

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Hon. Treasurer:

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President:-

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

Hon. Secretary

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Asst. Hon. Treasurer

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3rd April 1970.

Dear Member,

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and SOCIAL EVENING will be held on WEDNESDAY the 29th APRIL 1970-----in EIGNBROOK CHURCH HALL(S), HEREFORD, as usual.

promptly at 7 p.m.

Kindly note that it is again on a Wednesday evening, the only day that they are available to us. For the benefit of new members it is again mentioned that the HALLS adjoin Eignbrook Congregational Church, the Eye Hospital is opposite them, and adjoining them is the Horse and Groom Inn, where there is a large car park.

After the business meeting there will be various speakers, including old friends like the Rev. David Lockwood; and most probably Mr. L.Le Quesne, the new owner of Ashbrook, Clyro.

The main feature of the evening will be a talk, illustrated with slides, on

THE SHROPSHIRE KILVERT COUNTRY

by our Shrewsbury member Mr. William Price M.A. Mr. Price is Sub. Editor of the VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY OF SHROPSHIRE, and we hope in due course to improve our knowledge of the Kilvert roots in that county from his researches.

At about 8 o'clock there will be the usual break for refreshments, served by some of our lady members.

During the evening bookings will be taken for the ANNUAL SPRING COACH TOUR. This year it is to be to the BRECON area, and should prove a most interesting afternoon. Full details on an inside page of this newsletter. It is to be on Saturday the 9th of May leaving Hereford Town Hall at 2 p.m.

Coach fare will be 8/- each and members are asked to kindly pay when booking, as this so greatly simplifies the arrangements.

The Statement of Accounts is again enclosed as a separate sheet. The Annual Report and details of some of the outstanding events of 1969 will be found on one of the pages that follow.

It has already been announced that the Annual Commemoration Service is this year at CLYRO...on Sunday the 28th June, with the Dean of Hereford giving the ADDRESS. As this will be just 21 years after the first such service held by this Society at Clyro (1949) ALMS BOX WALL SAFES will be given to the church to mark the occasion, as at Bredwardine last year. Full details in the June newsletter.

Yours sincerely,

(C.T.O. Prosser) Hon. Secretary.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Despite requests in several recent newsletters there are still a few members who have neither paid up or resigned. ONCE AGAIN WE REPEAT THAT WE REGARD A MEMBER AS A MEMBER UNTIL THEY RESIGN..... and keep on sending them their newsletters. IT IS MOST UNFAIR FOR ANYONE TO ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN and we therefore appeal to anyone to whom these remarks apply to do their duty. With ever rising costs of printing, duplicating etc. etc. AND THE THREAT OF AN INCREASE OF POSTAGE COSTS it is vital that this problem is solved. The vast majority of members pay their subscriptions regularly; it is only a comparative few to whom these remarks apply: but it is felt that the best approach is through the newsletter.



OUR PRESIDENT.

No doubt many members saw and heard Dr. Plomer on T/V earlier this year; on two Sunday evenings, in "Omnibus". First one was about the late Ian Fleming (the creator of James Bond) who in his early days in this field was greatly encouraged by Dr. Plomer. A fortnight after, the subject was someone entirely different, the late Virginia Woolf, one of whose circle of friends was Dr. Plomer. About the same time Dr. Plomer was also to be heard several times on RADIO.

I asked our President to let me have news of his engagements in the near future, and received the following information.

The Poetry Society is busy making plans for the Wordsworth bi-centenary (7th April). There is to be a ceremony in Westminster Abbey in the afternoon and in the evening Dr. Plomer presides over a reading by various poets at the College of St. Mark and St. John in Chelsea.

Then he is at a week-end school at Bristol University (10th to 12th April). On the 10th Michael Foot M.P. will lecture on Wordsworth & Social Change and on the 11th (at Bristol City Art Gallery at 8 p.m.) there will be a public poetry reading, in which Dr. Plomer takes part.

It is interesting to know of his family connection with Bristol ——— his maternal great-grandfather, George Franklyn (1796-1870), M.P. for Poole, was mayor of Bristol and master of the Company of Merchant Venturers.

Dr. Plomer will no doubt be at the Aldeburgh Festival in June — as usual — but that will not prevent him being with us at Clyro on June 28th; something we all look forward to. I hear that he has written a poem which is to be specially produced in a very limited edition in aid of the fund for re-building after the disastrous fire at The Maltings; a well known painter is co-operating and each copy will be signed by both poet and painter; for further details please write to Cdr. John Jacob, Festival Appeal Committee, Festival Office, Aldeburgh, Suffolk. The poem is called A NOTE ON THE CELLO.

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THE ANNUAL SPRING COACH TOUR

Overleaf are the brief details of this...that it will be on Saturday the 9th of May and to the Brecon area, but as it is always to places with Kilvert associations it is felt that the details regarding this will be welcomed by many. Those who read pages 215/216 of Volume 1. will find that on the 25th August 1870 Kilvert and some Clyro friends (Baskervilles and Morrells) went to Brecon by train and then on out to "the high Crug Common" in a pair horse omnibus, where they had a picnic lunch. Afterwards walking to Penoyre, which they found empty and unfurnished. Kilvert gives us a splendid description of it and of its surroundings. Today Penoyre House is a Country Club, and that is where we are going. Whether we can get anywhere near to the Crug remains to be seen, but we are going to Penoyre and as TEA for our party is booked there we can no doubt wander around, at least to some extent. A Brecon member tells me that Kilverts description of Penoyre House is excellent. Brecon Cathedral can perhaps be visited as we pass through the old town, an extract from the original Diary (not to be found in the three volumes) tells us of an Archdeacons Visitation to which Kilvert went, in what is now Brecon Cathedral. If the weather is kind there are very fine views from the area of Penoyre — it faces the Brecon Beacons across the valley of the Usk.

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THE ANNUAL REPORT

Reports of events in the 3 newsletters of 1969, and the report of the October service at Bredwardine in this one, does not leave much for the Annual Report to say. 1969 saw the 21st Anniversary of the founding of the Kilvert Society, each year we have marched steadily on, with a small increase in our numbers each year. Until now we are well over 500 (we could be many many more, but we never ask anyone to join; people who do not join of their own free will are so apt to pay their first subscription and nothing afterwards!!) It is pleasing to note that more Wiltshire folk have joined, more from Radnorshire too, and a number more from the Birmingham area, several more to augment our members in Shropshire — where a year or two ago we had dropped down to none!! The events of 1969 were well attended, members came from far and near to the June weekend when we held our "21st" celebrations at Hereford Town Hall and in the Cathedral. Earlier in the year we had had a good A.G.M. and Social Evening; and, as the report on another page tells, the October service at Bredwardine was most successful in every way. Finances are good, and we now look forward to the events of 1970.



This turned out to be a most successful event — in every way. The day was a most beautiful one, when one considers that it was late October. Quite sunny and warm, so much so that we were enabled to have the church door wide open and thus be able to bring the old Brobury pews (that are normally in the porch) inside, up against the door and so provide seating for nearly a dozen more. The church was really full, right to the back — where other old Brobury pews are rarely used, and not another person could have been squeezed in anywhere. Some 200 people, many more than we ever hoped for so late in the year. All the lanes around the church were full of cars and a number in the meadow adjoining the Old Vicarage. All around the church everything had been "spruced up" — paths edged, grass cut around the graves of Francis Kilvert and Mrs. Kilvert, the memorial seat, and the grave of "Little Davie". The Committee of the Kilvert Society had made arrangements for flowers to be placed on the Kilvert graves, and many were heard to express satisfaction with how everything looked. The Vicar (the Rev. W. Lloyd) was present — with Mrs. Lloyd, but was not well enough to take part in the service. It was therefore conducted entirely by the Rural Dean — the Rev. C.G. Challenger; the LESSONS were read by two Vice-Presidents, Mr. E.F. Jelfs of Birmingham and Mr. Geoffrey Bright of Leominster; and the two ALMS BOX WALL SAFES (given by the Society to mark its 21st Anniversary Year were dedicated by the Rural Dean. A completely new note was struck by the Rev. D.N. Lockwood (Vicar of Hanley Castle with Hanley Swan in Worcestershire) in his ADDRESS, to which the large congregation listened intently (as one put it "you could really have heard a pin drop") — no mean achievement after 21 years of Annual Commemoration Services at which so many different preachers of note have said so much about Kilvert, the Diary, and on so many different aspects of many things connected with both.

As usual, members and friends were present from far and near; including a coach from Hereford, quite full. Among these from far afield were noticed members from London, from Sussex, from Birmingham and from Bristol, others from Bath and from Swansea; a number from Radnorshire and some from Monmouthshire, others from Worcestershire and from Shropshire. It is really wonderful, this support that we get time after time, year after year, from members and friends who so often make long journeys to attend.

The service over very many of the company present made their way along the road past the Red Lion to the Village Hall up the lane beside it — where a splendid TEA awaited them. This had been provided by the local ladies, and was served by them; the modest charge that all paid was given to augment the collection taken in church, so no doubt the day considerably helped to swell its funds — as indicated by the appreciative note in the local church magazine. It had been arranged that instead of dispersing when tea was over the company should stay on for half an hour or so (actually we stayed an hour) as a social gathering — where old friends could meet and some could say a few informal words on some relevant subject. This is just what happened, and all seemed to enjoy the little gathering. A little of what several of our members had to say will make interesting reading — brief reports follow on.

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Firstly — our Hon. Treasurer (Mr. J.D. Worsey) thanked the ladies of Bredwardine on behalf of us all for their hard work in providing such an excellent tea and then went on to say that he had attended all services right from the time that the Society was formed; there were probably others who had had the same privilege; and it was indeed a wonderful privilege to hear all the varied and excellent addresses that we had over the years.

Then followed Mr. L.V. Johnson of Worthing (who, with Mrs. Johnson) has made the long journey to almost all our Kilvert Services for many years — and has had many holidays in the Kilvert Country. From him we heard of how he never goes along Piccadilly, when visiting London, without looking in the window of Swaine, Adeney, Brigg and Sons Ltd. For it will be recalled that Kilvert noted in the Diary on the 29th July 1871 that Mr. Venables brought him a present from London, "a beautiful oaken walking stick from Briggs". Next came Miss O.E. Evans of Hereford (a long standing member who — with her sister Miss R.M. Evans — rarely miss any event of the Society) to remind us that their mother was Esther Hyde of Bredwardine, a child when Kilvert was Vicar there. There are a number of kindly references to her and to others of the Hyde family in the Diary. It is particularly interesting when a member will speak — however briefly — about her forbears who Kilvert knew. We have a number of such members of whom we know, and maybe a number more who have not yet revealed themselves. Miss Evans was followed by Mr. E.F. Jelfs of Birmingham who spoke on his pleasure in being invited to take part in the Bredwardine service, and then went on to talk about the gatherings of the Birmingham area members, specially referring to the one to be held on the following Friday.

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It was much regretted that the Vicar of Bredwardine (he is also Rector of Moccas and two other adjoining parishes) was not well enough to take any part in the October service, for we remember his kindly welcome the last time a Kilvert Service was held at Bredwardine (1964) The current issue of Hereford Diocesan News tells us that



ill-health has now caused him to resign and this takes effect on March 31st. I am sure that the good wishes of all of us will go out to the Rev. W. and Mrs. Lloyd — we shall also hope that his successor will turn out to be a "Kilvertian" and will join the Society.

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#### NEWS OF MEMBERS

Here are some notes on a few of our members whose names have been appearing in newspapers of late.

Our Vice-President, Alderman Tudor Watkins is now Chairman of Breconshire County Council. He has been the M.P. for the Brecon & Radnor Division for very many years, but has decided not to stand again for Parliament, when the next election takes place. He is a Breconshire man, well liked and respected by people of all political views. He was a personal friend of the late Mr. Sid Wright and a founder-member of the Kilvert Society.

Our other Vice-President who is also a Member of Parliament — Major David Gibson-Watt M.C. has also been much in the news of late. For although he represents the Hereford Division at Westminster he is the Opposition Spokesman for Welsh Affairs. A Radnorshire man, he lives at Doldowlod Hall, midway between Llandrindod Wells and Rhayader — the house built by his famous ancestor James Watt.

The present Hon. Secretary of Hereford Welsh Society is our founder-member and committee-member Mrs. Morfa Spinks of Hereford (Miss Morfa Hamer of Builth Wells until she married the late Mr. C. Spinks). Since the re-organisation of about a year ago, when Mrs. Spinks and other officials were appointed, this Society is very flourishing, with many new members and an event each month. The DINNER to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Hereford Welsh Society, held in December, was a most successful one; as was the more recent St. Davids Day Dinner.

Our founder-member, committee-member, and maker of the Kilvert Film — Mr. Godfrey Davies — was a special guest (to mark his 50 years as a member) at the annual dinner of Herefordshire Photographic Society in January. Mr. Davies joined the Society on leaving the R.A.F. in 1919, was Secretary for some years and has been its President, three times.

Leominster members Alderman and Mrs. Norman Davis are soon to become Mayor and Mayoress of that Borough for the third time in a period of years. It will be remembered that a previous newsletter told of Mrs. Davis (a member of Leominster Moravian Church) preaching in Malmesbury Abbey, undoubtedly the first woman ever to have done so.

#### THE REV. DAVID LOCKWOOD'S ADDRESS

Copies of this are now obtainable from the Hon. Sec. at 2/- each plus 4d postage (copies of the ADDRESS at Hardenhuish and at Hereford Cathedral are also 2/- each, several can be sent for the same postage).

Details of other members "in the news" would be welcomed from time to time.

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#### THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY

With every copy of this newsletter there will be a leaflet of the Victorian Society; they want to increase their membership and they therefore asked if this could be done. The Kilvert Society is a member of the V.S. (indeed, we are reciprocal members of each other) and from time to time get a mention in their newsletters; so it is nice to be able to bring them to the notice of our members.

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#### OUR BOOKLETS — and CHRISTMAS CARDS

"LOOKING BACKWARDS" has sold well, and is still selling steadily; both this booklet and "COLLECTED VERSE" will keep on selling throughout future years, this is why we had far more produced than would sell in the first two years; but despite the good sales they are not good enough, there are still many many members who haven't had a copy of either; and they do so much augment what is in the Diary (especially "Looking Backwards"). So many members have at different times sought news of Mrs. Kilvert — there is much about her in "Looking Backwards". Our 1967 booklet "THE SOLITARY OF LLANBEDR-PAINSCASTLE" plus "RADNORSHIRE LEGENDS AND SUPERSTITIONS" is about to be re-printed (after long negotiations with the firm concerned) and we have high hopes of having them at least by midsummer; this was a most popular booklet and many are waiting for them now. The promised "JOURNAL" of the Rev. Robert Kilvert will follow on, it may even catch up with the reprint of "THE SOLITARY", with it there will be other items dealing with life at Hardenhuish Rectory last century. It should prove to



be a "best-seller". So many are ever eager for more of the "KILVERT SAGA"....both members and Diary readers who are not members. These we get at by newspaper advertisements, and through leaflets.

CHRISTMAS CARDS — several thousands have been sold in the 2 years that are past; but again not nearly enough; if every member had bought just one dozen sales would have catapulted.....and we could have had even more designs than the 5 that will be available for next Christmas. The 2 new ones will be Bredwardine Church, no doubt as exquisitely done as the card of the two Wiltshire churches, for Robin Tanner is most generously doing this new design for us too. In somewhat similar style (but by another hand) there will also be a Clyro village scene of last century, with Ashbrook and the Church, the Baskerville Arms and a group of children.

Please note that booklets (and cards later on) are stocked by:-

The Pierpoint Gallery, Church Street, HEREFORD.

The Book & Card Centre, 55 Eign Street, HEREFORD (opposite Friar St.)

The S.P.C.K. Depot, High Street, WORCESTER.

The Book Shop, Temple Street, LLANDRINDOD WELLS.

H.R. Grant & Son, Castle Street, HAY-ON-WYE.

The China Bowl, Market Place, CHIPPENHAM.

The Book Shop (and P.O.) SELBORNE, HANTS.

and negotiations are going on for stockists in other towns.

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#### A PERSONAL NOTE

Mention of Christmas cards reminds me that once again Mrs. Prosser and I have to send warm thanks to all those members who so kindly sent us cards and kind messages at Christmas. We just cannot send to all who thus think of us; so please accept this message of thanks from both of us.

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#### THE CLYRO BARN

The October newsletter told of a proposal to demolish the old stone barns in the centre of Clyro (facing the CHURCH) and of the opposition by bodies such as the S.P.A.B. (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings); Georgian Group; C.P.R.W. (Council for the Protection of Rural Wales); the Victorian Society etc. etc. All these bodies knew of the proposed demolition and registered their protests as far back as June or July. It was not until August 21st that the Kilvert Society was informed, and invited to join the protestors — and the last day for protests to be in by was August 22nd !!. Although the weight of protests prior to August 21st was more than enough to cause the papers to be sent to the Secretary of State for Wales for his decision as to whether to call a Public Enquiry or not — I, on behalf of the Society, registered a protest — and the October newsletter invited members to write in and confirm it. Many did this.

The outcome was the Public Enquiry held at Hay-on-Wye on March 5th; which I attended. It was all most interesting, but it will be some weeks (I am told) before the result is known.

The situation is that the barns (Listed Grade 2 buildings) and the yards surrounding them have been bought by the local motor and agricultural engineer (Mr. R.P. Price) who is now working under cramped conditions just across the road from the barns; and he wants to demolish them and erect some other building in their place — for his workshops. Retaining only the wall next to the road. They want re-roofing and certain repairs and alterations carried out; other than this the experts of the S.P.A.B. maintain that they are in sound condition and perfectly able to be adapted to Mr. Price's purposes at a far less cost than demolition and rebuilding. Mr. Price disagrees. The case on these lines was very ably stated by the representative of the S.P.A.B. at the Enquiry. The fact that Clyro is Kilvert's village, is in the famous Wye Valley and that the barns are such a central feature of Clyro was also put forward on behalf of the S.P.A.B.

I, on behalf of the K.S. supported the representative of the S.P.A.B. and I ended by saying what might be summed up as I was prepared to listen to the experts and that therefore I could not see why the buildings need be demolished despite the fact that Mr. Price's business was a very essential one in an agricultural area, as it could be carried on in them. I stated that this would not happen in adjoining Herefordshire and pointed out how much the village of Clyro matters to people from all over the world, who come in ever increasing numbers to visit Clyro and the area around after reading the fascinating volumes of Kilverts Diary — and who are naturally horrified when landmarks are destroyed. Anything, built to replace the barns, however good it was would only be second-best. During the progress of the ENQUIRY it was brought out that there is little doubt but that Clyro village will soon be designated as a CONSERVATION AREA.

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## MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN.

Clyro nor Hay——nor the whole area around these places, is very far from being sufficiently aware of what prestige Kilverts Diary has given it. Nor what business is brought to the area through the Kilvert connection. IT IS THEREFORE SUGGESTED THAT ALL MEMBERS (AND THEIR FRIENDS) VISITING THE "KILVERT COUNTRY" (WILTSHIRE, TOO) SHOULD LET IT BE KNOWN WHAT HAS BROUGHT THEM TO THE AREA. When you sign a visitors book (Hotel or otherwise) let it be known that you belong to the Kilvert Society or are visiting the district because of the Kilvert interest. Let them know in shops what brings you to these parts.

I like the story of the prominent citizen of Hay-on-Wye who was on holiday in Cornwall, and the local inhabitant he was talking to asked him from whence he came. "From a little place called Hay-on-Wye" he said, "but I don't expect you've ever heard of it". "Oh yes I have" he replied "the capital of the Kilvert Country".

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## OBITUARY

We have lost several valued members since the October newsletter, and have had belated news of one who died in August.

In November we lost a valued old member who formerly lived near Eardisley but in the last few years on the outskirts of Hereford. This was Mrs. M.J. Lloyd — of a Radnorshire farming family, she rarely missed a Kilvert Service (I remember her pleasure when it was at St. Harmon and she and her sisters were able to visit their old home, nearby). Mrs. Lloyd attended the June evening at Hereford Town Hall and at the Cathedral next day, but was not at Bredwardine on October 26th. The funeral was at Eardisley Church and I represented the Society.

Then in mid-December came the sudden death of Mr. Donald Gowing, at the early age of 48. He was Secretary-General of the Musicians Benevolent Fund and therefore much in London. He was FOUNDER of the Abbeydore Festival and had a home in the Golden Valley of Herefordshire, where his parents still live.

Then — but a day or two before Christmas — Mrs. Mary Lane Griffiths died, in Hereford General Hospital, where she had been for many months, though getting around the ward and doing what she could to help others until but a few days before her death. It was February 3rd 1968 that our former President died and Cadwgan (as he always called her — she once said that if he called her Mary she knew he was angry) never got over his loss. She had many kind friends and neighbours (the outstanding one being Mr. Harold Butcher, who must have been her absolute "right-hand", as he was to them both for a long time). Indeed, she always had so many visitors in hospital that my wife and I did not go there as often as if conditions had been otherwise. We both attended the funeral, at which there were many members of the K.S. She was 70. We remember them both as staunch "Kilvertians" and think of services at Llowes, with tea in the schoolroom afterwards, presided over by Mrs. Lane Griffiths and her band of helpers....and what a tea!!

The death in August was of a London member...Mr. H.T.F. Rhodes who, with Mrs. Rhodes, quite often visited Hay and were sometimes there at the right time to join one of our activities. A long obituary notice tells us much that we were unaware of in his lifetime, and illustrates the diverse types of members within the K.S. Mr. Rhodes was a Forensic Chemist, an old member of the British Association of Chemists, Editor of the Journal, and its immediate Past-President. Author of a number of books on Crime, Forgery etc. he worked on technical censorship for the Government 1939/45 and after the war on Document Examination. He held the Diploma of Criminology and was a Hinchley medallist — in short a great authority on crime and criminals. This is just a brief synopsis of the details of him and his career; and will no doubt greatly interest numerous members.

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## THE POETS GATE

Contributions from Wiltshire members are always very welcome, and especially so is one from our good members Robin and Heather Tanner of Kington Langley. Their first contribution was "The Old Mausoleum" in the issue of 12th June 1967, since then there have been several others; and we owe that exquisite Christmas card of the churches of Hardenhuish and Langley Burrell to Robin Tanner. Their house is almost opposite "The Ridge" in Kington Langley, but exactly opposite them is the "Poets Gate" and members will be delighted to know of what they have had done here, and in doing it have provided yet another visible memorial to Francis Kilvert. Their contribution follows on:-

On Saturday, 18th March 1874 Francis Kilvert re-visited "The Ridge" at Kington Langley, where his beloved Ettie Meredith Brown was often to be found, repeating as he passed the old house the poem he had written for her. "How the sight of the double-gabled house and the tall poplars always bring that lovely face back to me with the remembrance of the happy days of last summer before all our trouble came and our separation" he wrote;

contd...



and then continued, "I went on past the head of the steep green lane in the site of the old Chapel and burying place where my great-grandfather was laid to rest... I lingered some time leaning over my favourite gate, the "Poet's Gate", and looking at the lovely view....At length twilight began to fall on the wide and lovely landscape. I turned away with a sigh and a heart full of sad sweet tender memories, and passed over the village green among the pleasant friendly greetings of the kindly village people. I always seem to feel at home among these people in the village of my forefathers".

It was in 1928 that we bought what proved to be "the site of the old Chapel" and built our cottage thereon, when the estate of Walter Coleman was sold. We knew nothing of its history. In the deeds was the name Robert Kilvert, appointed a trustee and executor in 1878 to the estate of the Walter Coleman of that time, and also the name of Edward Newton Kilvert who took his place at his death four years later. Little did we know who these men were -- the diarist's father and his brother "Perch".

But when in 1947 the last remnant of the Coleman estate came on the market we of course knew it as the meadow with the "Poet's Gate" and the view of "the wide and lovely landscape", and we determined to save it from "development" and bought it.

By lucky chance it remains much as it was a century ago. The wild flowers grow unchecked, and cows graze the grass. Pylons now stride across the valley, but fortunately none are visible; only the wires cut across the distant slope. At last we have persuaded our local builder to make a handsome oak field gate of the traditional kind with carved post and beautifully chamfered slats -- once made in N.W. Wiltshire, to replace an ugly iron one. We were able to take the measurements and details of construction from an early nineteenth century gate which we have managed to preserve. A memorial inscription is being incised on slate, and this will soon be fixed into one of the gate panels. It reads:-

This meadow is dedicated to the memory of  
the diarist, The Rev, Francis Kilvert  
1840-1879, who loved this view from  
"The Poet's Gate".

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#### MISS ETTIE MEREDITH BROWN.

Many members have, at different times, said how much they would like to know more about this young lady, and how much they would like to see a photograph of her. Both requests can now be -- to some extent anyway-satisfied. For we have a splendid photograph of "Ettie", taken in 1875, just at the time that Kilvert was writing about her in his Diary, and quite a bit of information about her family and exactly where they lived etc. For both we are indebted to our Vice-President -- Col. E.P. Awdry of Chippenham. When I asked Col. Awdry for any information that he could give about the Meredith Browns I also (rather hopelessly, I felt) said "How splendid it would be if we could get a photograph of her, not as an elderly lady but just at the time when Kilvert was writing of her". Col. Awdry said little, and I had almost forgotten about it; when, just at Christmastime, a large letter came from Chippenham and in it not only the photograph of "Ettie" but the negative too; so it is added to our slowly growing list of photographs of the folk of the Diary which are available to members. But what a story there is behind this photograph and how Col. Awdry came by it!!!

The photograph which Col. Awdry so kindly had "copied" for us came from Norway --from the family album, which is in that country -- with a great nephew of Ettie (it would seem that one of her sisters married a Norwegian). He is a General in their Army and a hero of the resistance, during the occupation of Norway he made many journeys to Great Britain, by submarine, and with a price on his head. What luck it was to ask Col Awdry about Ettie's photograph; for I feel that he is probably the only one who knew who to approach about it!!! Ettie's full name was Henrietta Maria -- she became Mrs. Wright and died on the 5th of February 1910, there were no children. Her sister Ellen died -- unmarried -- on the 19th of March 1920. Now follow Col. Awdry's notes on the family. "Their father-- the Rev. Meredith Brown (died 23rd February 1895) was the first Vicar of Chittoe, he was appointed in 1845 and lived in his own house -- Non Such. Chittoe Village or Hamlet (which in Andrew Drury's map of Wiltshire 1773 appears as CHITWAY) was previously part of the parish of Bishops Cannings, a village some 6 miles away. The Starky family -- owners of Spye Park in the parish (with the permission of the Bishop of the Diocese) built the Church of Chittoe and a new parish was formed from parts of the neighbouring parishes of Bremhill and Purton. The Starky family fell upon difficult times and Spye Park was sold to Captain Spicer who a year or two later built the Vicarage and a new Vicar succeeded Mr. Brown. Non Such (None-Such, in Drury's Wiltshire map) remained in the Meredith Brown family and is the house referred to as Manor House in the Diary. It was Ettie's home and I believe she was born there.

"The Ridge" Kington Langley -- which belonged to the Ashes -- was, I feel convinced, rented by Ettie's elder brother Meredith, whose wife was the "young Mrs. M.B." I have no doubt that Ettie spent much time there, not perhaps wholly unconnected with the near presence of Francis Kilvert".

Note...."The Ridge" is about a mile from Langley Burrell, north of Chippenham and little more than a mile from it. Chittoe lies in the opposite direction and is about 5 miles from Chippenham. The grid reference for Chittoe church (map 157 in the 1" O.S. series-Swindon) is 956666.

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### UNCLE FRANCIS.

Just a few weeks before the arrival of the photograph of Ettie Col. Awdry had very kindly sent along a little theological booklet by the Rev. Francis Kilvert of Bath (described as Minister of St. Mary Magdalenes Chapel, and Chaplain of the General Hospital, Bath) It is dated 1827, printed in Bath by A.E. Binns of Cheap Street and is inscribed "Mr. H. Awdry from the Author". It is dedicated to Edward Barlow Esq. M.D." by his obliged and faithful friend F.K."

This is another valuable addition to the Society's collection of items that we trust will one day go in the hoped-for "Kilvert Museum" — where it would go alongside the splendid volume given by another Vice-President (Mrs. H.A. Feisenberger) as per the item which commences at the foot of page 5 of the newsletter of October last. How everyone will agree with the member who said to me "Wouldn't it be fine if some wealthy "Kilvertian" one day bought and endowed a little house in Hay or in Clyro where some deserving person could live rent free and be caretaker to a small Kilvert Museum".

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### HALF MOON

Miss Phyllis Howell, of Carmarthen, a valued member of the Kilvert Society, has published a booklet of poems with the title Half Moon. It can be obtained from Messrs. V.G. Lodwick & Sons, Ltd., King Street, Carmarthen (price 4/6)

The greater part of the poems have appeared in Country Life, others in the Western Mail or the St. David's Diocesan Gazette. There is a foreword by Sir Ben Bowen Thomas, in which he indicates that Miss Howell's poems "will make us feel at home", "speak simply of lovely things", and are not in the least experimental or difficult. The simple enchantments of country scenes and changing seasons are tinged with a sense of the transitory, and Miss Howell's landscapes seem untouched by the noise and ugliness and anxieties of contemporary life.

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### LOOKING BACKWARDS

Miss Howell of Carmarthen is quite a frequent contributor to the St. David's Diocesan Gazette — the January number of which was sent me by a West Wales member sometime in February. In it is an excellent "write-up" of our booklet Looking Backwards, occupying about 1½ pages. Miss Howell deals with all aspects of this booklet of ours and specially points out the connections between Carmarthen and Kilvert and the Society. It was the Bishop of St. Davids who presented Kilvert with the living of St. Harmon. The preacher at the first Kilvert Society's service at Clyro (1949) was Professor the Rev. D.D. Bartlett, the present Bishop of St. Asaph and a Carmarthen man. In 1954 the address at Llowes was given by Dr. Glyn Simon (who also has Carmarthen connections). He was then Bishop of Swansea & Brecon; later Bishop of Llandaff, and now Archbishop of Wales.

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### TREES BEHIND A WINDOW

This was the heading to an item in the "Daily Telegraph" one day in January. It will be remembered that the newsletter of June last told of a MEMORIAL WINDOW to be put in the church at Eastbury (Berkshire) to the memory of EDWARD THOMAS and of a small donation that the Kilvert Society had made towards the fund. The "Telegraph" tells of how the cost of the special glass that Laurence Whistler is engraving has DOUBLED and also how in order to provide the dark background required yews and beeches and conifers are planted. It is pleasing to know that several of our members sent donations to Mrs. Myfanwy Thomas, and that she herself is now a member of the Kilvert Society.

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### CHRISTOPHER DAWSON.

Last October, Mr. Christopher Dawson celebrated his 80th birthday. The occasion was marked by an article in the Roman Catholic weekly, The Tablet, headed "Tribute to Christopher Dawson", by E.I. Watkin. Mr. Dawson's name will be familiar to Catholic members of the Kilvert Society. They may not know, and other members will be no less interested to know, that Mr. Dawson's mother was Mary Bevan, who Kilvert saw so often at Hay Castle and elsewhere, and to whom there are a good many allusions in the Diary. It may be remembered that in one place he called Mary Bevan "radiant" and spoke of her "beautiful eyes and brow". His parents clearly believed that he was in love with her and hoped to marry her. By kind permission of the Editor of The Tablet, we are able to subjoin here an abridged version of the article about Mr. Dawson that appeared in the issue of 4th October 1969.

"My first acquaintance with Christopher Dawson was in the early summer of 1905, when we met as fellow pupils of a private tutor, the Rector of Bletsoe, Bedfordshire. Though still a boy, Dawson introduced me to writers and ideas that have influenced me ever since, in particular Pater and Shorthouse's John Inglesant. At Oxford we shared rooms during my last year.

When the chair of Roman Catholic Theological Studies at Harrow was created, Dawson was chosen to be its first occupant. How excellently he filled this task of explaining Catholic culture to those brought up in the Protestant tradition of New England is attested by the two volumes of his published lectures, The Formation of Christendom



and The Dividing of Christendom. This chair together with his earlier Gifford Lectures were the due recognition of Dawson's gifts as an historian. Though Dawson is an historian, and an eminent historian, it is in a very special sense. First and last he is an interpreter of human culture in general but most particularly of Christian culture. His original design was to write a consecutive history of culture. Of this The Age of the Gods (1928) would have been the first volume. H.G. Wells, replying to Catholic attacks upon his Outline of History, of which incidentally Dawson's criticism is not devoid of appreciation or sympathy, taunted Catholics with their inability to produce a corresponding world-history in terms of their belief. Had this plan been carried out, Dawson would have achieved the cultural history from a Catholic standpoint which Wells had scoffingly invited. It was however abandoned. Its place has been taken by a profusion of particular studies Dawson contributed extensively to the Dublin Review. Later, thought for a period all too brief, he was himself its editor. It was during his editorship that he assisted Cardinal Hinsley's ecumenical effort, "The Sword of the Spirit", in which the Cardinal enjoyed the whole-hearted support of the Anglican Bishop of Chichester. Its aim was to unite Christians of all denominations on a common platform to defend Christian principles in the war against Hitler, and after the hoped-for victory to promote their social embodiment. Two inter-denominational meetings were held in London at which all present recited together the Lord's Prayer. The initiative failed. Rome rejected Bell's proposals for an ecumenical meeting. When Dawson arrived at Harvard he received the recognition and appreciation to which he was entitled. What however of today? In too many Catholic quarters Dawson and his teachings have been discarded as outdated. Dawson has not been refuted. He is simply disregarded. Sooner or later, however, if the fabric of our human society survives the peril to which it is exposed, Dawson's illuminating interpretation of history, stated moreover with such literary skill, will find an audience that can appreciate both. Even today a brash self-supporting both. Even today a brash self-sufficing cannot permanently sever modern man from his cultural and religious roots, alienate him from his historical inheritance. To guide his returning steps no man is better fitted than Dawson."

#### THE HON. SECRETARY IN SOUTH WALES.

In late September I spent an enjoyable evening with the BRECON SOROPTIMISTS. talking about Kilvert and the Diary and showing slides of many of the people and places concerned to a goodly company of ladies at the Castle of Brecon Hotel. It was interesting to hear that both President and Secretary of the Brecon Soroptimists are descended from people we read of in Kilvert's Diary.

A month later, I repeated talk and slides to a similar gathering of ladies at ABERGAVENNY, this time it was the local BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMENS CLUB and at the Angel Hotel. Our Hon. Treasurer (Mr. J.D. Worsey) came along and rounded off the evening with some well-received readings from the Diary; these ladies were more than usually interested and with questions and conversation the meeting went on to quite a late hour. This pleasant evening was arranged by the Hon. Secretary of the Abergavenny Club - she is also a valued member of the Kilvert Society.

Immediately after the October-Service at Bredwardine my wife and I took a week off for a little Autumn Holiday in South Wales; after a few days with relatives near Cardiff we went on to Swansea to take advantage of a very kind invitation from those excellent K.S. members Mr. and Mrs. J. Evans of Killay (how many times have they journeyed from Swansea to our meetings and church services?) to spend a few days with them. On the second day they most kindly arranged a "Kilvert evening", inviting the members living in the Swansea area plus some interested friends -- some 15 or so all told. Result -- a jolly evening and two new members: a few more in that area and they will be able to vie with London and with Birmingham and arrange occasional gatherings of the local group.....in the City of Swansea.

Next day we spent in GOWER, visiting some of the places that Kilvert writes about in the Diary. First a call at what is left of Killay station (the platform is still there) where Kilvert was met off the train when visiting the Westhorps at Ilston Rectory (it is only by carefully reading the Diary that one realises that Mrs. Westthorp was a sister to Mrs. Venables of Clyro). Then to Ilston, still almost as peaceful and secluded (down narrow lanes with sharp corners and steep hills; between two main roads) as when Kilvert was there. After a look at the ancient church we sought the Rectory, now the Old Rectory - gleaming white on its hillock above the church by its stream. No-one at home so I photographed it without permission and left an explanatory note and some Kilvert "literature"!!! Then on to Oxwich, Llanmadoc and Cheriton--all so well worth a visit, especially after reading the appropriate passages in the Diary; and back to our kind hosts via the coast road overlooking so many of the beautiful bays of Gower which Kilvert so charmingly describes.

On returning home there was one more pleasant surprise...a letter from Ilston Old Rectory and in it a message saying how much the present owners enjoyed Kilvert's descriptions of his stay there at different times, a cheque, and a better photograph than any I was able to take, for it includes both church and house. Thus we add two more to our Swansea area members, and two that we specially welcome....His Honour Judge Rowe Harding and Mrs. Rowe Harding.



#### NEW MEMBERS — and a MOST ODD STORY

During the last few months a number of new members have come into the Society, from places as widely distant as Cornwall and Norfolk, Durham and Essex. More London members and several more Wiltshire members too (very pleasing this). But the story behind how a certain new member living in Stourbridge (Worcs.) came to join us MUST be told.....this new member is a RAILWAY ENTHUSIAST and belongs to the Severn Valley Railway Co. (they have acquired the station at Bridgnorth, are building up a collection of steam locomotives etc. etc. there and hope to eventually acquire the line between Bridgnorth and Bewdly and run steam trains on it again). One of the many ways in which they raise money for their projects is by selling waste paper. Our new man was helping to unload some at Bewdly Station one day when he noticed a sheet of green paper that had fallen out of a bale and put it in his pocket to read at leisure. IT TURNED OUT TO BE ONE OF OUR GREEN LEAFLETS — ADVERTISING OUR BOOKLETS ETC.—and the result was that he not only sent for some but joined the Society too!!!

(No prizes for stranger stories — but please send them in for future newsletters.)

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#### MR. VENABLES GOES TO RUSSIA.

A number of members have asked for extracts from the book on this subject from which part of the PREFACE was quoted in the October newsletter. Two pages were prepared for this newsletter, but were crowded out in favour of a number of short items, but it will surely be in the June number.

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#### THE BIRMINGHAM AREA MEMBERS

This group are keeping up their more-or-less quarterly gatherings — at the houses of several different generous members who throw their homes open for these evenings. My wife and I attended the meeting of October 31st (in Moseley)....when a number of other members from Hereford and from Clyro also came up for the occasion. The main item that evening was a paper by Mr. C.H. Harvey on "Kilvert, the Man and his Diary" to which a large roomful listened intently before partaking of the tempting refreshments laid on by our generous hosts.

The January meeting was at another members home — this time in Northfield — Mr.H.Butcher and Mr. A.E. Bond were the only Hereford members this time, but they took a projector and the Kilvert Film with them, something that the company present much enjoyed — I am told. A good company, a large room and some more generous hosts added up to another very pleasant evening.

Details of future events can be had from the organiser of these Birmingham and District members gatherings... Mr. E.F. Jelfs of 8 Clarence Road, Birmingham 13.

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#### VOLUMES OF THE DIARY.

Several members want odd volumes of Kilverts Diary; particularly Volume 1 and Volume 3; and the member on whose behalf the item appeared on page 4 of the October newsletter still requires a complete set of any edition; it is strange that there was no response to this query — for there must be many sets of former editions without the index that are now redundant after their owners have bought the newest edition. Please write to 23 Broomy Hill Hereford, stating price required.

The special copy of a first edition of Volume 1; with Kilverts photograph among the front papers (it is understood that only 500 just like this were ever printed) is still unsold. It has been autographed by Dr. Plomer and is identical to the copy that made ten guineas at Hereford Town Hall last June. What offers?

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#### THE CLYRO ALMS BOX WALL SAFES.

It has already been stated that the Society is giving CLYRO CHURCH these WALL SAFES to mark the 21st Anniversary of the first ever service (1949) held there by the Society. They will be dedicated at the COMMEMORATION SERVICE of June 28th.

Now whilst the Society is perfectly willing to pay the whole of the cost of these safes, and the fitting of them, from funds, IT IS KNOWN THAT THERE ARE ALWAYS GENEROUS MEMBERS WHO LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO ALL SUCH PROJECTS, AND INDEED WOULD FEEL ANNOYED IF THEY WERE NOT GIVEN THE CHANCE TO SO PARTICIPATE. Any contribution that such members would like to make will be gladly received — by either of the Society's officers. Please state quite clearly that it is for the CLYRO WALL SAFES FUND.

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