

IMPORTANT NOTICE --- this is the third (and final) newsletter of 1968. The first two were sent out on 15th April and 6th June respectively; if you did not receive both, please notify the Hon.Secretary. This will be the first newsletter posted under the new "two-tier" system, but even as "second class mail" (at 4d) they should be delivered everywhere in G.B. within two days of posting. Please notify any undue delay. There is an important footnote to this page.

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

President:-

Dr.William Plomer. C.B.E., D.Litt.

Hon.Treasurer:

J.D.Worsey,
1 Harold St.
Hereford.

Hon.Secretary:

C.T.O. Prosser,
23 Broomy Hill,
Hereford.
Phone: 2094

Asst.Hon.Treasurer:

Mrs.E.G.Peters,
18 Moor Farm Lane,
Hereford.
Phone: 67375

5th October, 1968.
(Posted this day)

Dear Member,

The June newsletter gave the date of the SPECIAL AUTUMN SERVICE, - here are the full details:-

3 o'clock on SUNDAY the 20th OCTOBER, at ST.NICHOLAS CHURCH, HARDENHUISH, CHIPPENHAM, WILTSHIRE.

It will be conducted by the Revd. J.K. GARDINER - the RECTOR OF HARDENHUISH, and the ADDRESS will be given by CANON J.S. LEATHERBARROW, M.A. - the RECTOR and RURAL DEAN OF MARTLEY (WORCESTERSHIRE) and a VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE KILVERT SOCIETY.

The LESSONS will be read by Mr. A.J.Dann of Chippenham and by the Rev.J. Victor of Hereford. Both are members of the Kilvert Society.

During the service, a TABLET to the memory of the Rev. FRANCIS KILVERT will be unveiled by Mrs. E.M. Victor of Hereford (a member of the Kilvert family - see note overleaf) and dedicated by Canon J.S. Leatherbarrow.

It was in this church that Francis Kilvert was baptized.

After the SERVICE there will be TEA for all attending it -- this has been most kindly organised by local members of the Society and will be at the High School for Girls (by kind permission of the Governors) - a short distance from the CHURCH. There will be a charge of 3/6d a head for TEA and the proceeds will be given by the organisers to some local cause or charity, as they wish.

A motor coach (Yeomans or Yeomans-Corvedale) will leave Hereford (from near the Town Hall) starting at 10 a.m. (PROMPT). The fare is 10/- per person and members can book seats either at Wyeval Ltd., Photographic Dealers, Bridge Street, Hereford, or with the Hon.Secretary. IT WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED IF PAYMENT IS MADE AT THE TIME OF BOOKING. Those coming by coach should bring a picnic lunch, the route will be via Ledbury, Gloucester and Malmesbury, and the lunch stop will be near Malmesbury Abbey. We shall hope to have time after lunch to go on via Seagry, East Tytherton (passing the Moravian settlement referred to on another page) to Langley Burrell for a brief stop at the church if time permits, and thence through Kington Langley to Hardenhuish.

CAR PARKING --- there is a large CAR PARK adjoining Hardenhuish Rectory and therefore opposite the Church, cars can also be accommodated at the Girls High School just down the road. PLEASE NOTE THIS AND DO NOT PARK ELSEWHERE.

Yours sincerely,

C.T.O. PROSSER (Signed)

Hon.Secretary.

With the increase in postage on these newlsters - now 4d each - it has become more than ever necessary to cut out wastage. WE THEREFORE EARNESTLY APPEAL TO THOSE WHOSE SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE IN ARREARS, TO PAY UP WITHOUT DELAY. FURTHERMORE, IF ANY MEMBER HAS DECIDED NOT TO PAY ANY MORE SUBSCRIPTIONS, WILL THEY PLEASE WRITE IN AND RESIGN IMMEDIATELY. Until we receive a written resignation, we continue sending newsletters regularly and it is most unfair for any member to allow this to go on without payment of subscriptions.

NOTES and NEWS by the Hon. Secretary --- with other members' contributions.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr.Plomer has written to say that he greatly regrets that it won't be possible for him to get to Hardenhuish owing to a long-standing previous commitment.

We all will fully understand this, for we know how busy he is all the time, but nevertheless will be truly sorry not to have him with us.

THE MEMORIAL TABLET

The tablet which is to be unveiled and dedicated on October 20th is of white marble mounted on grey stone. The incised Roman lettering reads as follows:-

In memory of Robert Francis Kilvert --- Priest and Diarist --- born at Hardenhuish Rectory, 3rd December, 1840 --- died at Bredwardine Herefordshire 23rd September, 1879.

The PLAQUE on Hardenhuish Rectory (opposite) is of cast bronze and reads:-

Robert Francis Kilvert --- Diarist --- Born in this house, 3rd Dec.1840.

A FURTHER APPEAL

The cost of these two very nice memorials (the TABLET is a very fine one indeed) considerably exceeds the sum provisionally envisaged, and we are now about £30 short of what will be needed. Will those members and friends who have only so far thought about sending a donation, please do so as soon as possible. To Mrs.Peters, to the Rev. J.K. Gardiner at Hardenhuish, or to the Hon.Treasurer or Hon.Sec.

THE UNVEILING

All members (and most especially those who will be present at Hardenhuish) will be delighted to know that this is being done by a member of the Kilvert family (actually the only member of the family living in the British Isles who belongs to the Society). We are most pleased that Mrs.E.M.Victor of Hereford has accepted the invitation to do this.

Mrs.Victor is a great grand-daughter of the Rev.Francis Kilvert of Claverton Lodge, Bath, one of whose daughters - ADELAIDE MARY KILVERT - married Lieut.Colonel MONTAGUE CHOLMELEY of the Indian Army --- Mrs.Victor's grandparents.

The Rev.Francis Kilvert was the Diarist's uncle - for more about him see Dr. Plomer's contribution to the newsletter of June 1967, page 10, headed "The death of Uncle Francis".

Accompanying Mrs.Victor to Hardenhuish is her husband- the Rev.John Victor, who will read a LESSON, as overleaf. Mr.Victor was for many years Vicar of RINGMER and three other Sussex parishes. Since his retirement in 1960 they have lived in Hereford. Mrs.Victor is a Vice-President of the Society.

Mr.A.J.Dann

Reading the other LESSON will be one of our Chippenham members, Mr.A.J.Dann, who, like Kilvert, was baptized at Harnish and attended there for many years. He was Mayor of Chippenham 1964/65 and was Churchwarden at St.Pauls, Chippenham, at the time of the Union with Langley Burrell. Mr.Dann is a well known SOLICITOR in Chippenham.

A TELEGRAM FROM JONATHAN CAPE

The last four sheets of this newsletter went into production quite early in September, whilst this first sheet was held back until the last possible moment. The following telegram from Jonathan Cape Ltd., arrived just in time to be included here ... "NEW EDITION COMPLETE KILVERT'S DIARY COMING IN THE SPRING, FURTHER DETAILS NEXT MONTH". This is indeed good news and what we have been waiting for ... very many of us quite impatiently. The paragraph at the foot of page 10 can therefore now be ignored.

THE SELBORNE BOOKSHOP

I hear that the BOOKSHOP that our member Mrs.E.A.Mallinson runs at THE WAKES at SELBORNE in HAMPSHIRE, is already doing very well indeed. The Wakes is, of course, Gilbert White's old home and now preserved as a MUSEUM. Only four miles away is CHAWTON - where Jane Austen's house is a MUSEUM too. The bookshop specialises in Natural History and subject associated with the countryside and the locality, notably Gilbert White and Jane Austen. Paintings of the district too. Mrs.Mallinson also sells Kilvert's Diary and has just put into stock some of the new booklets of Kilvert's poems, "Collected Verse".

CHRISTMAS CARDS --- The enclosed sheet not only gives details of "Collected Verse" but also of the Society's new venture - CHRISTMAS CARDS - PLEASE GIVE YOUR SUPPORT TO THIS AND SO MAKE SURE OF A WIDER CHOICE OF DESIGNS NEXT YEAR.

AROUND AND ABOUT HARDENHUISH

This further contribution from our Kington Langley member - Mr. R. Tanner - comes just at the right moment; for those who get to Chippenham with plenty of time to spare before the Hardenhuish service, may like to wander round or visit some of the nearby places that figure in the Diary, and it is very certain that the information in this item will greatly assist them in this.

Although Hardenhuish Lane has a number of new houses and has become a busy road, and the park is taken up with Chippenham School and the Girls' and Boys' High Schools; Saint Nicholas Church remains exactly as it was when built by John Wood of Bath in 1779; and the Rectory opposite it, where in 1840, Francis Kilvert was born, is intact. (It will be remembered that the diarist's father had a school here, where Augustus Hare was a pupil). The recently cleaned monument to David Ricardo is described in Vol.3, p.75. "The dark mass of trees in the wilderness, overtopped by the cupola" (Vol.3, p.149) fortunately still stands. Hardenhuish House, the Georgian mansion that Kilvert used to visit when it was the home of the Clutterbuck family, is now a part of Chippenham School.

It is still possible to walk from Hardenhuish via Birds Marsh - a wood usually referred to in the Diary as "The Marsh" - to Langley Burrell. (Turn left where Hardenhuish Lane meets the Malmesbury Road, and enter Birds Marsh by crossing the field immediately after the last house and garden on the right). The description of a picnic in The Marsh (Monday, 18th May 1874) is a vivid one: "the keeper's lodge" is now dilapidated, but May still sees "the sheets of bluebells ... and the pink rhododendrons". The paths are muddy and overgrown but are easily negotiable. The exit gate that leads to an avenue of horse chestnuts is the one to leave by, and these trees show the way to Langley Burrell.

The shortest way to reach this village by car from Hardenhuish is to turn left where Hardenhuish Lane meets the Malmesbury road and take the first turning right (opposite the Golf Club) into Jackson's Lane. This narrow lane, in what Kilvert called the "Happy Valley" by which he reached The Ridge at Langley Fitzurse (i.e. Kington Langley) where lived Etty Meredith-Brown, meets the Swindon-Chippenham road. Turn right, and the church lies a few yards away on the left of the road; a notice shows the entrance.

The memorial plaque to Francis Kilvert in the porch indicates with beautiful clarity the architectural history of this fine church in its setting that has remained undisturbed since the time when the diarist's father was rector here (1863-1879) and he himself was his assistant, first from 1863-64 and then from 1872-76. The grave of his parents is near the private entrance gate to the Manor, Langley House, and it bears the same inscription as Francis Kilvert's grave at Bredwardine: "He, being dead, yet speaketh".

The great square Manor House stands to the east of the church and it can have changed but little since the Ashes of the Diary - the Squire and his family, kinsmen of the Kilverts' - ruled there.

The Rectory, Kilvert's beloved home which he called "Daffodil Parsonage", stands hidden behind some trees some half mile further in the direction of Chippenham, past the school and the turning to Kellaways and Tytherton; it is now a private house, approached by a white gate across a field which, in Kilvert's day was the open common. It is due to the imaginative handling of the present owner that this distinguished seventeenth century house with its eighteenth century front has been rescued from sad neglect and restored to its early beauty. It is now easy to picture, for instance, the tea party and game of croquet "with Miss Meredith Brown and her beautiful sister Etty" that so moved Kilvert on a sunny Monday afternoon in September 1875 that he described Etty and the dress and hat she wore in minute detail. The Meredith Browns lived in Kington Langley, which in the Diary is more often referred to by its alternative name of Langley Fitzurse. To reach the village from Langley Burrell, drive for about a mile in the Swindon direction where the Great House - now a Cheshire home - on the right, and the Manor House on the left, mark the entrance to the village. Kilvert often visited "Uncle Walter", the Squire, at the Georgian Manor, though the family formerly lived at the older and more handsome Great House. It was there that his great-grandmother was shot at through the window; and it was on the green between the two houses that Francis Kilvert saw in the October dusk that ghostly game of football watched by his great-grandfather, then dead nearly a hundred years! (Vol.2. p.385).

He was buried in "the old Mausoleum" (Vol.3. p.86) on Langley Ridge. The site of the chapel and burial ground are known, for they are described in the entry for Saturday 18th March, 1876, when Kilvert revisited the scene of his love for Etty and quotes a stanza from a poem he sent her called "The Ridge". This is the name of the house where she lived, and it stands but a stonethrow from the site of the old mausoleum which Kilvert mused upon that same evening. All that is known about it, together with other associations in the neighbourhood, is told in "A Contribution from Wiltshire" on pages 8 & 9 of the Society's newsletter of 12th June 1967.

THE MORAVIAN SCHOOL AT EAST TYTHERTON ... (Wiltshire)

Readers of the Diary may wonder what kind of school it was that Kilvert's mother attended at East Tytherton, concerning which the Diarist wrote on Friday, February 5th 1875 - " ... my mother went to the Moravian school at East Tytherton daily on a donkey which she urged forward by rattling a bunch of keys in his ear".

This school was opened in 1793 as a Boarding and Day School for Girls. It forms part of a settlement at Tytherton, together with a Moravian Church and a Manse. The School stands on slightly higher ground behind the Church. In 1742 the Hymn Writer & Evangelist, John Cennick, made his headquarters at Tytherton and it was here that he organised missions for his followers and held conferences to direct the carrying out of their work. In 1745, at Cennick's request, the Moravians took over the work that he had begun. It was natural that, in due course, a School was established because the Moravians have always been keen educationists. The School continued, as such, until 1940, when war-time conditions made it advisable for the Governing Body of the British Province of the Moravian Church to evacuate from London to this peaceful place and to use the School as its headquarters until the war ended. At the present time, the school building is in private ownership.

The church and its grounds, with the school buildings behind them, make a picturesque group and Kilvert enthusiasts would find it most interesting to visit it and picture the Diarist's mother arriving at school in this, to us, unconventional and amusing manner!

The above item was contributed by a member in Leominster who worships at the Moravian Church in that town. It comes at the right moment in view of the impending visit to Hardenhuish (a very few miles from East Tytherton) of many members for the Kilvert Service there. Mrs. Davis says that there are less than 40 Moravian Churches in the United Kingdom -- one of them being at Malmesbury, only about 12 miles distant from East Tytherton.

Mrs. Davis will be pleased to answer any enquiries on this contribution to the newsletter. Letters c/o. the Hon. Secretary will be forwarded.

RE-ISSUE OF THE 3 VOLUMES OF KILVERT'S DIARY

So many members and friends have asked about this (especially just after a paragraph appeared in a local newspaper which suggested that they may be issued in ONE LARGE VOLUME!!!) -- that it was felt that an authoritative statement must be obtained from Jonathan Cape Ltd. This was done and the reply, received just before this newsletter went into production, said -- "though we are actively pursuing various ways of bringing out a new edition of the complete KILVERT in an economical way, there is nothing I can add to the statement I sent you in March. I do assure you that as soon as a proper printing schedule has been worked out, you will be informed".

THE MUCH MARCLE MARRIAGE REGISTER

Last May a large party of members visited Homme House and then the church at Much Marcle (report on page 8 of the June newsletter); at the church we saw the Marriage Register, turned to the page showing the entry re the marriage of the Rev. Andrew Pope to Miss Money Kyrle of Homme House, with the signature of Robert Francis Kilvert - the best man. It was then arranged with the Vicar of Much Marcle (the Rev. Graham Holley) that we should be allowed to have a photostat of the whole entry. This we now have and photographs of the entry will shortly be available to members --- along with that of the wedding group on the steps of Homme House. They are 1/- each as is the whole series of more than 100.

VISITORS BOOKS FOR "KILVERT" CHURCHES

The old visitors book at Clyro Church is now full; so the Kilvert Society is supplying a new one. It will be in the same style as already supplied to Bredwardine, Monnington-on-Wye, Llanigon, and Newbridge-on-Wye, and will have Kilvert's photograph in it, a service sheet from the last Commemoration Service held there and a few notes about the Society. A similar book is available for Hardenhuish in conjunction with the forthcoming service there; and one is available for any church where a Kilvert Service has been held - if they will apply for it.

THE 1968 KILVERT SERVICE -- AND VISIT TO LLYSDINAM

June 23rd 1968 will be a day long remembered by many members and friends; for the morning was generally dull and drizzly, with nothing to indicate the beautiful afternoon and evening we were going to be favoured with. Despite this poor morning, a large congregation turned up - to completely fill All Saints Church at Newbridge-on-Wye, although

many extra chairs had been brought in to augment the normal seating. Numbers present were in excess of 200. As is usual on these occasions, folk had come from far and near; upwards of a dozen of the London area members made the long journey; substantially more than that from the Birmingham district; a number from Cardiff, Swansea and other parts of South Wales; several from Bristol and others from Somerset and from Devon. Many, of course, from nearer at hand and a large motor coach - quite full - from Hereford.

It was difficult to pick out individuals among this large congregation, but among those that we were particularly pleased to see were Sir Michael and Lady Delia Venables-Llewelyn; Dr. William Plomer and the local Member of Parliament, Alderman Tudor Watkins and Mrs. Watkins.

The service was conducted by the Vicar of Newbridge (The Rev. A. G. Thomas, B.A.), and, acting on his suggestion, the Society had invited Mr. H. R. Evans - the Clyro organist, to be at the organ for the afternoon. There was perhaps something very fitting that both preacher and organist should be from Clyro, which has such strong links with Newbridge through the Venables family. The lessons were read by Sir Michael Venables-Llewelyn and by Dr. William Plomer. The address - by the Vicar of Clyro (The Rev. T. J. Lewis, B.A.) was one just right for the occasion: it was centred around not only Francis Kilvert but also his Vicar during his seven years as curate of Clyro -- the Rev. R. L. Venables; for, as Mr. Lewis told us, you cannot have a good curate without a good vicar behind him. In the address (for which Mr. Lewis has received many congratulatory messages, verbally and by post) Kilvert's humour was brought out, with a number of examples from the Diary; and Mr. Lewis also dwelt on Kilvert's visits to Newbridge and to Llys dinam, and his appreciation of the beauty of the countryside in this part of the Wye Valley -- and quoted from Kilvert's sermons in the "beautiful little iron church" which preceded the one we were then in -- a church built by Mr. George Venables and which has so many tablets, brasses and memorial windows to members of the family.

The singing of the hymns was - as usual - a feature of the service, something that is so often commented on, particularly by those who live far away from Wales and the border counties. Altogether another memorable Kilvert Commemoration Service.

On coming out of church, almost everyone journeyed across the Wye and up the hill to Llys dinam, for Sir Michael and Lady Delia had so very kindly invited us all there to see the gardens -- but first there was tea, in the coach-houses now converted for just such an occasion. A splendid tea it was, provided by the local ladies and served by them too. A modest charge for tea and viewing the gardens all went to augment the collection taken in church -- for the Organ Restoration Fund; and the result was - we understand - a sum of somewhere between £50 and £60.

Tea over, the company proceeded to the terraces and gardens - to be met with a breath-taking view down the Wye and around a vast stretch of countryside to the distant hills -- for the dull morning had long given way to a sunny afternoon with the most wonderful visibility (although around Hereford, just 45 miles lower down the Wye, the dullness persisted all day). Next came a very pleasant little ceremony -- the presentation of the prizes won by local schoolchildren for their booklets of the wild flowers mentioned in the Diary; the choice at Newbridge this year for the Society's prizes. This was done by the President, Dr. Plomer, who congratulated the children - and their teachers - on the high standard of the booklets. He was undoubtedly very touched by the grave little curtseys of the girls and the bows of the boys as each of the ten came up for their book-tokens. "How Kilvert would have loved them" was a comment heard to be made by many. Dr. Plomer paid a special tribute to Mr. V. H. Hill, the Head of Newbridge School, and warm thanks to Mr. D. J. H. Lewis of Llandefalle School (Breconshire) who judged the entries. Extra prizes were awarded as there were so many worthy contestants for them. The winning booklets were on show in the summer house on the terrace, where very many saw them and gave them high praise. Dr. Plomer then delighted the large company assembled on the terraces and lawns by reading extracts from the Diary, he had a natural "pulpit" at the top of the terrace steps, most of the readings had references to Newbridge, Llys dinam, the Venables family and Kilvert's visits to the district and his descriptions whilst on them. For this he was warmly thanked by Sir Michael Venables-Llewelyn, and he in turn thanked Sir Michael and Lady Delia for having us all there; for all the enjoyment we had from their lovely gardens, trees and views; and also thanked all the helpers who had contributed so much on such a wonderful day. The company heartily seconded and applauded each motion. So ended a most memorable day at Newbridge-on-Wye in Kilvert's beloved Radnorshire.

THE ROYAL WELSH SHOW

It is understood that the winning entries in the above mentioned competition were displayed in the Church Tent at the Royal Welsh Show at Builth Wells in July. It is to be hoped that very many saw them for they were really good. Each of the 24 pages had a pressed flower, a coloured drawing of it and the passage from Kilvert's diary in which it was mentioned. What a splendid way to introduce children to the Diary.

OBITUARY

With much regret the deaths of three members have to be reported -- all in August, and the one particularly tragic ... that of Mr. Horace Sullivan of Hereford (Head of the firm of Wholesale Fruit Merchants of that name) who was involved in a fatal road accident in Pembrokeshire. Mr. Sullivan had, with his family, attended several of the Commemoration Services and had enjoyed a number of walks with other members in the hills of Radnorshire. He joined the Society in 1964. The Hon. Sec. represented the Society at the largely attended funeral service at St. Peter's Church, Hereford.

With the death of Mrs. E. M. Browning of Kyrle Street, Hereford (at the age of 82) the Society lost a member of many years standing and one who, up to only a very few years ago attended almost all services, meetings, coach tours and other events of the Society; and one who retained her interest and looked forward to reading newsletters etc., until very recently.

Soon afterwards came the news of the sudden death of Mr. A. L. Partridge of Windsor Street, Hereford, and with it the severance of a link with Francis Kilvert, for it was Mr. Partridge's father - the late Mr. A. F. Partridge - who was the weakly baby baptized at Clyro Court Farm by Kilvert, and who we well remember as the "grand old man in the pith helmet" at all the Society's functions right up to his death in 1957.

DEATH OF THE CHAIRMAN OF JONATHAN CAPE LTD.

On 28 July the death occurred of Mr. George Wren Howard, chairman of Jonathan Cape Ltd., the publishers of Kilvert's Diary.

Born in 1893 and educated at Marlborough and Trinity College, Cambridge, he helped to found the firm in 1921, and became chairman after the death of Jonathan Cape in 1960. He is particularly remembered for his achievements in improving the standards of book production. He has been succeeded as chairman by his son, Mr. Michael S. Howard.

A memorial service was held at the church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields in London on 12 September, and the lesson was read by Dr. Plomer.

ASHBROOK-CLYRO (Kilvert's "lodgings")

This house, where Kilvert lived during his seven years in Clyro and where so much of the Diary was written, is still unsold and is now empty. Everyone of the Society and very many other "Kilvertians" who are not members - would much like to see it lived in again; whether or not we were able to rent a room for the much wanted little KILVERT MUSEUM.

It is understood that there is now a substantial reduction in the price asked for it. Those interested are asked to get in touch with Russell, Baldwin & Bright - Auctioneers and Estate Agents, HEREFORD: or Hay-on-Wye via Hereford.

THE PRESIDENTS HEAD FOR SOUTH AFRICA

We hear that Dr. Plomer has lately been sitting to the sculptress, Frances Baruch, for a portrait head which has been commissioned for presentation to a university in South Africa. Miss Baruch was a distinguished pupil of the President of the Royal Society of British Sculptors.

NEWS FROM BIRMINGHAM - THE JULY "GET-TOGETHER"

Undoubtedly our very best Midlands Meeting yet was held on Friday, July 5th, by kind invitation of Dr. and Mrs. J. R. Mathers, in their delightful Northfield home. Dr. and Mrs. Mathers were our hosts for the occasion of the quarterly "Get-together" of the Birmingham and Midlands members of the Kilvert Society, under the chairmanship of Mr. E. F. Jelfs.

The spacious lounge was filled to capacity by 7-45 - among our interesting visitors being Mr. E. J. Schatz and Mr. Vivian Bird, both of whom are contributors to the columns of the Midlands Press and writers of some note. Mr. Schatz is acquainted with the Kilvert country and Mr. Bird has written of Kilvert in past articles. Mr. Bird, incidentally, had flown back from Stockholm to be with us for the occasion. Mr. C. E. Harvey - a keen researcher and student of Kilvertian themes, who has given our local meetings much assistance, and Mr. F. J. Price of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, were also among our welcome visitors.

The proceedings commenced with the playback of a tape-recorded address given by our Society's late President, Rev. D. J. Lane Griffiths, B.A., T.D., on the occasion of a Kilvert Commemoration Service at Langley Burrell, Wiltshire, the home of the Diarist. A note of poignancy lay in the fact that Rev. Lane Griffiths who had hoped to be with us on this occasion, passed suddenly away in February last - his passing a most lamentable loss to the Society.

Special guests of the evening were Miss M.Mantle and Miss C.Powell of Clyro - in the heart of the Kilvert country.

A talk given by Miss Mantle and illustrated with colour-slides presenting a picture of places mentioned in the DIARY as they are to be seen today, was greatly enjoyed by all present.

A successful evening was concluded with refreshments provided by the generous hospitality of Dr.and Mrs.Mathers.

A vote of thanks to all concerned for the success and achievement of the evening, proposed by Mr.C.K.Hughes of Moseley, was seconded and enthusiastically endorsed by the meeting.

We hope to have our next Meeting on Friday October 25th. Details will be sent to any who would wish to receive them. Please get in touch with Mr.E.F.Jelfs of 8 Clarence Road, Birmingham 13.

BY CAR AND ON FOOT IN THE RADNORSHIRE HILLS

When the foregoing account of the July meeting in Birmingham arrived, with it came a request that we should organise a ramble to some well known Kilvert "spots" so that a party of Birmingham area members could come and join in -- bringing Mr.Vivian Bird with them; as he was most anxious to get material together for a Kilvert article in one of the papers that he writes for. Accordingly a party of members met one August morning in Clyro for a day in the hills. The plan was to go by car and on foot in order to visit more places and cover more ground than on foot only. Accordingly, the little convoy of cars made their way towards Bettws, halting en route to see the "standing stone" at Cross Foot (or Cross Ffordd - see the Diary for March 29th 1870), and then a pause at the site of Whittys Mill (so much about this in the Diary), before reaching the little church at Bettws, in its field and looking just like "a house founded upon a rock" - as Kilvert described it on July 9th 1871. We had followed very closely to Kilvert's route from Clyro to Bettws - three miles, mostly uphill, pausing just short of it to note the farm (Llwyn Gwilym) from whence the baby came to be baptized on Feb.13th 1870 - when Kilvert had to use water with broken ice in it. A short run from Bettws brought us to the lane that leads to Whitehall - still in ruins and "sad and lonely" as Kilvert found it on May 3rd 1870, here all walked to see it; and from it, looked across to Pen-y-Cae, where "Gipsy Lizzie" lived. Lunch was eaten at almost the highest point of the road over Clyro Hill; then on by car along the lanes to the gateway to the Little Mountain, there to walk across it until we looked down on Newchurch and Gilfach-yr-Heol; this was Kilvert's walk when he visited the Vaughans at Gilfach; and the lapwings were tumbling overhead and the harebells trembling underfoot, just as in the Diary ... and away in the far distance were the Clee Hills of Shropshire. After this we proceeded, by car and on foot, to see Llanishiffr, the farm overlooking Rhosgoch Bog -- Kilvert describes it well in his account of a visit there on March 16th 1870. Then on through Rhosgoch, pausing at the Mill, well described by Kilvert after his very first visit there on March 26th 1870 - and to note how well that description fits today. After a halt in Painscastle village and a visit to Llanbedr church - where we remembered the splendid Commemoration Service of 1967, and noticed how really nice the church looks when there is time to "stand and stare". All gathered round the grave of the "Solitary" and talked of Kilvert's visit to him in his cabin under Llanbedr Hill. Then on up to a vantage point from which one looks across to the Rocks of Pen Cwm and the site of two abodes of the old hermit-vicar (the Rev.John Price). At this lovely spot we stayed to eat our tea; afterwards travelling round by Llanbychllyn (the lake which Kilvert looked down on and described as "gleaming like a silver shield" - July 3rd 1872). Then back towards Painscastle again, to park near Llandeviron Farm and walk across the Bachwy and up the steep fields to the little "cwm" under the Begyns where lies the secluded little church of Llandewl Fach -- the longest and steepest walk of the day. Back to our waiting cars to disperse - some to Birmingham, some to South Wales, some to Hereford and some just to their homes in Clyro village - after what all voted to be a grand day up in the hills. On this sunny summers day when so many of the places that seem to stand out in the pages of the Diary were visited. We are now eager to see Mr.Bird's newspaper article, for we feel that we gave him a lot that he could write about!!

What will most likely be the last day "in the hills" in 1968 is arranged for mid-September (just too late for an account of it to appear in these notes). That day a large party is expected and the walk will be "across the hills to the Rocks of Aber Edw" -- a favourite walk at any time, but perhaps best in September when one walks across the moors through miles of gorse fern and heather. Kilvert's poem, "The Rocks of Aberedw" - to be found on page 26 of "Collected Verse" - perfectly describes this walk and the scenes and surroundings. He was greatly impressed by these rocky cliffs towering above the Wye and carried his impressions back into his native Wiltshire, for this poem was written at Langley Burrell Rectory in September 1874.

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The following piece of interesting information came from Dr. Plomer just too late for the June newsletter. He says -- "Some members may like to know that in 1967 Longmans published a long poem called "The Book of the Green Man", by a young American poet, Ronald Johnson. One section of the poem deals with a walk in spring from the mouth of the Wye to its source. This section contains allusions to Moccas, Bredwardine and Kilvert, and some quotations from the "Diary"."

THE YOUNG WIVES OF LEOMINSTER

Earlier this year one of our Leominster members (Mrs. Norman Davis) gave a talk on Kilvert to the Young Wives' Group of Leominster Priory Church; she has since given a similar talk to Kingsland-Herefordshire Women's Institute. Mrs. Davis so interested the Young Wives of Leominster that they wanted to see for themselves some of the countryside of the Diary. It had to be an evening visit, not leaving Leominster until husbands arrived home to look after the children!! But much was squeezed into one of the long evenings of early August, as the following account from the Hon. Secretary of the Group will tell.

On the warm summer evening of Aug. 1st, a coach-load of our members journeyed towards the "Kilvert-Country", delighted that Mrs. Norman Davis was with us, for some weeks previously she had given a talk on Kilvert and the Diary to the Group and while we were travelling she spoke - briefly - on what we were to see; refreshing our memories and giving any that missed her talk a little insight into the subject.

It was good to meet Mr. & Mrs. Prosser - who were waiting at the appointed place. Their enthusiasm for Kilvert's haunts is infectious, and their running commentary as we went along, was just what we needed. The former Vicarage at Bredwardine looked splendid in its lovely setting as we crossed the bridge over the Wye. How very sad that Kilvert spent such a brief married life there.

It was a solemn moment to stand over the burial place of the Rev. Francis Kilvert; for it was indeed the grave of an old friend, although some years have passed since first I read his Diary, - he has lived with me ever since.

The proximity of the grave of little Davie touched the hearts of our members, who are nearly all mothers of young children.

Shall we ever forget the reflection of the softly setting sun on the river as we approached Hay?

When the coach turned off the main road (at Clyro) to travel towards Painscastle we were - for most of us - in unknown territory. Then we found that a farm at Painscastle was the birthplace of one of the leaders of our Group. When reading the Diary the reference to Jacobs Ladder had confused me, but suddenly it made sense. The whole journey was the fitting together of the pieces of a well-loved jigsaw.

No wonder a child had been drowned in that enormous bog (Rhosgoch)! Who would expect to find such a bog in so elevated a position?

The size of Clyro Parish impressed us. The sheer physical effort of walking, uphill and down, in summer and in winter to the little church of Bettws and to visit the parishioners, made us pause and consider how lucky we were to be making the journey by coach. I was glad that it was misty. I felt that Kilvert had probably travelled his parish in mist, rain or snow more often than on clear sunny days. It was no wonder that he was so eloquent about the countryside when he could see it clearly in all its splendour, sparkling in sunshine and washed by a recent shower. Descending again into Clyro, and walking towards the Church, we passed Ashbrook House where Kilvert had his "lodgings". There, physically tired after walking so far, the Curate had sat writing his Diary. We were glad that he had allowed us to share his thoughts and activities. There was no-one there that Thursday evening. The place is empty.

Clyro Church is beautiful. I must go there again. The gay, forward-looking colours in the Chancel contrast so well with the remainder of it; perhaps specially so when seen by artificial lighting.

We had seen so much to consider, and as darkness fell we poured into the Baskerville Arms (so often mentioned in the Diary) for refreshment. Here another surprise awaited us - the most delicious hot meat pies we have ever tasted! We thoroughly recommend an evening in Kilvert Country, followed by a visit to the Baskerville Arms. Very satisfying in every way! Our grateful thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Prosser for making it all possible.

Dorothy Taylor.

THE KILVERT CHRISTMAS CARDS

All who know Bredwardine will be in agreement with Mrs. Taylor's highlighting of the view of what was Kilvert's Vicarage that one sees when crossing Bredwardine Bridge... this popular view of a beautiful scene is the picture on the Society's first venture into CHRISTMAS CARDS - NOW ON SALE as per the enclosed leaflet. We do hope for the

fullest possible support from members and friends this year, so that we can confidently go on with the plan to have two more cards next year. CLYRO - and the two Wiltshire churches of Hardenhuish and Langley Burrell side-by-side.

A BLIND MEMBER VISITS THE KILVERT COUNTRY

It is just ten years since our first (and only) blind member joined the Society; this he did after not only having the Diary read to him, but also reading it himself in Braille. Not that he has always been blind - in fact for half of his life he has had sight. "The great darkness" (as he terms it) came to him in the 1930's, just a few years too soon for him to have read Kilvert's Diary for himself in normal fashion. Although he lives in Bournemouth he has visited the Kilvert Country almost every year since he joined us, first with his wife, and since her death in 1964, with his sister - staying in Hay, in Clyro, in Bulth and elsewhere in the district. Some of us have, at times, taken him out - to places like Snodhill Castle and Bettws Church. I remember taking him to the "standing stone" (referred to elsewhere in these pages) on Clyro Hill and shall never forget how his hands felt every inch of it until he no doubt "saw" it almost as well as I did. But it is Mr. Harold Butcher who has taken him out most of any-one and given him great joy - as will be realised by those who read on. But first of all let me quote from a letter from our blind friend, written on his return home after a visit in the year that he joined the Society. This shows how the local countryside appeals to him and why he returns year after year to it.

"I greatly like the quiet and unpopulous Radnorshire ... the ever chattering rooks, the skylarks, the wind whispering in the tall trees, the echoing cuckoo and the resounding pigeons, the perpetual bleating of lambs - and the wondrous singing of the swirling waters; and often, complete and blessed silence".

Among his favourite spots are ... Mousecastle, Llanigon and Llanleonfel - as will be realised from the following extracts from a letter written to me about his visit in May of this year.

Thursday ... May 9th: By train to Garth to visit my beloved Llanleonfel yet again. I stayed there for hours, my good sister benignly patient. I was pleased because there were plenty of sheep on the hillsides, calling and answering. (He then visited the church and no doubt had the extract from the Diary - of Kilvert's visit there - read to him).

Sunday ... May 12th: We walked to Llanigon (from Hay) - my eighth visit - and my kind sister read me all the extracts about Daisy from the abridged edition.

Monday ... May 13th: Harold came over from Hereford and I went with him to Newchurch, giving my sister a much needed rest from me. I had not visited it before and was eager to go because of the Vaughans. It was such a peaceful village, no traffic at all. Then on to Llanbedr - where I was eager to visit the site of the Solitary's hut. Harold was wonderful, guiding me where to put my feet and when to jump and putting stepping-stones for me. I was so pleased to be on the very site of the Solitary's peaceful and lonely abode, and I lingered there a long time. Harold read the appropriate entries to me meanwhile. As we were descending Clyro Hill, Harold told me that the evening sun was spread across the valley beneath and on to the nearer and more distant hills and mountains in a flood of green and golden glory. He said he had never seen anything more beautiful. I wished that I might have enjoyed it too. But, I thought to myself, if I could just have feasted my eyes upon the fresh, green, soft grasses and delicate spring blossoms on the banks of the steep lane - I would be in Paradise.

Tuesday ... May 14th: Irene and I walked to Clyro. Coffee at "The Swan" (Baskerville Arms) then bus to Whitney, re-visited the church (my fifth time) - where the curate of Cusop was "confirmed" by the impatient Bishop of Hereford.

Wednesday ... May 15th: Mouse Castle -- my ninth visit (no doubt he had the pages of the Diary read to him -- those that tell of the romping father and his children on the steep slopes of the old hill fort called Mouse Castle. Some members are convinced that one day they will visit it and find them all there - still romping).

Thursday ... May 16th: The good Harold came again to Hay, giving my sister another day of respite. We went to Newchurch again and then on to Glaschw (here they visited the church and found the private burial ground of the Beavans of Glaschw Court and the grave of the daughter who was turned out by the hard-hearted father because she married someone he did not approve of ... in the Diary as Mrs. Irwin).

They returned to Hay via Aberedw and visited the abandoned railway station. He writes, "we returned by the route of the railway between Bulth and Three Cocks - so much journeyed on by my wife and I between 1958 and 1962 -- the overgrown platform of Aberedw was still there with one lamp-post, but the buildings were down, and all was blissfully silent and sadly forlorn. We also went into the church (Aberedw) - my third visit, where the flute is kept which was played as a musical instrument before there was an organ.

Friday ... May 17th: Back to Bournemouth.

MICHAELMAS MILK

On 14th October 1870, Kilvert recorded the old custom in Clyro district "for the poor people to go about round the farmhouses to beg and gather milk between and about the time of the two Michaelmasses, that they may be able to make some puddings and pancakes against Bryngwyn and Clyro Feasts -- The women go round again to gather milk in May when the calves are weaned!"

In the transactions of the Radnorshire Society, 1935, W.Watkins, writing of Llanfihangel Rhydithon in the 1860's says, "It was a custom with some poor women to visit farms for the purpose of begging flour -- they carried a small bag fastened to the body in such a way as to rest on the side ready to receive the flour which was usually an ordinary basinful! They would exchange district news and knit stockings as they chatted".

In North Wales it was a recognised Shrove Tuesday custom to beg pancake materials from the farms -- milk, flour and lard, and for boys to "clap" for eggs by banging two stones together outside the farmhouse.

LLANHALLANT EVE

Kilvert's reference on Llanhallant Eve 1871 to the custom of sowing hemp-seed by girls hoping to see "phantom lovers" mowing after them, is elaborated in the MS from Mrs. Essex Hope's papers, published in the Kilvert Society booklet "Radnorshire Legends & Superstitions". Kilvert heard of a farm servant-girl who told her mistress that she had seen her master mowing after her. "Oh, Gwenny, be kind to my poor children" cried the mistress, realising that she would shortly die, and that Gwenny would be her successor and the children's stepmother. This is a classic type of Welsh "divination" story. A very similar one was given to the Rev. Elias Owen in North Wales in the 1880's by a man whose informant had been a woman still living in Owen's day and whose fellow-servant in her youth had seen a vision of her master after carrying out a divination ritual. Her mistress begged the girl to be kind to her children, whose step-mother the servant did, in fact become, as her master's second wife.

STOP PRESS THE BIRMINGHAM SUNDAY NEWSPAPER

Just as the sheets for this newsletter were enveloped and ready for posting to the duplicating agency, the post arrived with copies of the newspaper containing the article that Mr. Vivian Bird had produced following the "day in the Kilvert Country" that we had laid on primarily for him and of which an account will be found in this newsletter.

What a way of saying "thank you" for what we thought was a pleasant day which would enable him to produce an article on the countryside of the Diary with visits to some of the places that Kilvert wrote about.

He sneers at us and refers to places that folk come for miles to see (some from across the Atlantic even) as "shrines". What nonsense!

We are "worshippers" - and when someone read (from the abridged edition of the Diary) the little piece that Kilvert wrote about the "standing stone" all that he could say about that was - "Mr. Jelfs and some two dozen other Kilvertians clustered round like some evangelical gathering, one of the party reading from a book while our heads were reverently inclined to hear him". Reverently -- my foot!!!

It will be a very long time before I again organise such a day out for any newspaper man. I was sceptical from the start about this one, for I told Mr. Jelfs that my impression was that the further we kept from newspaper men the better!!! But in the end I gave way and did it.

If any member would like to see the newspaper in question and form their own opinions, just write to me and it will be sent along.

C.T.O. Prosser. Hon. Sec.