

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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16th June, 1971.

Dear Member,

The April newsletter told you that the ANNUAL COMMEMORATION SERVICE is this year at HAY-ON-WYE—on SUNDAY the 4th JULY at 3 o'clock, and at the kind invitation of the Vicar of Hay—the Rev. I.Ll. Davies, M.A., who will conduct the service. Mr. Davies is a member of the Kilvert Society. Here are the further details.

The ADDRESS will be given by.....The Rev. Canon W.E. JONES, M.A., a former Dean of Brecon, who now lives near Tenby in Pembrokeshire. Canon Jones has written out much of his life story for us, and given his permission for it to be publicised; this will be found overleaf and members who read it will undoubtedly agree that it would be hard to find anyone more suitable to give the ADDRESS this year at HAY, in the CHURCH which FRANCIS KILVERT SO OFTEN ATTENDED (AND SOMETIMES PREACHED IN) and where his friend the Rev. W.L. Bevan was Vicar for so many years.

The LESSONS will be read by Dr. WILLIAM PLOMER, our President; and by Major DAVID GIBSON-WATT, M.C., M.P.—Minister of State, Welsh Office, a Vice-President of the Kilvert Society.

The ACT OF REMEMBRANCE will be by Mr. D.T.W. PRICE, M.A., of Shrewsbury and St. David's College, Lampeter—Reader in the Diocese of St. David's—a member of the Kilvert Society.

This year's COMMEMORATION SERVICE will be quite different to those of previous years, for we are following the pattern suggested by the Vicar of Hay, who has had considerable experience of various Commemoration Services. It is possible that this style of service may be adopted for future years.

AFTERWARDS.....TEA will be available at THE SWAN HOTEL (corner of Brecon Road and St. Mary's Road - which leads down to the Church) where arrangements have been made for LARGE NUMBERS TO HAVE TEA AT A REASONABLE CHARGE.

THE HAY BOOKSHOP (THE LARGEST SECONDHAND BOOKSHOP IN THE WORLD) will be OPEN for inspection for many hours both before and after the SERVICE; it is in the OLD CINEMA, almost opposite the Swan Hotel. It might be a very good idea if a good crowd went over to THE HAY BOOKSHOP straight away and so saved congestion at the Swan by taking their TEA later on.

The final event of the evening will be a READING by DR. PLOMER—this will take place on the lawn in front of HAY CASTLE (by kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Booth). It will start punctually at 6 o'clock, this should give ample time for all who so wish to have TEA, visit the BOOK SHOP, and be at the Castle by 6. (See note on a following page re the CHILDREN'S COMPETITION.)

CAR PARKING—There is very little room for cars to park in the vicinity of St. Mary's Church at Hay. Members and friends are therefore advised to use the Council Car Park (a very big one) in Oxford Road—opposite the entrance gates to the Castle; this will mean leaving home a little earlier, for it is a walk of about 500 yards (downhill) from this Car Park to the Church.

As usual there will be a MOTOR-COACH from Hereford, leaving the TOWN HALL in St. Owen Street at 1-30 p.m. (PROMPT). It will be a YEOMANS coach. The fare will be 40p per person. Seats can be booked at Wyval Ltd., Photographic Dealers, Bridge Street, Hereford (or with the Hon. Secretary). Please book by or before Monday the 28th June. IT WILL BE MUCH APPRECIATED IF THOSE BOOKING WILL AT THE SAME TIME KINDLY PAY FOR THEIR SEATS IN THE COACH.

Finally, a reminder from the Hon. Treasurer (Mr. J.D. Worsey) that he would be glad to receive all subscriptions that are due; or overdue!! The minimum is now 50p per annum, apart from the concessions outlined in the April newsletter. Will members please note that RECEIPTS will - whenever possible - be held back to come with the next newsletter, and so economise on postage costs.

Yours sincerely,

C.T.O. Prosser

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

POSTERS -----many of these newsletters will have with them a POSTER re this SERVICE at Hay-on-Wye, a few will have more than one poster.

WILL YOU PLEASE DISPLAY IT (OR TAKE IT SOMEWHERE TO BE DISPLAYED) AS PROMINENTLY AS POSSIBLE?

We want to see HAY PARISH CHURCH filled for this Commemoration Service, and these posters help tremendously, for many interested people will then come who are not members of the Society. But POSTERS have another use, that is to let it be known that there is a Kilvert Society; some posters will therefore be sent to members living far away from this district, with the hope that they too will be prominently displayed. Public Libraries are good places, the porch of your local church is also very good. Please do your best, anyway.

NOTES and NEWS...by the Hon. Secretary...plus contributions from members.

CANON W.E. JONES

Now follows a good portion of the letter which Canon Jones wrote me after he had accepted the invitation to give the ADDRESS at HAY-ON-WYE on 4th July. He gave me his permission to publish all of it, if need be; here is most of it - and those who read it carefully will without doubt agree that we are fortunate indeed that he is free to come to Hay that day.

"You ask for some details about myself. I think I had better write down some of the things I mentioned rather scrappily when we met a few evenings ago. After graduating at Jesus College, Oxford, in 1922 I was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of St. David's, and went to Brecon as curate of Brecon. In 1923 the Priory Church became the Cathedral of the new Diocese of Swansea & Brecon, and I was ordained Priest by Bishop Bevan, at the first Ordination held at Brecon Cathedral in 1923. I stayed at Brecon until 1928 as curate and Minor Canon at the Cathedral, and left in October to join the Brotherhood of St. Boniface in the Diocese of Bunbury, Western Australia. I stayed on as Priest-in-Charge of the Kendinin Area in that Diocese for five years as I had promised the S.P.G. and returned to Brecon as Diocesan Missioner for Bishop Bevan at the end of 1933. Bishop Bevan died in February 1934. In 1935 the Archbishop of Perth (Dr. Le Fanu) persuaded me to return to Western Australia as Rector of Cottesloe, and I stayed in the Perth Diocese until 1949, when Dean Roberts of Brecon resigned, and Bishop Williamson of Brecon invited me to return there as Dean. In 1964 my rheumatoid arthritis became more troublesome, and I felt I should make way for someone younger at the Deanery, and the Provincial Board of the Church in Wales appointed me to the Parish of Penally, (near Tenby). Last year I reached the age limit, and for the past year my wife and I have lived on here in Penally.

When I left Brecon in 1928 my brother who was then curate of Crickhowell, took my place as Minor Canon of Brecon Cathedral. Before leaving for Australia in 1935 I was married to a Brecon lady - Miss Jones Powell - so that we were both well known in Brecon when I returned to the Deanery in 1950! As curate of Brecon I saw a great deal of Bishop Bevan, and shared some of the wonderful work which he did as chaplain of the Church Lads Brigade. It was a sad blow for me when he died so suddenly just as I was starting work as his Diocesan Missioner in 1934.

I was born and bred in Aberystwyth, and as I have told you, frequently heard my Mother talk about 'Mr. Kilvert'. But that part of the story I must leave till later. My Father and Mother grew up together as children in Aberystwyth. My Father was a sea captain, his ship was torpedoed in the first world war, in the Irish Sea, and all were lost. My Mother 'Lizzie Jones' lived on until the age of 84 and died in 1948 - just two years before I returned to Brecon as Dean."

Hon. Sec's notes---if those who have copies of "Collected Verse" will turn to page 29 they will find Kilvert's poem "THE TANYBWLCH BEACH", written by him whilst on holiday at Aberystwyth. The sixth verse tells of children round a fire kindled on Tanybwlch beach---"and Lizzie was Queen of the revellers there". Canon Jones has revealed to me that it was this little girl who became his mother, and who retained her happy memories of Francis Kilvert throughout her long life.

THE ABERYSTWYTH OBSERVER. Francis Kilvert wrote in his Diary---on Tuesday 7th January 1879---"Lizzie Jones sent me a copy of the Aberystwyth Observer with my lines in it on 'The Tanybwlch Beach'." (page 448 in the third volume).

BISHOP BEVAN---Not all readers of Kilvert's Diary know that "Teddy Bevan" (who Kilvert writes about on several occasions) became the first Bishop of the new Swansea & Brecon Diocese when this was created - in 1923. He is, of course, the "Bishop Bevan" who Canon Jones knew so well when he was curate of Brecon. An amusing entry in the Diary in which Teddy Bevan figures is that of 7th July 1871 (372/3 in Volume One). He rode over to Clyro on his donkey with a note from Mrs. Bevan, asking Kilvert to dine with them at the Castle that evening, as some Fusilier officers had turned up in Hay "to the excitement and delight of the young ladies

at the Castle." Kilvert slyly hoped that the Hay fever wouldn't turn to scarlet fever!!! Other entries concerning Teddy Bevan appear in Volume Two.

HAY CASTLE.....there are no less than 52 references to Hay Castle in the index to Kilvert's Diary; and about 112 references to the Bevan family who lived there. No wonder Francis Kilvert referred to the Castle as "my second home"----how true is this statement can only be realised by going through the three volumes and looking up the many times that Francis Kilvert lunched, dined, slept, played croquet etc. etc. at Hay Castle. It is a real "eye-opener" to do this. I will quote just two of the very many bits about Kilvert's visits to Hay Castle. St. Swithin's Day, 15 July, 1870.."To Hay Church at 6-30. Afterwards I went to the Castle and found Mrs. Bevan in the drawing room." But despite his many visits he was obviously always welcome, for on 26 June 1871 we read "I went to Hay by the fields and called at the Castle. Mrs. Bevan accused me of deserting them, and made me stay to dinner." These are both from the first volume; later on we can read of Kilvert coming up from Langley Burrell to dine and sleep at the Castle. Finally, right at the end of the third volume (p.453/4) he comes up from Bredwardine on the Tuesday and is driven back home after lunch next day. There are, of course, vast numbers of references to the town of Hay.

HAY CHAMBER OF TRADE

Members who know the Grant family and have happy memories of chats with the late Mr. John Grant will be pleased to learn that his eldest son (also John) is the current CHAIRMAN of Hay Chamber of Trade---the youngest that it has ever had.

HAY SCHOOLS--THE CHILDREN'S COMPETITION

Following the custom of offering prizes (book tokens) for the children of local schools wherever the Annual Commemoration Service is held, both of the Hay Primary Schools were written to and asked if they would like to participate. Only one of them took up the offer (Brecon Road School--- Mrs. Nesta Lewis, Headmistress) and (I understand) the children are working on some theme that links up with the Diary in some way. Their efforts are being judged by Mr. H.R. Evans, Headmaster of Clyro Primary School, assisted by Miss M. Mantle; and we shall hope to see the three prizewinners at Hay Castle at 6 o'clock on July 4th in order that Dr. Plomer may hand them their awards.

HAY CHURCH---VISITORS BOOK

Another custom is to offer a Visitors Book to any church where the Annual Service is held. Hay Church already has one, so the Society is giving them what the Vicar of Hay suggested as an alternative....a copy of the NEW ENGLISH BIBLE (OLD TESTAMENT). It will be suitably inscribed to record this July 4th SERVICE.

OUR PRESIDENT

I like to be able to give members some details of Dr. Plomer's movements and engagements, but this time left it rather late in writing to him to ask for some. The reply only arrived as this newsletter was being put together. By the time members get it some of these events will be over; none the less they will be a source of interest, of this I am quite sure.

Dr. Plomer first mentions the "BOOK BANG" in Bedford Square--from 28 May to 11 June There has been much about it in the press. On the opening day Dr. Plomer was one of the poets reading poems specially commissioned for the occasion; on 2 June he was reading on his own; on 3 June he was presenting this year's Cholmondeley Awards for Poetry, and the Alice Hunt Bartlett prize awarded by the Poetry Society. On 23 June he opens an exhibition at the National Book League, it is called "The Rediscovery of George Gussing". (About 25 years ago Dr. Plomer wrote the Introduction to reprints of two of Gussing's novels, In the Year of Jubilee and A Life's Morning.) On 26 June he is due to preside at the annual luncheon of the Poetry Society (he is president, and the vice-presidents include Lord Goodman and Lord Eccles). The April newsletter mentioned his engagements at the Aldeburgh Festival in June and at the Stroud Festival in October----but in between we have him all to ourselves, at HAY on 4 July!!!!!!

KILVERT'S "LODGINGS" at CLYRO..... A NEW PLAQUE?

It is many years since the Society put the small plaque (beside the doorway that faces the road through Clyro village) at Ashbrook. It is small and relatively inexpensive; in those days our funds were low and anything but a small plaque might have met with a refusal. The suggestion has now been made that the time has come for something much more worthy to be placed on Ashbrook instead of this small and now rather shabby plaque; and with this suggestion Mr. and Mrs. Le Quesne heartily agree, for we must never forget that Kilvert wrote the greater part of his Diary

during his seven years at Clyro, mostly at Ashbrook. The queries will now be.. what type? and how much? We seek suggestions from members, and offers of financial aid from anyone wishing to participate. All we have yet looked at is the drawing of the large round plaque which the City of Hereford is proposing to put on houses where famous citizens once lived, this is of fibre glass, round, and with very nice lettering--and quite expensive. But perhaps a round plaque does not give sufficient scope for the rather larger number of words that we may want to put on a plaque re Francis Kilvert.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR NEWSLETTERS

More of these would be much appreciated.....on any subject that in any way links up with Francis Kilvert, the Kilvert family, the Diary, the countryside, or with any of the people that we read about in the Diary. Furthermore, items that do not really come under any of these headings, but which will still be of interest to members, are also welcomed. Long items, medium length items, and short items are all welcome---and will all be used sooner or later. The only stipulation is that they are worded so that they can be held over until a later newsletter if crowded out of the current one; if this is kept in mind they can often be held over until the following year (if necessary) without being "dated". It is most useful to have a "stock" of items of all types stored away ready for use as and when required!! Please send yours along now.

MADLEY (HEREFORDSHIRE) FESTIVAL 1971

A year ago the June newsletter gave publicity to the 1970 Madley Festival, with the result that at least a dozen or so members made the journey and thoroughly enjoyed the musical feast provided for them, maybe many more attended that we do not know of. This year we are happy to again try to give them a little help. It starts on Monday, 21st June with a CIDER AND CHEESE PARTY in the Parish Hall at 8 p.m. with DAVID FRANKLIN present and giving a talk; then on the 25th, 26th and 27th there are CONCERTS, MUSIC and the Festival Service, all in the Parish Church. The Vicar of Madley is our member, the Rev. W.L. Paterson; full details (and booking) with the Festival Secretary...Mr. T.W. Lloyd, Tyberton, near Madley, Hereford.

MORE CHAPTERS FROM THE KILVERT SAGA

As predicted in the newsletter of 9th April these booklets (they should really be called paperback books, for they have 128 pages with 9 illustrations - one of these being a photograph of the fine likeness of the Rev. Robert Kilvert that was done by his brother Edward in 1840) have sold so well that the first batch that we had printed are almost all gone. Members and friends have bought them, by post and at gatherings of the Society in different places; and many have been sold through advertisements in the "Times Literary Supplement" and in "Country Quest".....the furthest enquiry coming from Canada, and another from Portugal, whilst Public Libraries in a number of towns and cities have sent for one or two copies. The few still on hand will undoubtedly all be gone long before the Commemoration Service at HAY-on-WYE on 4th July. A second batch has been ordered and will be in production by about the time that this newsletter gets around; they are promised for the end of June, so we shall have them on sale at HAY. BUT THE PRICE WILL BE HIGHER65p, plus 5p if posted. Meanwhile orders will be executed at the old price of 50p (plus 5p if by post) AS LONG AS STOCKS OF THE FIRST BATCH LAST.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

THE CORNISH REVIEW - has sold well, but there are enough here at present to meet orders for some weeks ahead; the price is 25p plus 2¹/₂p postage. There will be no more when all are sold. Members are reminded that the long article on Francis Kilvert's HOLIDAY IN CORNWALL is the main feature of interest in this magazine.

COLLECTED VERSE, Kilvert's 55 poems.....42¹/₂p, plus 5p by post.

LOOKING BACKWARDS..so much about Mrs. Kilvert; their homecoming to Bredwardine; St. Harmon - of which there is so little in the Diary; Francis Kilvert's death and funeral, etc. etc.-----37¹/₂p, plus 2¹/₂p by post.

KILVERT & THE WORDSWORTH CIRCLE..traces the Wordsworthian references in the Diary (illustrated) and has other items (hitherto unpublished) - by Kilvert.....37¹/₂p plus 2¹/₂p if posted (Just re-printed).

THE "SOLITARY" OF LLANBEDR - with Kilvert's RADNORSHIRE LEGENDS & SUPERSTITIONS. Re-prints 25p, plus 2¹/₂p by post.

KILVERT'S DIARY

The September newsletter announced that Messrs. Jonathan Cape Ltd. had agreed to the Society carrying small stocks of both the 3 volumes and of the abridged edition, following many members complaints that they could buy neither in their local shops. Orders soon came in for both and all have been despatched. Now we are informed by Capes that their stocks of the 3 volumes are completely exhausted. They are re-printing, and by mid-September the 3 volumes will be available again. Meanwhile we have a number of the abridged edition (paperback) and these can be posted without delay; the price is 95p per copy and we have found a way of packing them so that they can be posted for but 10p extra.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

The newest card (Broad Street HAY-----many years ago and therefore very much as Francis Kilvert knew it) was delivered just in time to be on show at the A.G.M.--where a number of packets of these cards were sold, and more by post afterwards. It is a most attractive card, and will no doubt be most popular.

Prices are...5 for 22½p, or 10 for 42½p. Postage is 2½p for every 5 cards. Cards of Bredwardine (Old Vicarage and the Church); Clyro (Church in 1865 and Village last century); and Wiltshire Churches (Hardenhuish & Langley Burrell); are also available, at above prices. Assorted packets can be supplied.

The new HAY card (only) is also available just with "Best Wishes" - so that it can be used for occasions other than Christmas. Prices as above, and in each case this includes envelopes.

Why not send for yours NOW and avoid the rush later on?

Christmas cards will be on sale at HAY on July 4th (after TEA) alongside our selection of booklets.

THE A.G.M. and SOCIAL EVENING

This annual event is always a popular one, but this year (on Wednesday the 28th April) it seemed to "go" better than ever. Perhaps because there was so much variety in the many items that we managed to pack into three hours. Attendance was above average, more than 80 coming from far and near.....a party from Birmingham; members from Swansea; several from Worcestershire, from Gloucestershire and from Shropshire; a lady member who comes quite often - from Aberdovey; some new members from Brecon; a number from Radnorshire; and, of course, many from Hereford and round about. Mr. F.R.C. Hermon (Committee Chairman) took the Chair, welcomed members and then called for us all to stand for a few moments in tribute to those who had died since the last meeting. After a few words from Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer (Mr. Worsey was complimented on the Statement of Accounts) there came the election of officers. All V.P.'s were re-elected, and two new ones added to the list, these were specially welcomed - being grandchildren of the Diarist's brother ("Perch") - Canon R.W. Kilvert, M.A. of Portsmouth and Miss M.L. Kilvert, M.A. of Woodbridge, Suffolk. The Hon. Treasurer, Ass't. Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary were then re-elected; and so was the Committee, with the addition of Mr. M. West and Mrs. L. West, both of Moorhampton (Hfds.). Thus the "business" part of the evening was concluded within half an hour of starting, as is usual - and the rest of the evening was free for items in lighter vein. Mr. J.D. Worsey then read a few passages from the Diary and from the new booklet "More Chapters from the Kilvert Saga"--selected with special emphasis on Francis Kilvert's visits to Oxford, when he goes to his old College - Wadham; and on the Rev. Robert Kilvert's account of life at Oriel some 40 or so years previously. This led on to Mrs. Peters (Asst. Hon. Treas.) taking bookings for the coach to Oxford on May 16th, when we were to be taken over Wadham by a member, and would no doubt have a look at Oriel too. Then we got the Dean of Hereford (The Very Rev. N.S. Rathbone) on to the platform for some light discussion on some points that crop up in the Diary; to be followed by the Rev. L.W. Wray (who was at his first A.G.M. - for though he has been a member for some years has been Vicar of Belton in Leicestershire for many years, and only just retired to live near Ross-on-Wye). Mr. Wray ministered in the Llanthony valley as a young man and has a fund of stories of that remote valley almost half a century ago, which we hope to hear on some future occasion, now he merely whetted our appetites for them!!! Here we broke off for refreshments, served as usual by some of the lady members, and much enjoyed. The first speaker afterwards was the Vicar of Clyro (the Rev. T.J. Lewis) who told of the large number of visitors to Clyro church and jokingly referred to the number of pencils that disappear from the vicinity of the visitors book (this is referred to in the item that follows this account of the A.G.M. etc.). Then the Vicar of Hay-on-Wye (the Rev. I. Ll. Davies) spoke briefly on the July Commemoration Service in his church, and assured us of a warm welcome to Hay.

Mr. J.C. Hockin of Kidderminster was at his first A.G.M. and it was good to have him with us, for he is of the Hockin family of Tullimaar - and of Langley Burrell, though they were at Taunton when his father was born and Francis Kilvert journeyed there to baptize him (P.292 in Vol.2. December 14th 1872). Mr. Hockin spoke of his family and of Tullimaar. Next came the Rev. Roger Williams of Puddlestone (Hfds.) who drew our attention to the fact that there is a bit of "Kilvert Country" adjoining him---Leysters and Bockleton and St. Michaels and Tenbury Wells, all places that Kilvert wrote of after a visit in that district; this we noted, maybe for a visit on some future occasion. This was followed by a talk on Kilvert's visit to Cornwall given by a new member of the Society, Mr. Ronald Davies, who is Senior Lecturer in English at Hereford College of Education; a most interesting subject, and we hope to have a summary of it published either in this newsletter or in the next (September). The final item was by our member, the Rev. W.L. Paterson, Vicar of Madley (Hfds.) - this was a show of some very beautiful slides, of scenes in and around Herefordshire, the Wye from its source, the Llanthony valley, and much else that links up with what we read of in Kilvert's Diary. Mr. Paterson had recorded his accompanying talk and he showed the slides to coincide with the talk as his tape recorder revolved.....a masterly performance which held his listeners as if spellbound. The Chairman brought the evening to a close with votes of thanks to all who had provided another happy evening.

NEWSPAPER REPORTS

Someone high up in the publishing world (in London) once said to me "The further you can keep away from newspaper men the better for the Society"---and I often wonder if he is right!!!

We had a press representative at the recent A.G.M. & Social Evening; but it is obvious that many members do not think much of the report that appeared in the local paper, for I have had numerous telephone calls, letters and personal remarks about it. The heading "FANS FLOCK TO KILVERT VILLAGE" has displeased many, who resent being so classified. Others point out that the Vicar of Clyro's joking remark about losing pens and pencils surely did not merit the eye-catching first whole paragraph which it got!!! It is several years since we had anyone of the press at this annual function; then the report made it seem that the fact of the Society having a satisfactory bank balance was the main theme of the Meeting and the most important matter discussed!!! Then, as now, criticism poured in; by phone, letter and in person.

It will be long years before the man from a certain Birmingham paper is forgotten. He who wanted to see something of "Kilvert country" and the places mentioned in the Diary. We made up a party (and he joined it) and went walking on Clyro Hill ---all arranged for his benefit. The result? A nasty sneering column in the newspaper he was writing for. Someone once said that newspapers and newspaper men just don't understand what the Kilvert Society is all about, perhaps they are right!!!

AN AUTUMN SERVICE

In 1969 we celebrated the 21st Anniversary of the founding of the Kilvert Society with the evening in Hereford Town Hall, and next day in Hereford Cathedral, that was in June---and in October of the same year an ANNIVERSARY SERVICE was held at Bredwardine, for the first held there by the Society was in 1948. In 1970 it was Clyro's turn for an ANNIVERSARY SERVICE - for it was in 1949 that we held the first there. This year there should really be something similar at St. Harmon for it was in 1950 that the first was there, with the memorial desk unveiled by Lady Venables Llewelyn (the baby whose birth in 1870 caused such celebrations in Clyro). But an enquiry has resulted in a letter from the Rev. D.A. Jones (the same Vicar as in 1950) that he intends retiring this summer and cannot therefore make any arrangements for the Autumn Service that we enquired about.....The Church at St. Harmon is not big enough for a summer service nowadays, with the very large congregations that come each year wherever it is, so we had to enquire about an autumn service, when less attend. So St. Harmon waits for some future year. But whilst the reply from Mr. Jones of St. Harmon was awaited we had an invitation from MOCCAS to hold our AUTUMN SERVICE there; and MOCCAS IT IS TO BE.....on Sunday afternoon (see note below) We shall then hope to help towards the cost of restoring their CHURCH ORGAN---that very organ about which members wrote in newsletters last year....one visiting member being from Chippenham and the other from Norfolk, and both very much "taken" with it. This is just a preliminary announcement; full details will be in the next newsletter. Many members have visited Moccas Church and have been delighted with it and its situation; it will surely be filled to capacity on the day. It

normally holds but 100, but I expect the good folk of Moccas will provide chairs to get as many more seated as is at all possible.

The date cannot be decided upon in time to be announced in this newsletter; it will be either the 19th of September or the 10th of October; it will be settled before 4th July and given out at HAY; with full details in the September newsletter.

JOURNEY THROUGH BRITAIN

A Warwickshire member - in a note enclosed with their cheque for this year's subscription - suggests that this book by John Hillaby, and now available in paperback, would interest members generally. His journey takes him through much of the "Kilvert Country" and on page 99 he says "Clifford is under a double spell. It is in the Kilvert Country, near Clyro - the home of that clergyman-diarist who found life such a 'curious and wonderful thing' that he could not let it go unrecorded".

OXFORD-----SUNDAY 16th MAY 1971

This is surely a day that will be long remembered by the 90 or so members who made the journey by coach or by car in order to take part in the tour of Wadham College under the guidance of Mr. James Feisenberger and afterwards to attend evensong in the College Chapel (with tea at the Randolph Hotel between whiles)-----all just as announced in the April newsletter; except that what could not be anticipated was the beautiful day that we had for it, clear and sunny but still cool enough to be very pleasant everywhere. Those of us who came on the coach from Hereford (Herefordshire and Radnorshire members) had a delightful journey over the Cotswolds, with marvellous visibility - and even with a long lunch stop in Stow-on-the-Wold got to Oxford so far ahead of time that we used the coach to tour Oxford and thus see much more than by walking, and still got to Wadham ahead of the appointed time for meeting our hosts. There we met many more who had come by car--from London, Birmingham, Bath, Langley Burrell, Hampshire, Surrey - and so on, not forgetting those who had perhaps made the longest journey of all, four of our Swansea members. After greeting Mr. and Mrs. Feisenberger and James we proceeded inside, and immediately noticed the statues of Nicholas and Dorothy Wadham high up on the facing wall as we entered the beautiful quadrangle (with James I above them); they were Somerset folk and it was built by masons from Somerset - more than 300 years ago - and can thus be termed a West Country College. Mr. Feisenberger told us much of its history and piloted us into Chapel, Hall, Library, etc, etc. It was perhaps in Hall that we thought most about Francis Kilvert and his years at Wadham (1859 to 1862) for when Mr. Feisenberger read the passage from Volume 3 (p.313) - where Kilvert dines at the High Table - many of us were sitting round it or leaning against it!! The splendid roof and the many pictures were much admired. Then outside to stroll around the extensive grounds and gardens - no doubt more than usually beautiful this sunny afternoon in May. The copper beech which "spread a purple gloom in the corner" (p.22 in Vol.3) is a most magnificent tree, surely the biggest that most of us had ever seen? It was now time to meander through some of Oxford's streets to the Randolph Hotel for tea; here to be joined by Dr. William Plomer and his host Mr. John Sparrow; the good tea over our President thanked "the Feisenbergers" on behalf of us all for suggesting and arranging this splendid day which we so much enjoyed. But it was not yet over--after tea Mr. James Feisenberger conducted a party around some of the other Colleges, with special attention to Oriel, for this is where the Rev. Robert Kilvert was for some years in the 1820's. Another beautiful quadrangle, with its clock ticking away, giving rise to speculation as to which room the Diarist's father occupied, for he was kept awake at night by the ticking and striking of that very clock (see the Rev. Robert Kilbert's MEMOIRS in 'More Chapters from the Kilvert Saga'). Then back to Wadham and into the College Chapel (with its lovely screen, roof, and windows) for evensong. Much could be said about this, which I am sure all present enjoyed--good singing by the choir, and an ADDRESS, which riveted the attention of all, - by Mr. A.O.J. Cockshut (a summary of which can be found on another page). The service itself conducted by the College Chaplain, the Rev. J.O. Makepeace (who turned out to be an old colleague of our member Mr. D.T.W. Price of Shrewsbury and Lampeter---no doubt they were at Keble College together). So ended this most memorable day in Oxford; but many of us took another look in Wadham gardens, and especially at that huge copper beech now almost dazzling in the evening sun - before boarding our coach or entering our cars for home. Our Hereford party were rewarded with another good journey across the Cotswolds, still clear and bright in the evening sunshine; but the "long line

of the Black Mountains" had almost merged into night before Hereford was reached.

THE WOOTTON TABLET

There is still nothing to report re this unhappy affair. The last we heard from the Oxford Diocesan Office was that they were still awaiting a reply to their letter sent to the firm of monumental masons concerned, in which they asked why they had proceeded before permission was granted. On our way to Oxford on 16th May we took the coach from Hereford via Wootton, in order for those who did not attend the service there last September to see the village and the church. We noted that the tablet is propped up against a pillar at the west end of the church. We can only hope that a solution can be reached in time for better news for members generally and subscribers in particular to be given in the September newsletter.

IN WADHAM COLLEGE CHAPEL

Here is the promised summary of the ADDRESS (Mr. Cockshut called it a TALK) given in Wadham Chapel by our Oxford member Mr. A.O.J. Cockshut in the evening of that memorable Sunday in May described on another page of this newsletter. Mr. Godfrey Davies took a tape-recording of the whole of it, but it was far simpler to get Mrs. Cockshut to make a summary of it from her husband's notes, and for doing this we give her our grateful thanks.

A.O.J. spoke of his difficulty in addressing both the Kilvert Society, many of whose members would know the diaries by heart, and also listeners from the University who might not know anything about them. He would try to compromise by speaking of Oxford in Kilvert's time, and in doing so would bear in mind the advice of the Duke of Wellington, a former Chancellor of the University - "Say what you've got to say, don't quote Latin, and sit down".

Oxford when Kilvert was up in the early 1860's, was, as cricket teams used to be, divided into Gentlemen and Players. The Gentlemen drank, hunted, gambled, and from time to time smashed a great deal of glass and never on any account worked and came away with a fourth class degree or a pass; the Players worked. The difficulty arose when a young man attempted to belong to both worlds. There was the instance of Ruskin, entered as a Gentleman Commoner at Christ Church, at a time when that college was the preserve of the wealthy and idle nobility. He at one time submitted an essay so distinguished that his tutor asked him to read it out in Hall. Whereupon his outraged contemporaries told him that it was unthinkable for a Gentleman Commoner to write an essay at all, or if he did it should be only twelve lines long, and that it should never be read aloud. Ruskin took the hint, and the offence was not repeated.

In Francis Kilvert's time the immense stir caused by the Oxford Movement had died down, and Newman had left the Anglican Church for the Church of Rome some 15 years before, but his father who had been at Oriel, where Newman had been a tutor, remembered him - "the sweetest human voice I ever heard, the voice of John Henry Newman. No voice but yours ever reminded me of him". (In 1878 Newman was given an honorary fellowship at Trinity, the college where he had been an undergraduate, and Kilvert commented on this in his diary.) The '50's and the '60's were the time of positivism and Germanism in biblical criticism, but there were still relics of the past, notable Routh, who had become President of Magdalen in 1791, and remained its President until he died in 1854, by falling off a ladder. Bishop Mandall Creighton, three years younger than Kilvert, remembered Oxford in those years as "an ideal educational establishment because everyone went his own way - gambled or hunted or WORKED and no one interfered with them". He recommended loafing in the High Street as a very good thing, but died, when he was Bishop of London, from overwork, a notable example of the clergy not practising what they preach.

Much changed in the decade after Kilvert went down from Oxford, fellows of colleges no longer had to be in religious orders, they were allowed to marry, there were German-type professors, tougher examinations. But still the Gentlemen and Players tradition persisted. There were perhaps arguments for it, but it meant that there were notable absentees, who should have gone to Oxford and who did not. One of these was Hardy, born in the same year as Kilvert, and like him a poet of the English landscape. In his novel of a boy who longed to come to Oxford as a student - Jude the Obscure - the hero writes upon the walls of Balliol "I have understanding as well as you". Two years ago in Oxford there was an eruption of writing on Balliol walls, the writers no doubt thinking that this was an innovation. But it is difficult to do anything new in Oxford.

KILVERT IN CORNWALL

The account of the recent A.G.M. and Social Evening (earlier in this newsletter) promises a summary of Mr. Ronald Davies' talk on Kilvert's visit to Cornwall, which was one of the several interesting features of that Meeting. It has arrived just

in time for inclusion in this newsletter; Mr. Davies has been very modest in not making it over-long, but there was so much of interest in it that it was perhaps not easy to know what to put in and what to leave out.

On Tuesday, July 19th, 1870, at 11.35 a.m. the Rev. Robert Francis Kilvert left Chippenham with a tourist ticket for Cornwall. It was his first visit to Cornwall and his destination was Tullimaar, near Perranarworthal. His host and hostess were Mr. and Mrs. Hockin. Assuming that 'Tullimaar' was a Cornish name, I looked it up in the Cornish-English dictionary, but it didn't help much. 'Tull' means 'deceit, fraud, disappointment, treachery'. 'Mar' means 'doubt'. Obviously not applicable to the atmosphere of that house!

By a curious coincidence, Francis Kilvert was twenty-nine years old, precisely the age Thomas Hardy was when he visited Cornwall for the first time earlier in 1870. Hardy's destination was St. Juliot, near Boscastle, in North Cornwall. The result of Hardy's visit was the novel 'A pair of Blue Eyes', his marriage to Emma Lavinia Gifford, and the moving poems he wrote in 1913 after her death.

Kilvert's observation of the Cornish scene was in many ways as acute as that of Hardy. He observed 'the bleak barren, and uninteresting first few miles of Cornwall; soon to be replaced by the luxuriance of the purple heather and the trees in the steep valleys as he looked down from the many tall timber viaducts.

Mr. Hockin met him at Truro, and drove him to Tullimaar by pony trap. Mr. Michael Trinick gave a descriptive account of the house and its situation in a previous newsletter. Kilvert was impressed by the appearance of the Cornish people. He wrote that they seemed 'fine, tall, folk, especially the women, much larger, taller people than the Welsh, and most of them appeared to be dark-haired'. Very gratifying to a native Cornishman to read!

It was very interesting to read of the expeditions to many places known to me, and to reflect that perhaps, as he visited Lands End he might have seen my grandmother, a little girl driving a donkey to carry sand up from Sennen Cove. Or that, as he drove down 'the long Market Jew Street' in Penzance he might have seen my grandfather, a little boy on the raised pavement called the Terrace. All my ancestors came from West Cornwall, and it seems not unlikely that it might have happened.

An intriguing task was to locate the exact route Francis Kilvert took when he arrived in Penzance on Wednesday, 27th July 1870, to drive to the Land's End. (He actually gets the phrase right, and says 'the Land's End', as the Cornish still do.) They drove across the sandy beach, and turned inland. This must have been at Newlyn. Then they drove along 'the pretty road' to the 'cross roads' made by the meeting of the four beautiful avenues! This must have been at Trereife. There's no other possible place.

The driver was Edward Noy. The Noy family still live in Penzance. 'Noy' in Cornish means 'cousin', not an helpful appellation, since the Cornish are nearly all related to each other anyway.

The sandy beach has long since gone, washed away by the changing currents produced by the building of docks and harbours. But the tourist brochures somehow succeed in giving the impression that it is still there, instead of the rather dismal stretch of shingle that is actually there.

After visiting the Logan Rock, the party returned to the village at Treen. Kilvert says 'the village was a paradise of black pigs which layabout in the glare of the sun under the hot granite walls, par-roasted, but in great content'. This is the kind of keen observation that brings the scene vividly to life. His impressions of Zennor are equally sharp: 'Then we came to Zennor', the strange old tower in the granite wilderness in a hollow of the wild hillside, a corner and end of the world, desolate, solitary, bare, dreary, the cluster of white and grey houses round the massive old granite church tower, a sort of place that might have been quite lately discovered, and "where fragments of forgotten peoples might dwell". Almost a century later, John Heath-Stubbs, in his poem 'To the Mermaid at Zennor', writes:

'This is a hideous and a wicked country,
Sloping to hateful sunsets and the end of time,
Hollow with mineshafts, naked with granite, fanatic
With sorrow.....

black-faced, the villagers
Remember burnings by the hewn stones.'

(From 'The Granite Kingdom. Poems of Cornwall'
an anthology edited by D.M. Thomas)

Once again, Kilvert catches the spirit of a place and time.

Perhaps that is why he also catches the imagination of so many readers. With him we visit Cornwall a century ago, we wander the Radnorshire hills and dawdle by the banks of the Wye. And when we do we see the scene through his eyes, and if we are

lucky, we may experience one of those moments of pure happiness that he had, when he seemed to be at one with Nature.

Ronald Davies

June 1971

THE COUNTRYSIDE IN MAY

This was the title of a half hour's radio programme on Radio 4 on Wednesday, the 26th May, starting at 4 o'clock. Part of it was about "Kilvert Country" and Mr. C. Gordon Glover came to Bredwardine and Clyro several weeks previously (with a BBC colleague to do the recording) after seeking my advice as to where to go in order to get material for the programme. But little did I think one evening when I met them at Clyro and went with them to the highest point of the road between Clyro and Painscastle and pointed out to them the wide stretch of countryside which can be seen from there - over much of which the walks that we read of in the Diary were taken (for it was Kilvert the walker and not Kilvert the parson that they were that evening concerned with)----that it was I who was going to be asked to talk!! Somehow I managed it, and there is a whole 2½ minutes of the half-hour in which I spoke of Llanbedr and the "Solitary", Painscastle and Rhosgoch, Bryngwyn and Glascwm etc. Mr. Glover had started off in Cornwall and Devon and worked his way to Herefordshire, Radnorshire and Breconshire. He spoke of Bredwardine and Hay, and over the Gospel Pass to Llanthony, and filled in some of my gaps about the Radnorshire scene. I think many members probably heard this broadcast, for one phoned me from London at 5 o'clock to say how they had been transported from London to the Radnorshire hills for a few minutes. Next morning came letters and post-cards from Sussex, London again, and from nearer home too. I particularly liked Mr. Glover's allusions to what he had read of in the Diary. Here are one or two. About Kilvert he said "wherever he looked he saw beauty, and over and over again thanked God for allowing him to behold it". About the countryside he said "the Diary--an unconscious masterpiece, set in a countryside which is almost as calm and changeless today as when he wrote of it". And about Glascwm he said "almost unbelievably remote, deep and lush in its meadows among the calling cuckoos--a stone church in the shelter of sycamore and lime trees, the hill shoulders pebbled with sheep. No living soul to be seen in this corner of another age, watched over by a pair of buzzards which sailed upon the thermals of the unchanging hills--all this was part of the Kilvert Country of today".

Mr. Glover ought to have met the Vicar of Glascwm, or maybe it is as well that he didn't, for he dislikes Francis Kilvert and all of us of the Society. Even to the extent that when a party called to see Glascwm Church one summer's evening, and left a treasury note in an envelope marked "a tiny gift from a party of members of the K.S.".....putting the envelope in the alms box; he returned it with a note stating that "in view of my appraisal of Kilvert and his followers I cannot accept it for my church, perhaps you would offer it to a more appreciative and more needy recipient". (We did, -- and it was accepted with thanks.)

KILVERT and THOMAS HARDY

Noticing the suggestion in the Introduction to MORE CHAPTERS FROM THE KILVERT SAGA - that Robert Kilvert's anecdotes of Bath in the Napoleonic era might well have interested Thomas Hardy, Mr. Herbert Byard of Bristol (a valued member of our Society) points out that there is in fact a slight connection between Hardy and the Kilverts.

He draws attention to Hardy's particular friendship when young with Horace Moule, son of the Rev. Henry Moule, Vicar of Fordington, near Dorchester. Henry Moule, is referred to by Robert Kilvert as "my old friend"; and it will be remembered that when Francis Kilvert paid his memorable visit to William Barnes, the poet, in 1874 he was accompanied by Henry Moule, who had then been at Fordington for nearly half a century. Horace Moule had died in the previous year.

Mr. Byard speaks of the interesting possibility that either Robert or Francis Kilvert, or both, might have met Hardy at Fordington Vicarage at some time or other, since Hardy was a constant visitor there. He reminds us that Thomas Hardy and Francis Kilvert were both born in 1840.
