

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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26th March, 1973

Dear Member,

The time has come round again for the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and SOCIAL EVENING. It will be held on WEDNESDAY the 11th APRIL 1973 in EIGNBROOK CHURCH HALL(S) - as usual Promptly at 7 p.m.

For the benefit of new members the following directions will help. Eignbrook Congregational Church is in Eign Street, which is the way out of Hereford for Brecon etc - off the ring road. The Halls are at the rear of the Church. Opposite the Church is the Eye Hospital, and next door is the Horse & Groom Inn, with a very useful large car-park.

The evening's programme will be much as usual, the business meeting first, got through as quickly as possible!! Then the Rev. David Lockwood will report progress over the ASHBROOK PLAQUE (he is the spokesman for the group of five members who are making the final decisions and seeing it through) and there will then be time for one or two other members to speak on any subject dear to their heart before it is time for REFRESHMENTS. These will be served at about 8 o'clock; in the smaller room (as usual) by some of our lady members. Immediately afterwards a Committee Member will take bookings for the ANNUAL SPRING COACH TOUR, which is to be on Saturday the 5th May; this year into a "different" part of RADNORSHIRE, bordering on the "Kilvert Country", but with an interesting connection with one who figures prominently in Kilvert's Diary; for full details see further on in these pages.

At approximately 9 o'clock will come the main event of the evening; this is to be a talk with the title

KILVERT - A NEGLECTED GENIUS given by Mr. Frederick Grice B.A. of Worcester—a member of this Society.

Mr. Grice was until recently Head of the English Department at the Worcester College of Education. He has published several articles in learned journals, including a series of contributions on the early history of Drama in Worcester. He has broadcast frequently, but is best known as the author of many books, mainly fiction, for young readers, "The Bonny Pit Laddie", his most successful book, was recently given an award by the Austrian Government. He has a great admiration for Kilvert as a writer and thinks that in spite of the growing interest in the diary he is still undervalued as a writer.

Afterwards there will be perhaps ten minutes or so for something arranged after this newsletter goes out, maybe as a result of some last minute correspondence. Whatever transpires I am sure that we shall have the same sort of happy and interesting evening as for many years past.

Do please remember that this year's COMMEMORATION SERVICE is in BRECON CATHEDRAL on Sunday the 24th June at 3 o'clock; we hope to see a VERY LARGE NUMBER OF MEMBERS AND THEIR FRIENDS at Brecon that afternoon; please do your best to spread the news of it. The June newsletter will have full details; there is a paragraph on the following page giving some advance information. THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 1972 WILL BE ENCLOSED WITH THIS N/L; ON A LOOSE SHEET

Yours sincerely

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

Many members subscriptions are now due; kindly pay them to Mrs Peters; unless you happen to be writing to me; or ordering publications or cards—when the subscription can be included, for me to pass on to Mrs Peters. ALL RECEIPTS WILL BE HELD OVER TO COME WITH THE NEXT NEWSLETTER.....UNLESS A STAMPED ENVELOPE IS SENT BY ANYONE SPECIALLY WANTING THEIR RECEIPT QUICKLY.

We now have membership cards, with plenty of space on which to stick your receipts. These cards will be sent out to members with newsletters throughout the year. Some will accompany these sheets.....where a receipt has to be sent.

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

OUR PRESIDENT

Dr Plomer's engagements are always a source of interest to members. Here are a few notes on some of them.

On Sunday the 4th February he was at the Hampstead Theatre, taking the leading part in a feature on KILVERT AND HIS DIARY, under the auspices of the Hampstead Theatre Club; the producer was none other than Patrick Garland, whom we all know through his B.B.C. connections. He directed BRIEF LIVES at that same theatre, and more recently produced the FANFARE FOR EUROPE programme at Covent Garden. Visual and sound effects were by Mrs.C.Douglas-Home; to whom I sent (at her request) a number of photographs of people and places relevant to Kilvert's Diary. I was able to let some of our London members know about it, and quite a few made the journey to Hampstead and afterwards wrote me glowing accounts of the evening there. They were greeted with a big enlargement of the old photograph of Clyro that is one of the Society's Christmas cards---Ashbrook and the Baskerville Arms and the children in the roadway between the two. Clyro was much in the picture; the passages about the Old Soldier, Hannah Whitney, the mad woman, and the rising sun striking into the bedroom at Penlan. Then to Wiltshire, the piece about the lonely church (Chittoe) with a picture of it; and then when he spoke of Ettie--there was her picture, so that all could see the features so enthusiastically described by Kilvert. Several other members sent me their impressions---I wish there was room for them all; here are some bits. "A well rounded picture of Kilvert emerged and if any in the audience did not already know the diary they must have received an excellent introduction to it"---"I was enthralled and delighted". "Thank you so much for letting me know, I would not have missed it for anything"...and so on.

In March Dr Plomer is due to present a Personal Choice of poetry and prose at a Literary Festival in Worthing--instituted by the Southern Arts Association. In June a similar Personal Choice at the Aldeburgh Festival. In July a reading of his own poetry in the Poetry Festival organized by the Shakespeare Centre at Stratford-upon-Avon.... and between it all our President will manage to be with us at Brecon on June 24th!!! The June newsletter will have some notes on "The Butterfly Ball & the Grasshopper" (published by Jonathan Cape and Times Newspapers Ltd.) and maybe a note too about some mid-Victorian letters which our President is now editing. Still a very busy man.

An important engagement of Dr Plomer's---omitted from the above--is at CARDIFF on Friday 27th April when, at the invitation of the Welsh Arts Council our President gives a Poetry Reading, together with two very well known younger poets, Charles Causley and Ted Hughes; and, just as this note is being typed, a letter has come from a London member who was at Hampstead on Feb 4th after expressing her delight at being able to get there she commented on the "full house" and that among the well known people in the audience she noticed Miss Claire Bloom.

THE BIRD OF NIGHT

This is the title of the last book by Susan Hill, a friend of William Plomer's and a recent new member of the Kilvert Society. With it Miss Hill won both the Whitbread Prize and the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize; it is dedicated to Dr Plomer. She is also a successful writer of radio plays; her latest--"WINTER ELEGY" - goes out on Radio 4 at 2.30 pm. on March 31st; Kilvert is quoted in it, the piece about the skating at Draycot, when they skated the Lancers etc. Miss Hill lives in Leamington Spa; she had hoped to join us at Brecon in June, but has a prior engagement to preach in a small country-church - on being a creative artist - that same day. Some of her other books are "Strange Meeting" and "I'm the King of the Castle".

LONDON MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE

The leaflets (often referred to as "information sheets") which are sent to enquirers about the Kilvert Society say "the London members (about 60) have an occasional "get-together" and Birmingham & District members meet several times each year". This remains more-or-less true as regards Birmingham; but London members have not met for several years. This is perhaps a pity, for in the past Dr Plomer and certain members of note have attended; and now--with newer members who are of the B.B.C. and others with wide interests--the possibilities are enhanced. Perhaps it was that the London members struck the wrong note; meeting in the houses of just two different members; perhaps it was too much a social event with too little emphasis on their Kilvert interests? Perhaps Birmingham are more fortunate in having at least six members with sizeable houses; so with three meetings a year the influx on any one household is not so much noticed. They have had some really good evenings in Birmingham; with speakers, films slides etc. (as it's little more than 50 miles from Hereford my wife and I have attended at least two of them). Even so I don't think that it is quite right to meet in members' houses. Surely--with the many members in both Birmingham and London--there is someone who can arrange a small room--with the suitable facilities--for just 2 or 3 times in a year? Perhaps 20 to 30 people is the right number to think about? THE TIME HAS NOW COME WHEN I MUST DELETE THOSE WORDS ABOUT GATHERINGS OF LONDON MEMBERS--UNLESS THOSE MEMBERS WANT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT--QUITE SOON? If there are interested members in and around London I suggest that they communicate with me first of all. Then--if someone is willing

to do a little secretarial work, mainly circularising 2 or 3 times a year- I will let that member have names and addresses, and they can go on from there. Anyone with ideas about a suitable place for meetings might mention this to me, to be passed on.

THE BRECON CATHEDRAL SERVICE---June 24th 1973

It can now be stated that the SPECIAL PREACHER on this occasion is to be the Rev.D.T.W. Price - our Vice-President who has taken part in several previous Kilvert Services. Clyro 1970; Hay-on-Wye 1971; Moccas 1971; and most recently at St Harmon, where he gave the "Act of Remembrance". This was the first time since his ordination in St David's Cathedral on 22nd July 1972. Before we see him at Brecon in June he will have been ordained PRIEST, this is to take place in Lampeter College Chapel on Sunday 20th May at 10 a.m. The Dean of Brecon agreed that we should (as usual) choose our preacher; and the unanimous choice of the committee was Mr Price; indeed no-one else was considered, for we all agreed that we must make full use of such an enthusiastic young member. Especially at Brecon, where a Welsh-speaking Welshman is so suitable. Is it too much to hope that one day we might see Mr Price as Vicar of one of the well-known churches in the "Kilvert Country"? One of the LESSONS will be read by Dr William Plomer; and it is our intention to invite the Vicar of Clyro (as soon as the new incumbent is appointed) to read the other. IT IS TO BE CHORAL EVENSONG. It looks as if this Brecon Cathedral Commemoration Service may well be a VERY OUTSTANDING ONE.

The Bevington Organ... I think that we shall hear this organ being played sometime during the service; it has been fully restored and is proving very useful (has been broadcast---not long ago). A goodly number of our members subscribed towards its restoration, those present will doubly appreciate hearing it I'm sure. It's nice to think that this organ from Hay Castle -- written about in Kilvert's Diary -- is safely housed at Brecon; and used.

This year's KILVERT COMMEMORATION SERVICE at BRECON has been fitted in between many other services etc. held there in celebration of the JUBILEE of the CATHEDRAL and of the DIOCESE of SWANSEA and BRECON; for it is just 50 years since the DIOCESE was formed-out of the huge old DIOCESE of ST.DAVID'S, and Brecon Priory Church becoming the CATHEDRAL; with its first Bishop the Rt.Rev.E.L.Bevan (Kilvert's friend "Teddy" Bevan of Hay Castle). Some of the other events are... April 20th (Good Friday) the Bishop of Coventry at Swansea; April 22nd (Easter Day) the Archbishop of Wales at Brecon 11 a.m. and Swansea 6.30 p.m.; April 29th Civic Service at Brecon; May 12th Friends of Brecon Cathedral; May 31st Diocesan Choral Festival, preacher-The Bishop of Birmingham; Sept.14th Archbishop of York at Diocesan Service at Brecon Cathedral.

FULL DETAILS OF OUR COMMEMORATION SERVICE AT BRECON AND OF THE DAY'S ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IN THE JUNE NEWSLETTER: CIRCULATED IN MID-JUNE.

MOTOR-COACH TO BRECON

It seems quite likely that we may be running two coaches from Hereford to Brecon on 24th June. If we decided to run one via Clyro and Hay and the other via Abergavenny and Crickhowell would the latter be worthwhile? Perhaps members living on that route will let me know how many of them and their friends we would be likely to pick up? Will all members please note that members are always free to bring interested friends on such occasions.

Except that friends must be prepared to stand down if the coach or coaches are fully booked by members.

FRIENDS OF BRECON CATHEDRAL

The June Newsletter will bring with it a special invitation to anyone interested in Brecon Cathedral to join the FRIENDS. If anyone would like further information now please write to the Secretary, Mr Melville Thomas, Oakfield, Maescelyn, BRECON. He will be delighted to give all details.

WANTED (on June 24th) A GOOD SAMARITAN

One of our London area members would very much like to be with us at Brecon for the Commemoration Service; but she must get back home that same night. This means being at Hereford Railway station by 6 p.m. that evening.

If any member feels absolutely certain that they will be leaving Brecon early enough to get to Hereford in time (it's under 40 miles) will they kindly communicate direct with Mrs.A.M.Wyley, 11 Shelley Court, Parkleys, Ham Common, Richmond Surrey..... or telephone 546-9413 (preceded by 01 if from outside the London area).

Worcester Railway Station before 7 o'clock will catch the same train

THE ANNUAL SPRING COACH TOUR.....May 5th 1973.

A new note will be struck this year by visiting a corner of Radnorshire which many will scarcely know or not know at all. Not strictly "Kilvert Country"—yet it borders on the area where Nantmel Abbey, Cwmhir, Pantydwr and Saint Harmon lie, and is traversed by the Central Wales Railway (Builth Road to Craven Arms and on to Shrewsbury). Kilvert used this railway, for we know that he visited Shrewsbury once; probably many times, with walks in the area too; if we could but read the other two-thirds of his Diary. We shall approach the area via either Kington or Presteigne, and then across that still wild looking region marked on maps as Maelienydd (sometimes Anglicised to Melenith) to join the A.483 (1) road at Llanbister, this road runs from Llandrindod Wells to Newtown in Montgomeryshire. TEA will be at Llanbister (at Felincoed...Mrs.F.Thomas) in two sittings, one at 4 o'clock and the other at 5 o'clock or perhaps a little before. Whilst one party has tea the other half will be taken to see Llananno Church, a mile or so away—nicely situated on the banks of the Eithon (Ithon); the showpiece here is the early 16th century screen, one of the finest in Wales. Not far away is the historic Baptist Church of Maesyrhelem, it may be possible to call here too. But for many the highlight of the day will be the visit that has been arranged to Newcastle Court at Evenjobb, for this was the birthplace of Miss Frances Thomas (Kilvert's "Daisy") and where she spent her childhood; the family moved to Llanthomas when her father (the Rev.W.Jones Thomas) became Vicar of Llanigon; when at Newcastle Court he was Vicar of Gladestry. This visit is by kind permission of Dr K and Mrs.Schechner, who live at Newcastle Court, though they will be out of Britain in May; it is likely that their daughter (Mrs.B. Treherne) will be there to meet us. We shall at least see the garden and grounds and get a close-up of the house. It is not yet settled whether we visit Newcastle Court in the afternoon, or in the evening coming back to Hereford. On this will depend our route too; we may reverse this, or alter it substantially the only thing absolutely settled is the time and place for TEA. THE COACH WILL LEAVE HEREFORD (TOWN HALL) at 2 O'CLOCK PROMPTLY...FARE WILL BE 50p. TEA WILL BE 25p. Please book at the A.G.M.—OR BY POST TO ME. PAYMENT WHEN BOOKING WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED, MEMBERS COMING BY CAR ARE ASKED TO NOTIFY ME: AS MRS.THOMAS MUST KNOW HOW MANY FOR TEA A WEEK IN ADVANCE

getting Mr.James to post it to me—It came up a week or more ago, now it is nicely typed out and pinned together; 10p please, and an envelope if possible.

WORCESTER PORCELAIN

In line with our custom of giving a little space to the activities of our members the following will interest lovers of Worcester porcelain. The Hon.Secretary of the FRIENDS OF THE DYSON PERRINS MUSEUM is a member of the Kilvert Society. They were formed in 1969 to increase all knowledge of the museum and of Worcester china and porcelain throughout the world. Those interested are asked to write to Mr.R.J.Collins, The Dyson Perrins Museum, Severn Street, Worcester.

A WORCESTERSHIRE FLOWER FESTIVAL

One of our Vice-Presidents is the Rev David Lockwood—Vicar of Hanley Castle with Hanley Swan (between the Malvern Hills and the Severn) and well-known to many of us. This year is the CENTENARY of St Gabriel's Church at Hanley Swan and it is being celebrated in several ways. A FLOWER FESTIVAL on the 8th, 9th and 10th of June—with a Victorian flavour—as in Kilvert's time. There is also to be a FETE on Saturday 9th June and on the Sunday a CENTENARY SERVICE with the Master of the Temple in the pulpit—the Very Rev.R.L.P.Milburn, M.A. formerly Dean of Worcester Cathedral. This service is at 8 p.m. Worcestershire and Birmingham members please specially note!

NORTH OF THE BORDER

Among our best known and longest-standing London members are Mr & Mrs.H.A.Feisenberger. Members who have attended many of our Commemoration Services and other functions; and who have entertained gatherings of the London area members in their home. Now they have gone to live in Scotland (but retaining a flat in London). Any members finding themselves in Kirkcudbrightshire are very kindly invited to call. The address is.... Port Mary House, Dundrennan, Kirkcudbright. Telephone Dundrennan 229.

ST. HARMON—October 8th 1972

What a lovely day we had for the Anniversary Commemoration Service in the church where Kilvert was Vicar almost 100 years ago. It was a delayed Anniversary—for it was in 1950 that our first ever service was at St Harmon, the occasion when Lady Venables-Llewelyn (daughter of the Venables of Clyro, whose birth in 1870 caused such celebrations in Clyro, all recorded in Kilvert's Diary) unveiled the litany desk which is the memorial to Francis Kilvert in St Harmon Church. This time the Society marked the occasion by giving an ALMS BOX WALL SAFE...formally handed over by Dr William Plomer during the service, and then dedicated by the Rev.C.J.Colebrook; it had been firmly fixed into the wall a few days previously by Mr F.G.White, Monumental Mason of Rhayader, most generously without charge; Mr White has been a K.S.member for a number of years. The church was absolutely packed; it is a deceiving church that will seat many more than would appear when looking at it from the outside. Many extra seats had been brought in and all were filled. As usual our members and friends had come from far and near; I noted folk from the London area; the Birmingham and Bristol areas and many from Wales. Perhaps some of these from furthest away was a lady of the Llanthomas family from Suffolk, and a great-grandson of the Bevans of Hay from N.W.Yorkshire; add to these a member who had driven all the way from Eastbourne and you have a fair cross-section of the congregation at St Harmon that Sunday—and up in the choir stalls I noticed Mrs Mallinson from Selborne in Hampshire—and sitting not far from her was Dr Phil Williams of Aberystwyth, the Chairman of Plaid Cymru...There was some splendid hymn singing, a marvellous ADDRESS from the Rev.Brian James (referred to twice elsewhere in these pages); a very feeling Act of Remembrance from the Rev.D.T.W.Price; and the READINGS so clearly done by the representatives of the local Baptist and Presbyterian churches. Altogether a most memorable service—conducted, of course, by the Rev.C.J.Colebrook, Vicar of St Harmon and his three other churches. Two coaches started from Hereford, early enough to call at the little church at Ysfa (I find that it is wrong to call it Hysfa, as Kilvert did) where the Bishop's certificate of 1871 (see p.3 of the September n/1)—now renovated—was seen by all. Then through Rhayader to the picnic stop at Abermarteg, where nearly all sat out on the hillside on this mild sunny day, having lunch almost where Kilvert ate his (p.291 in Vol.3) on a May day in 1876. An excellent item on another page—by a Birmingham member—tells much about the previous day and gives impressions of St Harmon, touches on the fine ADDRESS given there by Mr James; ending with a mention of the ending of the day in the Village Hall at Pantydwr; "a bountiful tea" sums it up very well. How Mrs Colebrook and her band of helpers must have worked!!! Tea over (but still plenty left on the tables) we had an hour for entertainment; and what we managed to cram into it!! First a little presentation, when Dr Plomer gave the Rev.Wm.Price a copy of the "Oxford Book of Music" from the Society—to mark his recent ordination. This was followed by some delightful singing, by three little girls of St Harmon Sunday School, one with guitar; first "Amazing Grace" and this brought so much applause that they came back and gave us "The Old Rugged Cross" ...both renderings reflected great credit on them and their tutor, a lady from one of the farms Kilvert writes of in the Diary. How he would have loved these children, and what an entry in the Diary there would have been about them! Dr Plomer then gave a reading; mostly the pieces about St Harmon that can be found in "Looking Backwards" this is something always looked forward to and which always ends too soon!! A few other speakers, and our thanks given to all (I hope) who had helped to make such a grand day, and it was time to start for home. We must return to St Harmon long before another 18 years elapses!!

The previous day. There is not much to add to Mrs Mathers' description of our day on the hills, except perhaps to say that it was just as popular as a year ago when we walked across to the Rocks of Aberedw, nearly 20 cars turned up at Clyro...from near and far...but, as always, once we started walking across moorlands the party of 50 or more seemed but a handful of people—spaced out into little knots of 3 or 4 in each. Many were heard to say that they hope another such day can be arranged for October 1973. Any suggestions?

FOLLOWING THE WAYS OF KILVERT

A diary reveals the past to Albert Winstanley as vividly as though it were today. This is the heading to a splendid two-page article in "CYCLING" for February 3rd, 1973, written by one of our Lancashire members—a keen cyclist—who spent Christmas cycling around Bredwardine and Clyro with Christmas Day and a few days after at the Y.H. at Ludlow. Mr Winstanley took some excellent photographs..."Bredwardine Church, Arthur's Stone, Ashbrook, and Kilvert's photograph hanging in Clyro church etc." these are used to illustrate his article—which has many quotations and diary references. All refreshingly accurate, so different to some of the so-called "Kilvert" articles that we have seen from time to time. I like his ending..."I would have given much to have known Kilvert in his time and age, which he has so vividly captured in his diary. He never knew the bicycle...for his were the days of dog-carts, horses, carriages, candles and lanterns. I feel sure, however, he had been with me in spirit, smiling his contentments at my having followed some of his ways".

THE VICAR OF CLYRO

By the time this newsletter circulates the Rev T.J. Lewis; Mrs Lewis and James will not only have left Clyro but will no doubt be nicely settled in their new home at Penclawdd in the Gower Peninsula (near Swansea). The news of them leaving Clyro came as a surprise to many of us, for they had only just got back into the Vicarage after major reconstructions and additions to it; living in the Vicarage Flat at Llanigon for many months whilst this work went on. I think they left Clyro with much reluctance, yet at Penclawdd they will be almost next door to the parish which they left to come to Clyro some 16 or so years ago. We shall never forget that as soon as possible after Mr and Mrs Lewis got settled in Clyro we received an invitation to have a Commemoration Service in Clyro Church. This 1958 service was the first there since 1949, a fact bemoaned by many. Since then we have been back to Clyro in 1962, 1965 and 1971. The outstanding one was, of course, 1965 (the Centenary Service... Kilvert first went to Clyro in 1865) when approximately 500 were packed into the church for a splendid service with the late Bishop Newnham Davis in the pulpit. Our best wishes go with them to Penclawdd.

Already a member has suggested that perhaps next year we might take a party down into Gower and call on Mr and Mrs. Lewis... surely an idea worth thinking about? Perhaps make it the May Coach Tour? Near to Penclawdd are the churches of Cheriton and Llanmadoc, in both can be seen the carvings done by the Rev. J.D. Davies more than 100 years ago; Kilvert was there in 1872 and wrote about them in the Diary (p.183 onwards in Vol.2). Tea at Worms Head (Rhosilli). It would certainly make a really good day out.

(There is much about all these places—and pictures—in GOWER by Olive Phillips; first published in 1956 by Robert Hale).

THE BAPTIST TIMES...for January 18th 1973

This is the issue with a nice two-column article on KILVERT'S DIARY—by Rex Mason, who is obviously a Baptist Minister; he commences by saying "One of the nicest presents I received this Christmas was Kilvert's Diary". Reading on we find that Mr Mason "knows and loves Radnorshire"—"still the most beautiful and least discovered county in Britain". It is obvious that Mr Mason has quite "fallen for" Kilvert and the diary; he calls it "a gem among diaries, full of un-expected surprises, delights, chuckles and compellingly absorbing"; and about Kilvert's interest in the humble people of the countryside "he knows and loves them with the heart of a real pastor".

Our thanks to the Hereford member—a member of the local Baptist Church—who sent this in. Will other members please do likewise?

KILVERT AND THE WORDSWORTH CIRCLE

This is, of course, the title of one of our publications. It is specially mentioned here because—although it has sold quite well—sales have not been as fast as the other booklets. Can it be that the title does not do it justice? Perhaps some think that it quotes a lot of Wordsworth's poetry and not much else. (One member who sent for all the other publications and afterwards sent for a copy of "The Circle"—as we call it for short—wrote specially to say how glad he was that I had put a note in with the others to tell him what he was missing; and admitted that it is totally different to what he had imagined it to be). There are many who do not realise that Wordsworth had family ties with the Dews of Whitney, and had visited there; and that he knew the Venables' and had stayed with them at Llysdyman. There is an interesting account of the meeting between Kilvert and Elizabeth Hutchinson (niece of William Wordsworth). The Hutchinsons and the Monkhouse family come into the story and there are pictures of where they lived... Hindwell in Radnorshire and Brinsop Court in Herefordshire (the latter was taken before 1915, for it was in that year that the cedar which William Wordsworth had planted was blown down).

This is a publication that I can heartily commend to members and their friends. As a bonus the end pages of "The Circle" contains three pieces—each by Francis Kilvert—that have not been previously published. The poem found in his blotter after his death; his paraphrase of the 23rd Psalm; and "The Dawn Chorus"—something not in the Diary as we know it, for it comes from one of the original 22 notebooks. Dr Plomer read it at Cae Mawr after the 1970 Commemoration Service at Clyro; subsequently many asked for a copy of it. HERE IT IS...and the cost of the entire booklet is but 37½p (plus 3½p by post).

NOT AS GOOD AS KILVERT

Any reference to Kilvert in a national newspaper is sure to be spotted by one or other of our members—and passed on to me.

A little before Christmas a Wiltshire member sent me a little cartoon out of the "Observer Review" for Sunday 19th November. It depicts a man reading Cecil King's Diary, but he has laid it across his knee, as if to have a rest from it! The caption reads "Not as good as Kilvert but better than Mrs. Dale"

Our Wiltshire members says "This must be one of the first occasions on which any such informal reference to Kilvert has been made in a national newspaper, and we are gratified to think that the gospel of his diary is spreading through the country."

(Thanks; please keep it up, members!!!)

WHERE TO STAY IN THE KILVERT COUNTRY

We are slowly building up a list of "where to stay" from recommendations of members. How fast this list grows depends on how many members take the trouble to inform me!!! Here are some of them.

CLYRO... many members have stayed (at different times) with Mrs Harris at Crossway Farm; delightfully situated on Clyro Hill, two miles or so from the village, on a good road just off Kilvert's route to Bettws. Ideal for walkers as well as motorists.

Ashbrook House... Mr and Mrs. W.H. Monk (the new owners) are doing B & B. on a limited scale. There are no doubt members who will appreciate the chance to stay where Francis Kilvert lived during his seven years in Clyro.

The Baskerville Arms... exactly opposite Ashbrook House, many members have stayed here too. The dining room is where the Petty Sessions were held in Kilvert's time!!!

(Note: The Postal address of CLYRO...and of HAY-ON-WYE...is "via HEREFORD")

HAY-ON-WYE... over the years numerous members have holidayed at Brooklands Guest House with Mr and Mrs. Williams. Although the address is Lion Street, Hay-on-Wye, this house is on the very edge of the little town, just where the road turns up for Cusop Dingle.

For those who like to stay in HOTELS there is the CROWN and the SWAN in HAY.

Two miles out of HAY is Hawkeswood Farm where Mrs. Lloyd is hostess; and in the Black Mountains there is Olchon Court (Mrs Jones) wonderfully situated, address is Longtown, Hereford.

Further away- in the area which includes St Harmon, Abbey Cwmhir, Nantmel etc. we have two recommendations...The Old Rectory in a village a few miles from St. Harmon; and a FARMHOUSE which offers perfect peace, home produced food, a table licence and magnificent walking country. We have a few of their brochures, please send a large envelope for one... if this is the kind of place that interests you.

WHEREVER YOU STAY PLEASE LET IT BE KNOWN THAT YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE KILVERT SOCIETY AND HAVE COME TO STAY IN "KILVERT COUNTRY" IN ORDER TO SEE SOME OF THE PLACES YOU HAVE READ ABOUT IN KILVERT'S DIARY...for the folk living in the "Kilvert Country" are still far from being fully aware of just how many visitors are attracted to it because of their Kilvert interest.

THE LATE MRS CHRISTY OF LLANGOED (Breconshire)

The "Brecon & Radnor Express" for the second week in November has the above as the caption to a long account of the life, death, and funeral of a grand old lady who Francis Kilvert knew as a very small child, for he was a frequent visitor at her childhood home in the parish of Clyro. It reads..."We regret to record the death which occurred peacefully at her home, Llangoed, on Friday November 3rd, of Mrs. M.A.E. Christy. In her 98th year she was the widow of Capt. H.A. Christy, and was a remarkable personality. Mrs. Christy was a member of the well-known Radnorshire family of Crichtons of Wye Cliffe, frequently mentioned in the Rev. Francis Kilvert's Diary. Mrs. Christy's life was full of good works for the Church, and to help the lives of her tenants and friends, and she had always been a very active worker for many good causes". After mention of more of her activities for Church and parish, it continues "she opened her grounds to the public for good causes, Children's parties were a source of delight to her, and she was never more happy than when preparing gifts for children. Capable, versatile and artistic, Mrs Christy was especially keen on art, and painted extremely well. During recent years she had held two exhibitions of her art at Llandrindod Wells, and gained much success. Her passing deprives Llyswen and district of a gracious, kind and helpful Christian lady, who will be much missed". Then follows an account of the funeral, at the parish church, Llyswen. The Rector was assisted by the Bishop of Swansea & Brecon (The Rt. Rev. J.J.A. Thomas) the Archdeacon, and a number of other clergy. Although not a member of the K.S. (something we always regretted) she was very interested in the Kilvert connection with her family; and had attended several of our Commemoration Services in past years. Perhaps the last was Clyro in 1965, when my wife and I had a few words with her, and were invited to call at Llangoed to have tea and see some of her treasures. The time spent there will always be a happy memory. Mrs. Christy took delight in showing us the very zoetrope that is mentioned on p.121 of Vol.2 of the Diary, spinning it just as Kilvert no doubt spun it for the Crichton children. We saw pictures and paintings, and listened to her account of a journey to Vancouver-to see a brother-from which she had not long returned. When we remarked on such a journey (at 91) her reply was "Only 12 hours by jet over the North Pole".

Note... it was Mrs Crichton who did the water colours of Clyro Church etc on the front of the book of subscribers to Kilvert's presentation when he left Clyro in 1872. Canon R.W. Kilvert brought it with him to Langley Burrell last June; no doubt many members saw it in the Village Hall after tea.

AN AUTUMN WEEKEND : Clyro and St Harmon - October 7th and 8th 1972.

My impressions all seem to be coloured with Autumn sunlight. On that Saturday morning we might have said with Kilvert—"The morning was so lovely that I was tempted to go to Clyro again"—and so we did, and after the greetings outside the Baskerville Arms we set off for leisurely walks and picnics on the Begwns, and on Bryngwyn Hill. It was a wonderful day, though the distant views were hidden. "The mountain and the great valley were blue with mist, and the sun shone brilliantly upon the hill and the golden fern". Even the Rhos Goch bog looked less sinister, as we paused on the road to look across to distant Llanshiver, the house which Kilvert describes in some detail; but one remembered the sad story of the child who "was drowned in one of the peat pits"; in October of 1871.

The sky was overcast on Sunday morning, but as we reached St Harmon, there was sunshine again, streaming through the windows of the little church so brightly decorated for Harvest, and in "holiday mood" (how different from the "bare, cold, squalid appearance" of Kilvert's first sight of the older church) and filled to overflowing with members (and their friends) from far and near. It was a Service of real thanksgiving...for the treasures of the Diary, and the beauty of Kilvert country, for the renewal of friendships and new ones beginning, and especially for the example of a life spent so much in the service of others, among those hills of Radnorshire, or wherever the call came. As the Rev. Brian James reminded us, in a moving address, it was of St Harmon that Kilvert wrote "I have not sought this or any other preferment. Indeed I have rather shrunk from it. And as it has so come to me without my wish or seeking of my own, it seems as if the Finger of God were in it, and as if I were but following the calling of His Voice, and the beckoning, guiding and leading of His Hand."

After the Service there was an opportunity to wander round the churchyard, noting especially the grave of "the Atheist of Bwlch Gwynne", enclosed in railings, and in very good order; and also, nearer to the church door, the stone in memory of the "handsome, pleasant-faced woman, very stout" as Kilvert described her, who "kept the little by-station of St Harmon's". Then we drove to a bountiful tea and entertainment in the Village Hall at Pant y dwr before we began our journey home once more, as the last streaks of sunset faded behind the hills which guard the "sweet Vale of Marteg".

(Contributed by Mrs. M. Mathers—Birmingham)

AN ARGUMENT WITH FRANCIS KILVERT!!

About three weeks before the October service at St Harmon, my wife and I had a day out in Radnorshire; calling at Nantmel Vicarage with the Ysfa certificate; taking the wall safe for St Harmon to the monumental mason in Rhayader; making sure that Abermarteg is a good picnic spot for the coach party on Oct. 8th; looking round at St Harmon and Pantydwr; and coming back via Abbey Cwmhir to make sure that the road is really good enough for the coach to travel—and at the same time taking posters re the St. Harmon service to many places en route. Many of these were left in Builth Wells and Rhayader, where everyone who was asked willingly agreed to exhibit them. One shop in Builth Wells where the proprietor instantly agreed to exhibit some posters must be mentioned particularly—"Oh, yes; anything to do with Kilvert" he said "for my grandfather has talked to me about him, and the argument that they had outside the church at Eglwys Oen Duw after the Harvest Festival there" (but he didn't know what the argument had been about). This ties up with what we can read on p.53 of Vol.2—when Kilvert preached at the Harvest Festival at Newchurch (Rads) and used the same sermon that had done duty several times before (on Ruth and Boaz) — one occasion being at Eglwys Oen Duw (Llwyn Madoc); which is about 9 miles beyond Builth and just off the road to Llanwrtyd Wells in Breconshire. Wouldn't it be good to know much more?

DESERT ISLAND DISCS

On Saturday 28th October—repeated on Monday 30th October—the "castaway" was Miss Imogen Holst. I wonder just how many of our members did hear Miss Holst say that (after the Bible and Shakespeare) her favourite book would be Kilvert's Diary? For numerous members, mostly from far afield, wrote to tell me about it afterwards. Fortunately Miss Holst had told me beforehand about it all, so I was able to tell a good many local members and a few further afield to whom I had to write on other matters. She termed the Diary "her favourite bedside book" and went on to say that Kilvert was "so sympathetic" and that it is a "never failing source of enjoyment". Miss Holst is high on our list of distinguished members; we are proud to have her.

MADLEY FESTIVAL 1973 Each year we give brief details of this splendid event; held in one of Herefordshire's largest and most beautiful village churches; advance details are just to hand from the Vicar (the Rev. W. L. Paterson, a valued member of the K.S.); as it is on July 13th, 14th & 15th a more detailed note will appear in the June n/l. The highlights are to be the "KING'S SINGERS" on the Friday; the ORCHESTRA DA CAMERA with the violinist RALPH HOLMES on the Saturday; and the Festival Service with the recently retired Dean of Exeter as preacher on the Sunday. Each year a number of our members attend; some coming long distances to do so.

KILVERT'S INTEREST IN WORDS

Mr. L. Le Quesne's suggestion in the Newsletter for 22 September 1972 that Kilvert clearly knew a fair number of Welsh words is supported by the contribution he helped his friend Mayhew to send to Notes and Queries in 1878. Kilvert mentions this contribution in Volume 3 of the Diary page 411.

"Looking over the Hereford Journal in the Reading Room my eye fell upon 'Some Radnorshire Words' which I had given to Mayhew and which he had sent to Notes and Queries whence the extract was copied into the Hereford Journal".

The contribution was a brief one and reads as follows:-

Some Radnorshire Words

Gorkerel	cormorant
Load	an eruption, measles, smallpox (qu. connected with loathsome, laidley, Fr. laid -ugly?)
Frame	a skeleton
Pembolade	a tadpole (cp. Welsh Penbwl penbyliad - thick-headed. Penbwla - miller's thumb - a fish)
Gambo	a cart of the very simplest construction
Welsh aunt	first cousin of mother or father
Noah's Ark	Ursa Major
Bloodyman's fingers	flowers of the foxglove (Digitalis purpurea)
To the height of music	very much
Oblionker (Herefordshire)	a game played with chestnuts

My authority for the Radnorshire words is a clergy man long resident in Clyro. 'Oblionker' I heard last month in Ledbury. They are not to be found in Halliwell.

This is the contribution (Notes and Queries. Fifth Series. Vol. x p.105), that is reproduced in the Hereford Journal for 17 August 1878. It is prefaced by these words:*

"Under this heading, 'Some Radnorshire Words', A.L. Mayhew, Oxford, writes as follows to Notes and Queries"

and it contains a few errors.

Only three Welsh words are included in the note, but their presence reveals Kilvert's interest in the Welsh origin of certain dialect English words.

A second suggestion of Mr Le Quesne's - that Kilvert was unusually fond of playing with words - prompts me to ask if anyone can throw any light on the unusual words he uses (in 1871 only) for certain months of the year.

January	.....	Wolf Monat
February	.....	Sproutkele
March	.....	Lenet Monat
April	.....	Oster Monat
May	.....	Trimilki
August	.....	Barn Monat
October	.....	Wine Monat
November	.....	Wind Monat

Most of these read like fanciful but intelligible inventions, but they may be spurious Old English names that Kilvert had picked up somewhere. I have read somewhere that 'Trimilki' was an Anglo-Saxon word for that time of the year when the grass was so lush that the cattle could be milked three times a day; but it is not to be found in any reliable Old English Dictionary.

Did Kilvert merely invent these names, as he may have invented the Welsh name for his house?

Frederick Grice,
91 Hallow Road, Worcester.

MISS KILVERT'S WORLD TOUR

I wrote to Canon Kilvert for news of his sister (and his daughter, Susan). His reply has come just in time to catch up with this N/L and (I hope) appear in it. Canon Kilvert says that his sister and Susan had a very successful trip from Halifax (Nova Scotia) to Vancouver - calling on relatives, friends and K.S. members in Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg, New York, Toronto and Calgary. Susan flew home in September 1972 and Miss Kilvert stayed on in Vancouver for some weeks before travelling south to California. She was based for about 10 weeks near San Francisco with an old friend (married to an American) until mid-January 1973. Then with half-a-dozen young companions she set off for a tour of Mexico. Unfortunately "Peregrine" needed expert attention at Tucson, Arizona - which delayed the party for some days—but we heard today (late February) that they have now reached Mexico City after a day or two on the west coast—temperature 80 to 90 degrees F. and sea-bathing three times a day!

SPREADING THE NEWS

Various members have been busy giving TALKS (mostly illustrated with slides) in different parts of the country. Recently I posted a box of slides to Mr Colin Davis (of Edenbridge in Kent) so that he could show pictures of Clyro, the Black Mountains etc etc. (Bredwardine and Monnington etc also) to an audience at Tunbridge Wells whilst he talked on KILVERT AND THE DIARY. A most successful evening, I hear.

The "Leominster News" in a recent issue had a glowing tribute to the talk on FRANCIS KILVERT given to the Leominster Historical Society by the Rev.D.T.W.Price of Lampeter; apparently he delighted a large audience with his talk and his slides.

Here in Hereford Mr Worsey and I have given several such illustrated talks in the last few months—to the Teachers of English; Church Fellowships; etc — with one or two more at future dates.

THAT KILVERT MUSEUM

Every now and then someone mentions this subject, and expresses pious hopes that one day it will materialise. What we want is MONEY!!! Or someone to buy some suitable property (Hay or Clyro perhaps) where it could be established. If someone had done this years ago - when property was cheap—it could have proved a valuable investment—and provided museum premises at the same time. Perhaps this further note on the subject may bear fruit?

Anyone with any ideas???

APOLOGIES—AND THANKS

Far too much matter is being sent to the producers of these newsletters for this particular one; they will be sorted over according to their length, the available space, and my markings of urgency. To those whose articles are NOT in this number I offer apologies—and many thanks for contributing them. THEY WILL APPEAR, SOONER OR LATER; Some in June, some in September. It is a grand feeling really to know that there are items on hand, so that much of the other two newsletters of 1973 are already done. BUT, KEEP IT UP PLEASE: IT'S SPLENDID TO HAVE A "BANK" OF ITEMS, AND A FEW MORE ADDED TO THEM IS ALL TO THE GOOD.

Thanks too, to all those members who sent Christmas cards—— each year I have to say this and explain that it is not possible to send either cards or thanks individually—— there are so many. Believe me, my wife and I greatly appreciate your kind thoughts and good wishes.

