Life at St Fagan's, Cardiff). This photograph, taken about 1926 shows Fanny Thomas (Daisy) in the centre, Charlotte Thomas on the left. On the right is Canon W.E.T. Morgan, a curate in Kilvert's time. (Unfortunately the coach is not on public display at the moment).



The Rose and Crown in Broad Street, Hay, now part of the Crown Hotel.

THE BIG SLEEP
By John Hodkin (Cumbria)

It would be hard to find two clerics more different than Kilvert and Herbert Hensley Henson, Bishop of Hereford from 1918 to 1920, when he was appointed Bishop of Durham.

Kilvert, as we all know, disliked controversy and being involved in arguments. Henson, on the other hand, was born to controversy 'as the sparks fly upwards' and this is made clear in his two-volume autobiography *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life*. He was obviously rarely happier than when locked in conflict with a fellow cleric.

Yet there is a passage in these memoirs which instantly reminded me of Kilvert. It comes on 9 March 1918, when he walked round Hereford Cathedral with the senior verger, Mr Moore, *a shrewd and competent official, very well-informed and communicative who enjoyed the reputation of a local 'character'*.

I made an observation on the lethargic influence of the mild Hereford climate, which ever disposed me to untimely and undignified slumber.

'Ah well', replied Moore. 'It's like this, My Lord. Nobody is ever more than half awake in Hereford, but then nobody ever dies in Hereford.'

I reflected that an immortality of involuntary somnolence hardly accorded either with my ideal of personal happiness or with my conception of episcopal duty.

Henson writes that the soft Herefordshire climate did not suit his health and made him realise that he could not reasonably look forward to a long or effective ministry there.

Let us now turn to Tuesday 27 August 1878, in Kilvert.

I went on to Old Middlewood, had tea and a grand romp with Alice and Ellen Jenkins. Coming home I overtook Stephens, a native of Abbey Cwmhir now living at Tuswell (St. Oswald's) under Jones of the Clogan (sic properly the Cloggau). He complained much of the difference between the pure clear bracing air of Radnorshire and the damp close relaxing atmosphere of Herefordshire which made him very rheumatic. He said that when his landlord came down from the Clogan to Tuswell he sat down and fell asleep at once.

There is another link between Kilvert and Henson. The latter records that on Thursday, 20 December 1917, Mr Bateman, the late Bishop's butler, came to see him. *He has served at the Palace since the time of Bishop Atlay, and is reported to be 'indispensable'.*

I told him that if I did come here as Bishop I would continue him in his butlership at the same payment (£96 per annum).

In a chapter on his first impressions and activities in Hereford, Henson records that Bateman *in aspect, manner and outlook, a typical episcopal butler, continued to shed a Victorian dignity over the domestic life of the Palace and proved himself very helpful in many ways.*

Finally, the thought recently occurred to me that it would have been possible for Henson to have read Kilvert as he lived on until 1947.

It is easy to believe that with his feeling for great literature he would have loved the *Diaries* even though he might well have thought Kilvert a bit too passive!

CYMRU KILVERT (KILVERT'S WALES)

A belated review by Barry Smith (Abergavenny)

In the Society's Newsletter for April 1974 the following statement appeared:

'At last a start has been made on translating Kilvert's Diary into Welsh. When the late Revd D.J. Griffiths helped the ladies from Denmark with the Diary in Danish, he was often heard to say that it was high time it was produced in Welsh. That was in 1960 when Kilvert's Dagbog was published. A paperback has recently been published with the title Cymru Kilvert. It covers volume I up to the account of Miss Maria Kilvert's funeral at Worcester Cathedral. Its compiler is the Revd T. Lloyd Evans of Swansea, who tells me that if this first one is well received, it is his intention to go on and cover the period that Kilvert spent in Wales.'

To the best of my knowledge, no more was ever made of *Cymru Kilvert* by the Society and no mention is made of it in the comprehensive index to the Society's newsletters and journals. Indeed, not having become a member till nearly ten years after the book's appearance, I had no knowledge of its existence.

I first became aware of it when perusing a Welsh language anthology, *Nos Dawch (Goodnight)*, compiled by Society member Buddug Medi of Bala. (With it, she came joint winner of the Bedside Book competition in the National Eisteddfod in Rhyl in 1985). Divided into seasons of the year, the book reproduces, amongst its many extracts, eight from *Cymru Kilvert*, which no doubt helped in spreading knowledge of the *Diary* amongst Welsh speakers.

Later, I was to acquire Grice's *Francis Kilvert and his World*. Tucked away in the back is a list of Welsh language publications. Mainly, these consisted of reviews of *Cymru Kilvert*. Frustratingly, nowhere was there any indication of what they said, whether favourable or otherwise.

It was not till a few months ago that I finally obtained my own copy of *Cymru Kilvert* and that in Aberystwyth's Oxfam bookshop. At the same time, I was able to obtain copies, in the National Library of Wales, of all those reviews of *Cymru Kilvert*, which had been listed by Grice.

In understanding who Lloyd Evans was and the nature of the journals of which Grice had made mention, I was greatly helped by another work of a Society life member, Professor Meic Stephens of Cardiff, whose *New Companion to the Literature of Wales* is an indispensable guide to Welsh literature in its historical and cultural context. I acknowledge my debt to that volume here.

Who then, was Trebor Lloyd Evans? The *Companion* tells us that '... he was born near Bala, Mer..., and educated at Bala-Bangor College and the University College of North Wales, Bangor. As Independent minister at Pen-y-groes, Caerns. and at Morryston, Glam., he became Secretary of the Union of Welsh Independents in 1964. He was the author of books, mainly on religious subjects ...' Amongst these is his translation into Welsh of the *Pilgrim's Progress for Boys and Girls* by G.G. Martin, published in 1973. It was in October of the same year that his *Cymru Kilvert* appeared, published by the John Penry Press of Swansea and priced at 60p!

Why his specific interest in Kilvert and what his motivation for translating the *Diary*? The author tells much in his foreword: 'During a bout of illness towards the autumn of 1970, I was introduced to *Kilvert's Diary* by a kind friend D.E.W. (Pontyberem). "Have you read this?" "No, I haven't." "Well, read it so that you forget the office and all your worries." So it was, and an uncommon pleasure ...'

As to motivation, the translator goes on: 'But seeing an Englishman of the stature of John Betjeman claiming this little classic as "the best picture of quiet vicarage life in Victorian England that has yet been given us," I rebelled and asked since when has Radnorshire been in England. And yet this was the time, in the seventies of the last century, that it experienced great Anglicisation, as every other county in Wales. This is the time of the "Welsh not", and it is sad to see on the pages of Kilvert the corruption of the good and colourful Welsh names I have tried to restore their Welshness.'

He goes on: 'I felt another challenge. "Translation is an impossible art", said Dr C.H. Dodd and yet he was chairman of the panel which gave us the *New English Bible*. I wondered whether Welsh could present that rich mastery of Francis Kilvert over the English language (a prodigal one, at times, like the *Song of Solomon*). I tried to do justice to him; not to translate but to interpret.' Whilst repeating the admonition of Dr Kate Roberts (the eminent Welsh short story writer) that no one should write literature in Welsh, solely for the continuation of the language, he admits that if anyone is drawn to read his Welsh-language Kilvert, he would feel satisfied, given the dearth of light Welsh language books dealing with religious subjects.

Did he succeed in a difficult task? Well, first there are the views of those reviewers, whose work was helpfully listed by Grice. It should be said, at the start, that the reviewers came at *Cymru Kilvert* from a variety of standpoints, partly reflecting the publications for which they were reviewing. Of the review journals which Grice lists, for example, *Yr Haul a'r Gangell (The Sun and the Chancel)* was the magazine of the Anglican Church in Wales, whilst *Taliesin* was primarily a literary journal. The major reviewer was the Revd W. Islwyn Morgan, writing for *Yr Eurgrawn (The Treasury)* a journal with Wesleyan origins, though his observations range far beyond the selections which he was reviewing.

In the main, the reviewers do not claim any extensive prior knowledge of Kilvert, apart from reading the one volume *Diary*. The exception was the Revd Islwyn Morgan, who had read all three volumes, visited the Clyro area and trodden some of the ways earlier trodden by the Diarist. Thus, he was able to introduce wider considerations and perhaps more penetrating viewpoints than those of his co-reviewers.

Generally, the reviewers aim to apprise readers of the nature and charm of *Kilvert's Diary*, as mediated through *Cymru Kilvert*, giving examples of some of his memorable phrases and descriptions of nature, as well as memorable anecdotes from the *Diary*, with which Society members will be familiar. They comment but little on the selection offered by the translator, though one reviewer does not feel that Kilvert's pastoral work is particularly reflected.

On one theme, the reviewers all converge, that is their general praise for the quality of the translation and the attractiveness of the cheap volume produced. (Morgan was especially sensible of the latter, saying that he had had to pay twelve pounds for the three volumes!). Indeed, they are almost fulsome in their praise of the translation as writing in Welsh. They

variously describe it as 'fluent and smooth,' skilful' and even 'pure honey.' They comment on the 'elegant Welsh and an attractive style.'

Though the sub-title *A Selection from Kilvert's Diary* sounds suitably all-embracing, only a line – 'Volume I: 1870' – on the reverse of the title page, shows that these selections are confined to one year only of the Diary. The translator himself makes no reference to this limitation. A mere parenthesis, amidst the translation of Plomer's preface, tells us that it is Kilvert's 'time in Wales', alone, which is found in the Welsh-language selection.

One might conjecture that it is in line with this self-guideline, that the translator omits any translation of a major gem of the Diary for 1870 – Kilvert's attendance at the funeral in Worcester Cathedral of Maria Kilvert. Yet a detailed translation is given of his mother's letter from College Green, describing the vicissitudes of their stay there. Equally surprisingly, detailed translation is given of his stay in Wiltshire from 16 May to 28 May 1870. Much hinges on how 'time in Wales' is defined.

The translator is remarkably unforthcoming on his approach to translating the Diary, beyond trying, as indicated, to turn back the clock on the corruption of 'good and colourful old Welsh names' which had occurred by the time of the Diary. And in this, he acknowledges his debt to F.G. Payne, known for his volumes *Crwydro Maesyfed* (*Roaming Radnorshire*). Thus, unintelligible names which Kilvert uses are restored to their 'correct' state – for example, 'Llys Ifor' (Ivor's Court) for Llanshiver and 'Yr Allt' (wooded hill) for 'The Reallt'.

Aside from this process, the translator tells nothing about his schema, the basis on which his selections are made. One assumes that he is picking his way through the one-volume edition, yet here and there he interweaves passages from the three-volume Diary and cuts and connects passages as he sees fit. The results of this are not always felicitous.

A major puzzle is why the translator's work is so riddled with errors and idiosyncrasies of all kinds. This fact greatly mars his assiduity in undertaking such a major task in the first place. Yet on this issue the translator remains fairly unscathed by his reviewers. The reviewer Robin Williams most 'rings alarm bells', pointing to some fifteen or so errors in the translator's Welsh, including three different spellings of the word for 'comfortable'! (He asks the translator: 'Well, Trebor, which one?'). Gomer Roberts questions whether the translator's 'tw-hit, tw-hw' adequately renders the 'trilling' of the first turtle dove which Kilvert sees on 4 May!

He might also have queried why the 'turtle dove' of the Diary comes out as the 'wood pigeon' of the translator! Granted more variation in Welsh for the names of flora and fauna, the translation seems marked by some curious renderings of Kilvert's originals. The sweeping peewits which Kilvert saw on Easter Eve become swallows; the young antelopes or fawns, the Mouse Castle girls (19/4), become harts and hinds; in the dressing of the church for harvest, Spanish chestnuts become Spanish conkers (15/9).

Granted some 'translator's licence', there are numerous instances where one wonders if the translator apprehended the significance of the words which he was translating. Claret cup becomes a cup of claret, whilst the meal (i.e. grain) room of Whitty's Mill is called the dining room; the slop (i.e. loose outer garment) worn by the mysterious traveller on Hay-on-Wye station becomes clothing with a second-hand look; the rumble (i.e. type of rear seat) in which Mr Allen conveyed Kilvert back to Hay (7/7) is deemed to be a noise!

So numerous are errors that it sometimes seems that if an error could be made, it would be made: Clevering Lyne for Clavering Lyne, Dykes for Dyke, Denning for Dewing, Bryntwyn for Bryngwyn. Not even Latin escapes, with Kilvert's 'genii loci' (19/4) becoming 'genni loci'! Dates are transposed, and Septuagesima changes places with Sexagesima. Contradictions in the same section are unobserved with King Charles appearing as I and II (26/3), while Summerflower, the cress-seller (26/5), also appears as Summerfield.

There are clear 'howlers'! In a most lyrical of passages, where Kilvert sees the full moon set beyond the church steeple, the translation has it setting beyond the church wash-house – a typographical confusion of 'golchdy' and clochdy! 'Perch (i.e. Kilvert's brother) fishing' (24/5) comes out as 'fishing for perch'. And what would the Morrells of Cae Mawr have made of the mangled 'called at Cae Mawr at 3.30 and found Mr and Mrs Morell (sic) of Moultsford, who are staying in the house' (9/6).

The reviewers listed by Grice seem largely to have missed these blunders and one gains the impression that they were judging the quality of the translation by the quality of the Welsh. They presumably did not compare translation and original. (Not even they were beyond reproach as W. Islwyn Morgan tells us that Kilvert served as curate to his father in Somerset!)

How does one account for so many egregious blunders in the translation – a translator in haste, typists unable to read handwriting, lax proof readers? It is impossible, now, to discover.

This, perhaps necessary, concentration on errors, should not prevent one from saluting the prodigious work of a minister and literateur who laboured to raise consciousness of Kilvert and his Diary. As the reviewer Robin Williams avers: *Cymru Kilvert* is a 'further tribute to the diligent talent of Trebor Lloyd Evans,' who, sadly, died in 1979.

Enid Morgan asserts that such a fluent and skilled translation is sure to have brought 'a host of new admirers to Kilvert.' One hopes this is so! Yet an age of monoglot Welshmen and Welshwomen has long since passed into history. Might not those sufficiently interested, informed and literate to have found Kilvert through *Cymru Kilvert* eventually have found him, instead, through his splendid original? Who can say?!

KILVERTIAN LINKS WITH SWINDON

By Sidney Ball (Swindon)

Although in *Kilvert's Diary* there are seven entries relating to Swindon, we are not told if Francis went into the town: most entries are to do with the railway. But in and around Swindon there are several interesting links with a variety of Kilvertian folk.

An important person in the *Diary* who did come into Swindon was William Barnes. On the 18 February 1860 Barnes brought his younger son, Edgar, to keep an appointment with Mr W Gooch, Manager of the GWR works. This was to arrange for Edgar an apprenticeship in the GWR factory.

That most important Awdry, Sir John, of Notton House in Lacock, was born in Swindon on 21 October, 1795, at the mansion of the Goddards. Sir John Awdry's paternal grandmother was Priscilla, a daughter of Ambrose Goddard, Lord of the manor of Swindon.

Near Swindon, from Tudor times, there were two unrelated families, both surnamed Richmond, whose numerous descendants spread far and wide in ensuing centuries. From one of these families descended the author, WM Thackeray, whose father, Richmond Thackeray, had his forename to show descent from these Richmonds of north Wiltshire. WM Thackeray introduced several local family names and incidents in his novel *Henry Esmond*; he also based one of his major characters, George Warrington in *Pendennis*, on his friend, George Stovin Venables, who is prominent in *Kilvert's Diary*. Thackeray and GS Venables remained friends, despite the future author having his nose broken in a schoolboy fight at Charterhouse. Plomer notes this in a footnote to page 93 in vol. II. (I have seen in the NPG a portrait of WM Thackeray clearly showing his misshapen nose!).

The other Richmond family originated in Tudor times as yeomen in Bynol, an out of the way farming area (out of the way for centuries, but now much nearer sprawling Swindon!) From these folk descended the Revd Legh Richmond, whose popular tales must have been the reason why Kilvert was so keen to visit Yaverland (vol. III, p 38). He had read a quarter of a century earlier 'a beautiful and touching story' – he must have been only about nine then, but kept the memory of Elizabeth Wallbridge, the 'Dairyman's Daughter,' and where she lived and worked for 25 years. (There are informative articles about Yaverland by John Hodkin and Gillian Avery in Newsletters June and September 1996).

Much of the village of Lydiard Tregoz has been taken over by Swindon. On the west of Lydiard Tregoz is the subsidiary manor of Midgehall. Here, in the reign of Henry VIII lived William and Agnes Pleydell, ancestors of Francis Kilvert, although he was unaware of this.

Kilvert would have known of the big house at Basset Down, on Swindon's southern outskirts. Mrs Crichton must have told him of her holidays there, the first when she a girl of eighteen, with elder sister Thereza. Their father, JO Llewelyn invited a younger scientist and photographer friend, Nevil Story-Maskelyne, to stay at the Llewelyn home, Penllergaer. This in the summer of 1856. In the autumn Thereza and Emma Llewelyn came to stay at Basset Down. They would have gone by railway to Swindon station, where horse and carriage awaited to take them to Basset Down.

Nevil Story-Maskelyne and Thereza had fallen in love. They were married from Penllergaer on 29 June 1858, after more holiday exchanges. Emma later became Mrs Crichton, so well known to readers of *Kilvert's Diary*.

SPEAKING WORDS OF WISDOM

By Peter and Paul Baker (Glasbury-on-Wye)

The *Shorter Oxford Dictionary's* introduction lists Kilvert as a source. When this was first read it was felt that it would take too long to search through the *Dictionary* for the words that Kilvert had used in a novel way. Happily the publication of the *New Oxford English Dictionary* through the Internet and the home computer enabled a search to be done at little effort to find out which the words were. The complete list is to be found at the end of this article.

It is often an ambition of a writer to coin a new word or phrase or to use an existing word in a new way. The fact that Kilvert is credited with no less than thirteen fresh uses of existing words is a credit to him and surely says something of the quality of his writing as literature.

From the limited research done on the words it is impossible to say whether Kilvert used the words himself in a novel way or whether he was just using them as he had heard them used before but he was generally the first person that the Oxford Dictionary is able to cite.

Of the words cited in the Dictionary the word 'rose' is perhaps the most evocative of the area.

rose.

Diary 13 March 1870 vol. I p 56: *The mountain clad in deep snow and tinged with rose colour ... As the sun set a lovely rose tint stole over the snowy mountains.* Those who know the Black Mountains will be familiar with their ability to change in colour, the full white of the winter snow, the dappled shades of black and grey and the full red-rose colour as the afternoon sun sinks in autumn and spring giving the full glow to the mountainside facing across the Wye Valley. Of related interest the writer Compton Mackenzie is cited twice in the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*: *From the heart of every oaken rose ... peered ... a deadly sin* and *The setting sun ... flushing with rose the ... top of the Alps.*

iron.

Diary 21 December 1871 Vol. II p 101: *They told me of a new invention, iron paper, as thin as the thinnest tissue paper. The sheets of iron are rolled so thin that 3000 sheets together are only an inch thick.*

This perhaps captures the spirit of the age, the seemingly rapid change in technology exemplified by Crystal Palace to which Kilvert was an enthusiastic visitor out at Sydenham. The iron works on the south side of Brecknockshire would have been busy in Kilvert's time lighting up the night sky over the Beacons. From the context of the *Diary* it may be fair to speculate that this was a word Kilvert had heard used in this way as he goes on to record exactly what it means.

welcome.

A bell tolled on the occasion of a person's death.

Diary 25 December 1878 vol. III p 443: *The Welcome Home, as it chimed softly and slowly to greet the little pilgrim coming to his rest, sounded bleared and muffled through the thick snowy air.*

This use of the word welcome shows Kilvert's Christian faith in the after-life, without such a faith the word welcome would seem cruelly out of place here whereas with the faith it strikes just the right note. Here in conjunction with the expression *the little pilgrim coming to his rest* it provides a wonderful description through economy of words.

village.

To visit a village in a pastoral capacity.

Diary 24 February 1871 vol. I p 305: *Villaging about to Mrs. Jones at the Infant School, Jo Phillips and Margaret Griffith.*

Here the author accurately describes the pastoral side of his work – a side recorded frequently in the *Diary* and it seems rather fitting that his conscientiousness in his pastoral responsibilities should be rewarded with a citation in the *Dictionary* for his work in this major aspect of the work of a priest: *these were his gifts: some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.* (Ephesians 4:11.)

standard.

Diary 16 January 1878 vol. III p 359: *Gave the upper standards at the school questions on paper on the Catechism.*

Here Kilvert is seen in the final aspect of the priesthood and again from the *Diary* it is obvious that he revelled in this aspect of his work too.

Post Card.

Diary 1 October 1870 vol. I p 235: *At the Vicarage I saw one of the first 'Post Cards' that have been sent. It was from Lillian to Mrs Venables, very bright and cheery.*

This does not appear in the *Shorter OED* as the current use of this term is as one word. In E.T. Onions' *Dictionary of Etymology* he cites the first use of the word in written English as occurring on this date. The word comes from the German *Feldpostkarte*, which is the third German word to describe this invention.

Other words in the *Dictionary* illustrated by a quotation from Kilvert:-

dark. Diary 4 May 1876 vol. III p 289: *It was built in the Dark Ages of fifty years ago and was simply hideous.*

Jack. Diary 10 May 1872 vol. II p 196: *He [sc. the sawyer] said wild garlic, called Jack-in-the-Bush, is a famous pot herb.*

monastic. Diary 25 May 1876 vol. III p 318: *They [sc. the cloisters of New College] have an air of higher antiquity and a more severely monastic look.*

penny. Diary 3 February 1871 vol. I p 301: *This evening we had our 4th Penny Reading. The room was fuller than ever.*

poultry. Diary 6 August 1873 vol. II p 362: *I went ... to Garth to attend the Garth Flower Show, Dog Show, Poultry Show, Bazaar and Athletic Sports, all in one.*

Rebecca. Diary 25 November 1878 vol. III p 434: *A large party of Rebeccaites being out spearing salmon below Rhayader Bridge.*

sphairistike. Diary 27 July 1874 vol. III p 55: *We began to play 'sphairistike' or lawn tennis.*

tithe. Diary 5 February 1878 vol. III p 366: *Today was the Tithe audit and tithe dinner to the farmers, both held at the Vicarage.*

zanella. A type of fabric used on an umbrella.

Diary 28 April 1876 vol. III p 272: *I found she had taken my umbrella and left me a much better one, a fine silk umbrella in place of my zenilla (sic).*

All page numbers given above refer to the 1971 edition of the *Diary*.

FROM RECENT CORRESPONDENCE

i) **Veronica Powell writes from Tavistock about some Llanigon-Clyro connections:**

My husband, who died in 1991, lived as a youth in Llanigon and knew both Miss Thomases as elderly ladies. His parents later also lived at Clyro and Llowes. While moving house recently I found a note from Mr Prosser saying that the Revd Lane-Griffiths* (vicar of Llowes) had asked him to send membership forms to us so that we could join the Society. That was in January 1957. I wonder how many surviving members you have who joined before that date. (We think two – ed.)

Mrs Powell also recalls having tea at Ashbrook House 'a long time ago, while it was still lived in. We had lovely home-made scones with jam and cream in the kitchen, with the stream running past the door.'

* Barry Smith informs me that the Revd D.J. Lane-Griffiths was, briefly, president of the Society. He was unanimously elected at the AGM of 21 April 1967 but, alas, died in February 1968 and at the succeeding AGM the presidency was then assumed by Dr William Plomer (ed.)

ii) **David Hepworth wrote in June from Bakewell, Derbyshire to our membership secretary enclosing a very generous donation to the Society:**

I have been a life member of the Society since 1995, having joined in the first instance through interest in the *Diary* and because of a desire to support the Society and its aims.

Life membership of the Society is something I am very proud of and I wouldn't want to lose it. But I feel that while retaining life membership, I ought to support the Society as if a subscribing member, or at least by making a contribution to make me less of a drain on the Society's resources. As I am 52 and hope to enjoy a good few

years of membership yet, I expect to make further similar contributions at intervals which ought to be regular, but which will probably be haphazard! I leave it to you to decide how to cope with this irregular idea and hope it doesn't cause any accounting difficulties!

Indeed it doesn't, Mr Hepworth and we very gratefully acknowledge your generosity and hope that it proves an inspiration ...!

The above is published with Mr Hepworth's permission and he is not at all bashful about his age, he says (ed.).

- iii) **Ruby Walker, the organist at Bredwardine church, writes from Dorstone in response to my recent request for old photographs with a Kilvert connection:**

Some years ago a distant relative visited us and brought with him several family photos of my great-grandparents, Edward Gittoes and Levia née Beavan a member of the Beavan family of Newchurch. Edward was the parish clerk who taught school under the tower at Glaswcm church (see *Diary* for 22 May 1871 – ed.) Our relative later sent a photocopy of one of the originals ... I thought you might be interested.'

Certainly! And here are Edward and Levia Gittoes:



- iv) **Sidney Ball writes from Swindon:**

Basil Butcher wrote in *Journal 7* that a friend had said:

'You cannot read anything now without finding some connection with Kilvert.'

Often this has been so during my near 40 years membership of the Kilvert Society. Just two examples from many:

In Micheldever church, Hants, among memorials of the Baring family is mention of 16-year-old midshipman Arthur Baring who perished in *HMS Captain*. What is more the faded flag of this ill-fated ship hangs on the church wall.

Kilvert's uncle Will is remembered when I read about Colwall; for the Revd William Coleman was curate in this Herefordshire village when he married Augusta Johnson at Paddington in 1859.

- v) **Dorothy Smith writing from Chaddesden in Derbyshire to renew her subscription adds:**

I would love to know someone near who would share my admiration for and interest in Francis Kilvert.

Her telephone number is 01332-674442.

vi) **Sarah Thomas writes from Norbury, London and tells how she and her mother first discovered Kilvert:**

My mother read the *Diary* after finding it in a bookshop in Wales back in the 60s. At drama school in 1968 I had to write a thesis and chose the subject of Kilvert. My thesis was not especially good I don't think but I still received quite a high mark! I think for the originality as much as anything!

vii) **Angela Bowler writes from Chesterfield expressing her pleasure that the Society was represented at the Hay Literary Festival and adding that she would like the Society's website to receive a little more publicity. Well here it is – as well as in its usual place at the end!**

Communicate.co.uk/here/kilvertsociety

OBITUARIES

It is with regret that we record the deaths of the following members. We offer our sympathy to their families and friends.

Mrs I. Newell of Solihull, a member since 1978 died in 2001.

Mr Michael Sleight of Lincolnshire, a life member since 1972, died some time ago but news of his death has only just been received.

THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The AGM of the Alliance of Literary Societies will be hosted by the Dylan Thomas Society in Swansea on Saturday 26 April 2003 with further activities on Sunday 27 April.

PLEASE NOTE

Owing to shortage of space a number of articles have had to be held over. These will appear in the March 2003 issue. The editor apologises to any disappointed contributors.

Contributions for the March 2003 edition of the *Journal* should reach the editor not later than 12 January 2003.

Members are reminded that ALL e-mail communications with the Society or its officers should be made via the dedicated website: communicate.co.uk/here/kilvertsociety.

The current ordinary subscription is £6.00 (Joint membership £9.00 w.e.f. 1.1.02) and is due on the 1 January of each year. Cheques payable to The Kilvert Society should be sent to:- Barry Smith, Membership Secretary, 25 Prospect Road, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 5DU.

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

