

T H E K I L V E R T S O C I E T Y

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J U N E 1 9 7 5.

Dear Member,

The March newsletter gave advance details of the ANNUAL COMMEMORATION SERVICE, to be held on SUNDAY, 29TH. JUNE at 3 o'clock at the CHURCH OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW, MUCH MARCLE, HEREFORDSHIRE. Here are the full details.

It will be conducted by THE REV'D GRAHAM F. HOLLEY, A.I.G.C.M., VICAR OF MUCH MARCLE WITH YATTON, who so kindly invited us to his church, following suggestions for such a service from a keen reader of Kilvert's Diary.

The ADDRESS will be given by THE REV'D W.L. PATERSON, VICAR OF MADLEY, HEREFORDSHIRE ... a member of the Kilvert Society.

The ACT OF REMEMBRANCE (AND PRAYERS) will be by the REV'D CANON J.S. LEATHERBARROW, M.A., OF MALVERN, a Vice-President of the Kilvert Society; and the LESSONS will be read by the PRESIDENT and by the DEPUTY PRESIDENT of the Society. The new Hymn Board (given by the K.S) will be dedicated by the Vicar.

A special feature of this service will be SONGS WITH CLARSACH (THE IRISH HARP) by ELEANOR SIMEY; a note about this will be found overleaf. There are also various notes on the very interesting Parish Church, its Tombs and Monuments; on the village and its houses - and one about the wedding which took place on the 9th. September, 1874, when Francis Kilvert was best man. This is the link with Much Marcle and is what sparked off the idea of exploring the possibilities of having our Annual Commemoration Service there in 1975.

TEA will, as usual, follow the service. It will be in the Parish Hall, about 500 yards from the Church. This tea is very kindly being provided and served by the ladies of Much Marcle and Yatton Women's Institute. Tea tickets are 40p each and can be obtained either from the Hon. Secretary of the Kilvert Society or from Wyeval Ltd. in Bridge Street, Hereford.

IMPORTANT ... 150 TEA TICKETS HAVE BEEN PRINTED and TEA will be provided for this number; admission to the Village Hall will be BY TICKET ONLY. Members and their friends are therefore advised to buy their tea tickets EARLY.

TEA WILL BE AT 4. 30 P.M. Some may like to walk to Homme House first (see note) and get to the Village Hall for tea by about 5 o'clock; this would no doubt help to relieve any initial congestion.

It is usual to stay on for half an hour (or a little longer) on these occasions, in order to hear talks or readings by our President and/or Deputy President, and often from other members too. This is something which members and friends welcome and appreciate. Arrangements have, therefore, been made on these lines for after tea at Much Marcle. Perhaps from about 5. 30 to 6 o'clock or so?

Much Marcle is on the A.449 and about 5 miles from Ledbury and about 7 miles from Ross-on-Wye. It is in Herefordshire but on the Gloucestershire border and therefore about 14 miles from both Hereford and Gloucester. The Church and the Village Hall are a little way off the A.449, the turn for them being at the "Walwyn Arms". The massive central tower of the Church is very conspicuous.

A motor-coach (or coaches), will run from Hereford ... leaving the Town Hall at 1. 30 p.m. (PROMPT). Fare will be 50p per person. PLEASE BOOK EARLY, by or before Monday, 23rd. June, so that a second coach can be ordered if required. Coach booking (and tea tickets) at Wyeval Ltd., Photographic Dealers, Bridge Street, Hereford, or with the Hon. Secretary of the Society. Please pay at the time - this is greatly appreciated and saves a lot of work.

Many newsletters will have a POSTER (or POSTERS) with them. Will any with this please arrange for display as prominently as possible. Whilst advertising the SERVICE they also excite curiosity and often cause people to read Kilvert's Diary and sometimes to enquire about the Society.

Yours sincerely,



C.T.O. Prosser.
Hon. Secretary.

NOTES AND NEWS by the Hon. Secretary, with Contributions from Members.

Exciting news about a MINI-MUSEUM at Hay-on-Wye is expected to come in just in time for inclusion in this newsletter. PLEASE TURN TO THE LAST PAGE.

MUCH MARCLE - The Church. Pevsner says (in his "Herefordshire") that an account of the church must start with the arcades, they are of c.1230-40. His lengthy description of the church and its monuments should be read. There is also a good "Short Guide to Church and Parish" which is on sale in the church for 5p. The Kyrle Chapel will be opened for us. In the centre is the marble tomb of Sir John Kyrle of Homme House and Sybil Scudamore, his wife. He died in 1650. On the walls are memorials to the Money Kyrle family. In a corner is a 14th. century tomb, thought to be that of Hugh, Lord Audley and Isolda, Lady Audley.

In the chancel is a late 14th. century tomb of great interest and beauty. The figure is that of Blanche Mortimer, a daughter of Roger Mortimer, first Earl of March, and wife of Sir Peter de Grandison. Blanche was a member of the famous family of Mortimer of Wigmore which played such a prominent part in the history of the Welsh borders and of England in the 14th. and 15th. centuries, and eventually attained the throne of England in the person of Edward the Fourth (1461-1483). Fifty yards north of the church is Mortimer's Castle, a motte and bailey earthwork 21 feet in height. The Oak Figure in the South Aisle must not be missed, such figures are rare, the only other in Herefordshire is at Clifford in the far west. It represents a man in civilian costume of the mid-14th. century and is thought to be Walter de Helyon who lived at Hellens in the parish in 1357, as did his son-in-law and successor, Richard Walwyn. It has recently been splendidly restored.

The Churchyard Cross (probably 15th. century) and the ancient yew tree (hollow, with seats inside) should both be noted.

The Old Vicarage (now known as Phillips House) is a Queen Anne house of 1703, this is where Francis Kilvert stayed on the night before the wedding of his friend, Andrew Pope. It is almost opposite the road leading up to the church.

Hellens - this ancient house is normally open to the public, but is under repair and will not be open at present and probably not for a considerable time.

HOMME HOUSE - this is undoubtedly the house of greatest interest to readers of Kilvert's Diary. Many will have seen the photograph of the wedding group, taken on the steps in 1874 - Kilvert sitting unobtrusively on a low step but identified completely by his black beard. This house dates from c.1500. It was formerly the seat of the Kyrle family - their descendants, the Kyrle Pope family are still in possession. Our Vice-President, Commander Kyrle Pope is old and infirm and in a home for the elderly. The house is, therefore, at present closed, for Admiral Michael Kyrle Pope and Admiral J.E. Kyrle Pope are both abroad - but have given permission for anyone interested to either walk the old drive from the church (over half a mile each way), or go by road via the drive off the Ross Road, this is 1½ miles each way. There are so many interesting houses to be seen in and around Much Marcle that anyone who can get there really early will be well rewarded. Among them is Hall Court, in the hamlet of Rushall, about 2 miles north west of the Church. It is a fine example of an early 17th. century timber-framed house. Built in 1608 by Sir John Coke and has been very little altered.

SONGS WITH CLARSACH by ELEANOR SIMEY.

It is as long ago as 1953 that we last had a musical treat as part of our Annual Service (this was at Llowes in Radnorshire, when three sisters sang from the chancel steps). We are, therefore, delighted to be able to announce that at Much Marcle we are to have Eleanor Simey as a soloist with her Irish Harp. Some quotations from newspaper reports will be of interest. First, from the WATFORD OBSERVER - "The Carol Service at Leavesden Parish Church was notable for the inclusion, among firm favourites, of a selection of less familiar carols with Eleanor Simey ... a most acceptable soprano and harpist". Then from the BUDE AND STRATTON POST - "It was undoubtedly with her final item, a group of folk songs in which we accompanied herself on the Irish Harp that Miss Simey excelled herself. Her interpretation of these songs, from many countries, was faultless". From the EAST GRINSTEAD COURIER - "Miss Simey sings very clearly and truly, her expressiveness is most effective. Her technical mastery of the Celtic Harp, and her use of it, were just as admirable. To combine the two with such artistry must be very difficult indeed" ... and from the HEREFORD EVENING NEWS - "The star of the evening was undoubtedly Miss Simey". Finally, a quotation from a different source - "Eleanor Simey is a native of Hereford. She studied at Birmingham School of Music, obtaining there the Associate Diploma in Harp; and in London with Maria Korchinska and Isobel Baillie - she has visited Music Clubs, Schools and Colleges in many parts of the country, and has also broadcast for Kenneth Clark of the English Folk Dance Society.

(In private life Eleanor Simey is Mrs. Graham Holley of Much Marcle.) Hon. Sec. of K.S.

ANDREW POPE'S WEDDING:

For the benefit of those who only have the abridged edition of Kilvert's Diary the following extracts from Volume Three (pages 77/78) will be useful, for this is one of the many outstanding events not to be found in abridged editions. Some members and friends who will come to Much Marcle on June 29th. may not fully realise the links which really started thoughts of having this particular service.

Tuesday, 8th. September, 1874. Put up at Much Marcle Vicarage where Pope, the bridegroom, is also staying. Our host, Mr. Chatfield, the Vicar, an original eccentric man, very amusing, kind-hearted and hospitable. At 7. 30 I went up to Homme with him and Pope to a large dinner party of 22 people. A good dinner and a pleasant, friendly, merry party".

Wednesday, 9th. September. The wedding was to be at 11. 30 but the bride was late and the marriage ceremony took place almost on the stroke of noon. The village people had made the Church lovely with flowers and the building was thronged. There was an immense crowd at the Churchyard gate and the bride's path was strewn with flowers. The presents were magnificent and laid out on several tables in the library. I was best man and took the chief bridesmaid, Miss Alice Money Kyrle, in to breakfast and returned thanks for the bridesmaids. After breakfast we were all photographed grouped on the steps before the house and afterwards danced on the lawn to the music of the Herefordshire Militia Band which had played during breakfast. The bride and bridegroom went off brilliantly with four greys and scarlet postillions, the bride in a mauve silk travelling dress".

The Curate of Cusop - the bridegroom of this marriage was Kilvert's friend, the Rev'd. Andrew Pope. The first we hear of Pope is when he was a young curate at Cusop (which almost adjoins Clyro) and was "confirmed" by the impatient Bishop of Hereford at Whitney when he arrived late and with just one candidate. This is on pages 73/74 of Volume One, and is also in the abridged edition on pages 19 and 20. After this Pope is mentioned many times throughout the three volumes. In 1873 he became Vicar of Preston-on-Wye and Blakemere, and that is where he took his bride after the honeymoon. The Popes remained at Preston until 1880 so they were very near neighbours to Kilvert during his years at Bredwardine and the diary tells us of their many meetings. The last entries where Pope is mentioned are those for 27th. and 28th. December, 1878 when Kilvert "walked with Pope to Blakemere to visit the pretty little church" and next day "walked with Pope after breakfast to see Preston Church and admired the grand south doorway. Pope talks of moving the Church up to the village green where it will be more in the centre of the population". This he did not do, but they did substantially re-build the Vicarage at Preston-on-Wye, as a plaque above the front door with their initials and the date confirm. This is now a private house where our members, Mr. & Mrs. C.B. Ottaway live. They have re-named it Pope Place. (Incidentally, it is now FOR SALE Agents are Bernard Thorpe & Partners, Hereford). From Preston the Popes went to Diddlebury near Ludlow; and in 1890 to Upton Bishop, near Ross-on-Wye; then in 1910 to Langley Burrell in Wiltshire, where they remained until 1920 and retirement. They are buried in the churchyard at Much Marcle.

THE SOCIETY'S GIFT TO MUCH MARCLE CHURCH AND AN APPEAL.

The Committee decided that a gift should be made to mark the occasion of this service, in view of the friendship between Francis Kilvert and the Rev'd. Andrew Pope and his wife, Mary Money Kyrle something on the lines of recent gifts to the churches at Llowes and at Ilston. The Rev'd. Graham Holley said they needed a new HYMN BOARD, so this was ordered. It will be dedicated during the service. On it will be a tiny tablet to record that it was given by the K.S. on 29th. June, 1975. Total cost is approximately £20 and although we have funds from which this account can be paid it is usual to launch an appeal, for there is always a number of members who like to subscribe towards such gifts. Some may have links with Much Marcle or with the families concerned and would wish to subscribe for that reason. ANYWAY, ALL CONTRIBUTIONS GRATEFULLY RECEIVED please send them to the Hon. Secretary at 8, Prince Edward Road, Broomy Hill, Hereford.

THE MARRIAGE REGISTER - AND THE PHOTOGRAPH:

I understand that the Vicar of Much Marcle intends having the relevant page of the Marriage Register on view that with the signature of bride and bridegroom and of Francis Kilvert, the best man.

Copies of the wedding photograph will be on sale on the "bookstall" in the Village Hall at tea time, along with a small selection of our publications and cards.

The new Christmas Card for 1975 is to be of the old Rhydspense Inn at Whitney-on-Wye taken in about 1910 and therefore still very much as when Kilvert so often passed it when walking between Whitney and Clyro.

THE A.G.M. and SOCIAL EVENING ... 24TH. APRIL, 1975.

This was the 22nd. A.G.M. (the first being in 1949) and the first to be held in the St. John Ambulance Hall in Hereford (due to the demolition of the larger Hall at Eignbrook). Some had wondered if the present high cost of petrol would adversely affect the attendance, but in actual fact we had a larger number present than for some years ... almost one hundred. Perhaps there were exactly one hundred, for each year a few do not sign the attendance register. Members came from far and near ... Birmingham, Swansea, Shrewsbury, Worcester, Malvern, Cheltenham, Knighton, etc., in addition to local members and those from just over the borders.

Mr. Frederick Grice took the Chair and welcomed all present and then called for a few moments silence in memory of those who had died since the last meeting. After hearing from the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer, came the Election of Officers. Vice-Presidents were all re-elected, with no additions. The Committee was also re-elected en bloc with the addition to it of Mr. R.I. Morgan of Dilwyn, Hereford. He had been co-opted for the March Committee Meeting and his appointment to the Committee was now confirmed. The final business was the re-election of the Hon. Treasurer, Asst. Hon. Treasurer and the Hon. Secretary and the business part of the meeting ended shortly after 7. 30 p.m.

Mr. Grice then read a paper which he had composed ... THE HUMOUR IN KILVERT'S DIARY. This was very well received, and will in due course be reproduced for sale in the same way as some of his previous talks. This took us up to 8 o'clock and time for REFRESHMENTS. The really large Ambulance Hall enabled us to prepare ten tables at one end of it - whilst the meeting was at the stage end, making for a quick change over both before and after the refreshments. Upon resuming we heard from several different speakers during the 45 minutes prior to 9. 30 p.m. First the Vicar of Much Marcle (the Rev'd. Graham Holley), who told us something of his Church and Parish and gave us an outline of the forthcoming service. Then Mr. Le Quesne of Shrewsbury, who spoke on THE VENABLES DIARY (to be in part published in due course). He was followed by Canon J.S. Leatherbarrow of Malvern who spoke on the Kilverts' Worcestershire connections and raised the query as to why Miss Maria Kilvert was offended by her kinsman writing the LIFE AND WORK OF BISHOP HURD. Finally, the Rev'd. J.J. Harding (Bockleton, Worcs) spoke on "Communicating" and brought into a thoughtful little talk the fact of how good a communicator was Francis Kilvert.

Then came a complete change, the last half-hour was given over to Mr. John Howell who is Senior Lecturer in Speech and Drama at Hereford College of Education. Mr. Howell is a Swansea man who knew Dylan Thomas and now specialises in giving Dylan Thomas recitals. He is really excellent, and held the company spellbound (when they were not laughing). Ten o'clock came too soon, but I think everyone went off smiling!!! But not before Mr. Grice had thanked all concerned who had contributed to such a happy and lively evening, particularly all the ladies who had prepared and served the excellent refreshments.

SATURDAY, 28TH. JUNE ... ANOTHER WALK.

Following the custom of recent years there will be a WALK on the day before the SERVICE at MUCH MARCLE. It will be "as usual" in that all those coming by car are invited to meet at CLYRO at 11 a.m. (near the Baskerville Arms) - each bringing picnic lunch and tea, but after that we hope to do something different ... a circular walk, by paths wherever possible, otherwise along the lanes, and passing by as many of the places mentioned in Kilvert's Diary, as can be managed. We shall have to organise a car to take picnic baskets to an agreed spot en route, other cars being left at Clyro until we return. Our Hay and Clyro committee members will no doubt help to get it all worked out beforehand. Then in OCTOBER we shall hope to break new ground by having a walk in the Bredwardine Hill area on the day before the Autumn Service.

THE AUTUMN SERVICE.

This is to be at NEWCHURCH (Radnorshire) on Sunday, 12th. October, by kind invitation of the Rev'd. W.M. Davies of The Rectory, Rhosgoch, (Rector of Bryngwyn with Newchurch and Llanbedr). There has not been a Kilvert Service at Newchurch since 1952. Twenty-three years is really too long an interval when one considers how much the Newchurch area comes into Kilvert's Diary. As usual, full details will be in the October newsletter.

KILVERT'S DIARY ... sets of the 3 volumes selling like "hot cakes".

The item on p.12 of the March newsletter spurred many members into buying the set of 3 volumes. A tiny advertisement in the "Times Literary Supplement" brought in more orders. Several sets were sold at the "bookstall" at the A.G.M. - so that the publishers have had a good many orders for a dozen sets from us in the last few months. BUT WE HAVE HAD A FURTHER WARNING FROM THEM - THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE COMPLETELY SOLD OUT LONG BEFORE THE END OF 1975. Anyone thinking of buying the set of 3 volumes is therefore advised to wait no longer. A set is £12 and the postage an additional 50p. Plenty in stock now, but do hurry if you want one.

A LITTLE MORE OF THE ORIGINAL DIARY.

(Page 7 of the March newsletter). The 200 of those little booklets mentioned then have nearly all been sold - and a further 200 ordered. Have you had yours yet? They are 35p. including postage. They will be on sale after tea in the Village Hall at Much Marcle on the 29th. June - along with a few each of all our publications, etc., etc.

A KILVERT SYMPOSIUM.

Mr. Grice says that this should be published in time to be on sale on the 29th. June too. It contains contributions from all who took part in the Attingham Park Conference in January and is, therefore, an account of the proceedings and should be of great interest to all members. Mr. Grice has edited it. Price not yet fixed. Mr. Grice has another booklet in course of preparation ... an illustrated introduction to Kilvert's Diary and the Diarist, summarising the main discoveries about Francis Kilvert over the last few decades. This will be available later on this year.

SOME OF OUR AUTHOR MEMBERS.

Readers of this newsletter may like to know about books by members. (I am always ready to do a note on such things if only members who write will let me have brief details of their latest).

WORCESTERSHIRE by Canon J.S. Leatherbarrow was out in 1974, but somehow I missed to include a note about it in either the March or October newsletter. I have read it and can thoroughly recommend it. A Batsford book, with a number of good illustrations and yet only £2. 50.

WELSH BORDER COUNTRY by Maxwell Fraser ... I noticed this book on show in a Hereford bookshop, almost side-by-side with "Worcestershire" and as it is by another of our members and has not been mentioned here previously I decided that it must have a few words too. Another Batsford book and also at £2. 50.

TALES AND BELIEFS - a book on folklore for children (Nelson). The latest of a string of books by our Deputy President, Mr. Frederick Grice - published in 1974.

In 1976 Mr. Grice hopes to publish a story for children inspired largely by the Kilvert Country. Also to appear in 1976 is an article on Kilvert at Clyro. It will be published in the Anglo-Welsh Review.

A DAY IN GOWER WITH MR. WYNFORD VAUGHAN-THOMAS.

The day of the Autumn Service at Ilston was one of mist and drizzle (but one to be long remembered for the warmth of our welcome and the splendid service) and it was ironical to learn of the fine weather in Hereford and in many other places on that October day; but things were quite the reverse for our second visit to Gower on May 17th, for it was bright and sunny there all day whilst Hereford and much of the rest of England and Wales had rain, in some places heavy and prolonged.

After a good run via Clyro, Brecon and over the Brecon Beacons we reached Swansea soon after noon, a most enjoyable run - especially for those members from Barnet, Bristol and Winborne (Dorset) who were staying in the Hereford or Hay areas for the weekend (or longer) and were picked up en route. Others from Worcestershire and Gloucestershire joined the coach in Hereford and a few who failed to get seats on it followed by car. A number of our Swansea area members met us at the chosen picnic spot overlooking the lighthouse at Mumbles. Here our President joined us and after lunch read the relevant extracts from the Diary and pointed out where the sheep were "driven down the steep slope into the sea" whilst a boy played "Rosalie and Prairie Flower" on an accordion as he ran. From here Kilvert walked the cliff path to Langland Bay and Caswell Bay, but we went round and visited them by coach, beautiful bays still, despite all the "development" since Kilvert's time - Caswell especially so. Then onwards past Kilvrough towards Penmaen where just beyond the start of the narrow road up to Ilston we all walked up a beautiful "green cwm" to the "graves of the unknown" and found it all just as Kilvert described this prehistoric group of burial chambers (now well protected and under the care of the Ministry) ... see page 185 of the second volume. We even found a cowslip growing nearby, just as the footnote to that page tells us that Kilvert found one. Without Mr. Vaughan-Thomas we would not have easily found this "green cwm" and after telling us much about it and the surrounding area and its history (darkened by tales of the De Breos family of Abergavenny ill-fame) he took us a little further up the cwm, and there among the trees at the top of a steep little climb was Kilvert's "bone cavern" (marked on most maps as "Cathole Rock"). All very rewarding. En route for Cefn Bryn we halted at the spot where the President knew there was a fine view down over Three Cliffs Bay and Oxwich Bay, two gems of the lovely Gower coast (Kilvert called it "Three Cleaves") before the long climb over the "backbone of Gower" with its good views in several directions; then via Cheriton to Llanmadoc for a visit to the church (which we were fortunate to find un-locked, because local ladies were renewing the flowers ready for Sunday). Here our party quite filled the small church - every pew of it - and

listened to Mr. Vaughan-Thomas reading pages 183 onwards of volume two, and telling us much about the Rev'd. J.D. Davies (the Historian of Gower) who Kilvert met and liked. We had seen his wood carving in the church and there is even more of them in Cheriton church, which we passed but hadn't time to visit. The former Rectory was viewed and photographed, most of us agreeing that it was not the "ugly barrack" of Kilvert's description. It adjoins the churchyard ... below is Carmarthen Bay and the Burry Inlet leading up to Llanelly.

Tea time was now not far off so coach and cars were boarded for the drive through lanes and hilly roads towards Rhossili and Worms Head, many places of interest were passed en route and Mr. Vaughan-Thomas regaled us with stories of the smugglers of bygone days who lived in some of them, and pointed out much of interest. Then the odd shaped Worms Head loomed up and we were at Gower's "Lands End" ready for a good tea at the Worms Head Cottage Hotel, high on the cliffs overlooking both the Head itself and the wonderful expanse of Rhossili Bay. After tea the President told us much about Worms Head, the blow holes, the wrecks and the treasures from them. Mr. Grice, the Deputy President, then proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Vaughan-Thomas for his leadership throughout the day and his fascinating talks, he had indeed made this visit to Gower a memorable one.

After starting on the homeward run we made the last call of the day ... to Oxwich Bay and Church, past Penrice Castle and across Oxwich Burrows (a nature reserve of ponds, sedge, bird life and rare plants and flowers). A short walk from the coach parked on the sands took us to the church on the headland where Kilvert and his friends "had a merry windy luncheon on the bank near the churchyard gate, great fun, and famous laughing". This was in October 1878, during his last visit to Ilston Rectory, for a year later he was dead. Our final halt was at the lychgate of Sketty Church in Swansea, where Mr. Vaughan-Thomas pointed out the faded traces of the names of "all the snobs of Swansea" which had, (so Kilvert said) desecrated it. Here we parted with our President with renewed thanks to him for our splendid day in "his" Gower; homewards over the Brecon Beacons in a lovely evening light to arrive in Hereford an hour late, but no-one grumbled for it had been difficult to get the party moving on after each visit - due, of course, to the beautiful day, the scenery and the interest created by our President.

A NEW GUIDE TO GOWER ... by Wynford Vaughan-Thomas. This will be "out" in October, just right for a notice about it in the October newsletter. Kilvert's visits and the impact that Gower made on him figure largely in it - I understand.

BISHOP HURD OF WORCESTER.

At the A.G.M. on the 24th. April this year, Canon Leatherbarrow posed the question "Why was it that Miss Maria Kilvert of Worcester was so offended by the Rev'd. Richard Kilvert writing the "LIFE OF BISHOP HURD" that she cut his side of the family out of her will? No-one had any suggestions to offer, so I stood up and told what follows..... a keen member who lives at Guildford was also similarly puzzled, so he got the book in question from a library - and read it right through (ponderous as it is). The only thing he came across in its many pages that might be the answer to the query is where Richard Kilvert refers to the Bishop on some occasion being like "an old woman in petticoats". Any comments?

MADLEY FESTIVAL - 1975.

Each year, for some years past, the June newsletter has given brief details of this annual event held in one of Herefordshire's loveliest churches - Madley, some five miles or so west of Hereford. This year's MADLEY FESTIVAL is to be on the 7th. to 13th. July. Some of the highlights are D. and M. Musckett presenting "Flutes, Reeds and Whistles"; the Orchestra da Camera with Harold Gray and Angela Beale; A Serenade Concert, etc., etc. Full details from the Hon. Secretary, T.W. Lloyd, The Forge, Tyberton, Madley, Hereford.

A COWSLIP IN THE LATCH HOLE.

It was apparently Kilvert's practice to put a cowslip or an ivy leaf in the latch hole when he called at a house and found no-one at home.

"No one was at home at Pant-y-Ci so I stuck a cowslip in the latch hole by way of leaving a card and went on to Crowther's Pool". (p.122 in volume one).

Several times over the years my wife and I have come home to find an ivy leaf in our key hole or under the letter flap - telling us that some member who really knows the Diary had called when we were away. Never a cowslip, they are much too rare nowadays. The last time this happened was on Friday, 16th. May, and a neighbour who wondered why on earth they were picking some ivy leaves, told us that they were two men, one grey haired. Perhaps someone will recognise themselves? Sorry we were out - we are always glad for a member to call ... particularly those from far afield.

A VISIT TO TULLIMAAR - by the Hon. Secretary.

The March newsletter (p.p. 5 and 6, under the heading "Skinners Diary") hinted that a little party of local members were off to Cornwall in April and that a report of this would be in the June newsletter.

Here it is Two of our Forest of Dean members organised this visit and invited a few local members (and one from Bath) to join them and make up a party of 10. They hired a minibus and away we went, first to Bath to pick up the last member of the party, then to Camerton (see next item) onwards to Exeter and across Dartmoor to Tavistock and so to Lostwithiel for a visit to Restormel Castle (see footnote), getting to the farm near Truro where we were staying in nice time for the evening meal. Next morning to Rosewarne in Camborne (now a Home for Spastics, but still very much as when Kilvert visited it and was taken out by the "larky" Capt. Parker and later dined on conger eel). As Kilvert and the Hockins drove away afterwards "the granite columns sparkled in the moonlight"; for us they sparkled in the sunlight as we drove away after a rewarding hour there. This visit was, of course, arranged beforehand, as was the meeting there with our Camborne member (Mr. Pascoe) who was our guide to Portreath and Godrevy. At Portreath we noted the now deserted harbour which was the scene of much activity when Kilvert visited it, and the inn where they stabled the horses during that visit; then on along the coastal road to Godrevy - a place which fascinated Kilvert; then to Gwythian to see the church and find the window to the memory of the drowned curate. Next, a drive around St. Ives and on along the coast to Zennor and then to Gurnards Head. Each day it was fine and bright, with wonderful visibility and blue seas, but the wind cold and boisterous ... too much for anyone to venture out on to Gurnards Head as Kilvert did, but some of us went half way and got some good photographs. Then miles more of coastal road to Lands End, for a brief visit. Next to Treen and a walk to the Logan Rock; then via St. Buryan to Penzance for a quick run round before the return to Truro and the farm again.

Next day to Tullimaar, by kind invitation after some correspondence with the new owners. This was the real "highlight" of our few days in Cornwall; such a kindly welcome from folk who have just bought the three volumes after being loaned by a local lady. We were even shown which bedroom Kilvert occupied, for after reading the Diary it becomes very obvious that it could be no other. Everything must be much as Kilvert knew it, but has been sadly neglected of late years by elderly occupants. It is now in good hands and house, grounds and garden will be restored to much as in bygone years. We called at Perranwell Station, just as a train came in from Falmouth, and walked to Perranwell Church, along the route that Kilvert walked with the Hockins. Then on to Falmouth, for a quick run round before making off for the Lizard, but not by the main road, we went as they did, by lesser roads through Stithians and Gweek. Now the Diary tells us that here a horse cast a shoe and they lunched whilst he was re-shod at the smithy. Just before Gweek we lost the tail end of our exhaust pipe, dumped it in the Gweek litter bin and went off to find the smithy a dark little place, surely the same as in 1870; AND WE FOUND THE SMITH SHOEING A HORSE !!! On to the Lizard and after that to Kynance and on to Mullion; all just as beautiful as Kilvert found them (and we had it all very much to ourselves, no crowds as later on in the year). The part thatched Old Inn must be very much as when Kilvert and his friends were there, and across the road Mullion Church is well worth a visit. After that, Helston and back to the farm for our evening meal.

Next morning we set off after an early breakfast for home, again by a devious route, for we were determined to visit Tintagel en route (see footnote) and to hug the North Cornwall, Devon and Somerset coast to Bude, Lynmouth and Minehead before we struck the motorway at Bridgwater for the Severn Bridge and home. This we did, and the splendid weather held up for us as far as Lynmouth, after that gentle rain for a while but fine again in the later stages of our journey. A memorable few days in Cornwall. Anyone wishing to do something similar can have more details from me ... and the address of the farm where we stayed, for it is a place that we can thoroughly recommend, in every way.

Additional Notes.

Some time before she destroyed most of Kilvert's 22 black notebooks, Mrs. Hope (his niece) gave one of them to William Plomer; it has now been given by his executor to Durham University (presumably because it was Durham that conferred D.Litt. on William Plomer). Not long before he died Dr. Plomer wrote out (for us) all that is in that notebook that isn't in the Diary. From this we made notes before starting for Cornwall. Now, at the foot of page 201 of Vol. 1. there is a note which reads "A series of expeditions to Tintagel, etc.". This covers much more than most would suspect. From it we know that on Tuesday, 2nd. August, Kilvert and the Hockins went on an afternoon train to Lostwithiel, and after booking supper and room for the night at the Royal Talbot, walked out to Restormel Castle, these lonely ruins greatly impressed Francis Kilvert and in Dr. Plomer's written pages there is a long and very interesting account of them and of Kilvert's impressions of them and their surroundings. Next morning the party set off in a wagonette for Tintagel. Between Bodmin and Camelford a violent storm caused them to use

much ingenuity to shelter Mrs. Hockin from the worst of it. They dried out at the inn (which we photographed) and then on to Tintagel, putting up at the Wharnccliffe Arms (also photographed) for lunch and to rest the horses. Their visit to Tintagel Castle is described in detail. It was interesting to note the ruins of "the little low house which was or had been a mill" down by the stream in the narrow valley by which one approaches the castle, for this is where Kilvert and his friends called for the key and a guide. It was good to have all this additional information on Kilvert's holiday in Cornwall; indeed, we would no doubt have missed Lostwithiel and Restormel Castle without them, and perhaps Tintagel too. In due course it may be possible to make it available to any member wishing to acquire it, though the cost of photostats of Dr. Plomer's ninety handwritten pages may be quite substantial. (Any offers of such photostats at a "cut" price or at part cost would be greatly appreciated).

SKINNER'S JOURNAL ... AND CAMERTON.

The item in the March newsletter (wrongly headed "SKINNER'S DIARY") created a lot of interest and brought a number of orders for the 1971 re-prints which were offered. Indeed, the first dozen copies sold out very quickly and we are well on with the second dozen. They are £4. 50 plus 37p. postage, and the publishers have not yet indicated that they are approaching the point when the edition will be sold out. Almost all of the party who went to Cornwall in April had read SKINNER'S JOURNAL and were therefore glad of the opportunity of paying a brief visit to Camerton en route. It is only about five miles out of Bath, on the road for Radstock. The Red Post Inn is actually on that road and just here is the right-hand turn for the church. It is an interesting church, with tablets, etc. to some of the people one reads about in the Journal. Mrs. Skinner's tomb in the churchyard (easily found when one has seen the photograph of it in the book) together with the Manor House across a meadow from it. All around the grassed-over "tips" bear witness to the industry of former days, for this was well in the old Somerset coal-field. We were glad of this opportunity of visiting Camerton and considered the little detour and the half-hour it took was all well worth while.

OBITUARY

News of the death of a Cardiff member with a well known name has only just reached me, though it occurred in January. I refer to the late Mr. T. Chichester who (with Mrs. Chichester) had been a member for many years. He was a kinsman of the famous yachtsman, Sir Francis Chichester. A keen reader of Kilvert's Diary, Mr. Chichester was often asked to give readings at local meetings.

In March the Society lost a founder-member and my predecessor as Hon. Secretary with the death (in his 91st year) of Mr. W.H. Ellis of Hereford. He became Hon. Secretary during the first year of the Society's existence (1948) and held the post during those early years when it was expanding up to the A.G.M. of 1955 when I took over. Mr. Ellis remained on the Committee up to 1968, when he resigned, continuing as a member for the rest of his life. Mrs. Ellis died in 1952. The funeral service was at Eignbrook Church (where he was a Deacon and had attended for the last 40 years or thereabouts) and was largely attended. The Society was represented by Mr. Worsey, Mrs. Peters and myself together with a number of other members.

Another death in March the news of which caused widespread regret was that of the Radio personality, C. Gordon Glover. Though not a member of this Society he was sympathetic towards it as he was towards most things with a country flavour. A personal recollection of him will be found on another page, headed "IN KILVERT'S COUNTRY WITH C. GORDON GLOVER".

CLAREMONT.

In the SUMMER 1975 number of the magazine "THIS ENGLAND" there is an article - and a picture - under the heading "Claremont gardens to be restored". It states that "The National Trust has received a grant of £65,000 from the Slater Foundation to restore the 18th. century character of Claremont, a landscape garden at Esher, Surrey. Claremont was once a great estate, centred around a Mansion House. All that now remains are 50 acres of landscape garden owned by the National Trust and, in private ownership, the original House and its immediate surrounds which is occupied as a school". My thoughts immediately turned to KILVERT'S DIARY and I looked up CLAREMONT in the index. Pages 293/8 in volume one are well worth reading again in view of this article. Kilvert was there when it was virtually a Royal residence. This ceased to be so some 55 years or so ago. The account as in KILVERT'S DIARY makes very interesting reading.

"IN KILVERT'S COUNTRY WITH C. GORDON GLOVER"

The recent death of this well known Radio personality (many members no doubt heard the tribute to him by our President ... Mr. Wynford Vaughan-Thomas ... they were old friends) reminds me of the time when he thrust a little temporary fame on ME!! In 1972 he decided to include something about KILVERT COUNTRY in his "Countryside in May". Someone obviously told him to write to me about it and there followed quite a little correspondence between us. Some time in March he came to the Clyro area to do the recording and I met him there one nice bright evening. Now, all the time I thought that I had been advising him where best to go and what best to talk about in order to "get a quart in a pint pot" - and that evening I thought that I was merely taking him to the spot where I have often taken people who are in a hurry but want to get a glimpse of "Kilvert Country" and have as much as possible told them in a nutshell. This vantage point is about mid-way between Clyro and Painscastle, at almost the highest point on that road which goes over the shoulder of the Begwns.

"Here we are" I said, "from this point you can see so much of the country of the Diary - Painscastle below you, Llanbedr and the haunts of the "Solitary" to the left, Rhosgoch Bog to the right, beyond that is Newchurch and over the hill in the distance is Glaschw". He listened as he got his equipment ready, and then - quite suddenly - thrust the microphone at me and said "YOU are doing the talking". I had no chance to quibble, nor time in which to get nervous, so all I could do was to get on with the job and do my best. Fortunately I do know that countryside pretty well, and know the Diary pretty well, and therefore had no need to hesitate, or do much thinking. In about five minutes I managed to say a good deal and when I heard it "on the air" some weeks later, thought it didn't sound too bad. I had quite a few letters after it, and one or two 'phone calls. The call I best remember was from London, five minutes after the broadcast ended. This particular London member said, "How nice to hear your voice again; and how nice to be taken out of this stinking London to the hills of Radnorshire for a few minutes".

But this isn't the end of the story. Mr. Glover did an article entitled "Kilvert's Country" for the magazine "IN BRITAIN". It appeared, (splendidly illustrated) in the number for April, 1972. Five pages all told - ending with a tiny note about the Kilvert Society and my name and address. Enquiries came rolling in, from all over G.B. and from many other countries (especially the U.S.A), for this magazine has a world-wide circulation and is the type of publication that lingers on for years. This is evident from the enquiries that I had over the next two years, the last one was but a few months ago - from somewhere in the Mid-West of the U.S. Many sales of our publications has resulted, and of some copies of the Diary ... and one or two new members. Perhaps the last enquiry is still to come !!!

THE ONLY DEAD ELEPHANT IN THE FAIR.

Those members who study the social life of the Victorian era can hardly have failed in their reading to come across allusions to one of the lesser institutions of the age; Wombwell's menagerie, so that it is hardly surprising that we catch a couple of glimpses of it in that brightest of mid-Victorian mirrors, Kilvert's Diary.

Members who have read these passages in the Diary but who know nothing otherwise of what one writer has described as "although not the first peripatetic zoological collection, certainly the largest" may be interested in the following biographical notes.

George Wombwell, who was born in 1777, started his working life as a shoemaker, but his natural inclination towards wild animals and birds led him to purchasing two of the first boa-constrictors to be brought to this country, and which he proceeded to exhibit with so much financial success that he was able to acquire more animals and set up as a travelling menagerie. In due course, as his venture prospered, he formed three separate shows, known respectively as "Wombwell's Royal No. 1. Menagerie", "Wombwell's No. 2" and "Wombwell's No. 3", each of which, of course, travelled its own separate way across the length and breadth of the country.

Like all successful enterprises it soon had its imitators and competitors, the most formidable of whom was a man called Atkins, and the rivalry between this "menagerist" and Wombwell gave rise to an amusing incident. One year Wombwell, exploiting good business in the north of England, decided not to make his regular attendance at the great Bartholomew's Fair in London, whereupon Atkins widely proclaimed that his own menagerie would be the only one to be seen at the fair, claiming that Wombwell's had conceded by this decision not to attend that the Atkinson collection was the superior of the two menageries. Wombwell, happening to be on a visit to London, heard about this and, although the fair was due to open in a fortnight's time, resolved to travel (and this was in the days before railways) back to Newcastle, where his menagerie was then stationed, and bring it to London for the fair.

This, after a four-day coach journey back to Newcastle and by dint of forced marches

on the capital, he managed to accomplish, and his great caravan arrived just before the fair opened. Unfortunately, however, one of the star attractions, the elephant, which of course had had to walk in double-quick time the two hundred and seventy miles from Newcastle, expired on arrival, affording Atkins what he at first thought would be an immense advantage. He had a large sign hurriedly painted at the entrance to his show: "The only live elephant in the Fair". However, the wily Wombwell, not to be outdone, quickly exhibited a sign outside his show: "The only dead elephant in the Fair". The dead elephant, in fact, proved to be a far greater attraction than the live one. As someone remarked, "You can see a live elephant any day, but how often do you get the opportunity of seeing a dead one?"

The enterprising Mr. Wombwell died in 1850, his business then having been in existence for some fifty years, a wealthy man, but working hard up to the very end. He left his "Royal No. 1" to his wife, who had shared the rigours of peripatetic life with him. The other two shows he left to a nephew and niece, having no children of his own. In 1866 Mrs. Wombwell handed over the "No. 1" to relatives of her own named Fairgreaves, of Edinburgh, who after less than five years decided to sell it piecemeal at auction. Accordingly, in April, 1872, seventy years after Wombwell had bought his first two snakes, the "Royal No. 1" was put under the hammer at Edinburgh, when the animals fetched just under £3,000 - a large sum in those days. But even this was not the end of Wombwells. I have not been able to ascertain the fate of the two lesser shows, but at least one of them must have gone on, for it was in May 1872 that Kilvert records the visit to Hay of "Wombwell's Menagerie" (they put up at the "Blue Boar"). His previous reference occurs in June 1871, on a visit to Dolgelly, when "the town was all alive and swarming with people", the menagerie "having just come in". Judging by his description of the show on this occasion it seems to have been a much grander affair than the mangy "caravan" which straggled into Hay in the pouring rain in 1872. Perhaps, indeed, at Dolgelly he had seen the famous "Royal No. 1 Menagerie" itself.

Contributed by R.I. Morgan, Dilwyn, Hereford.

Hon. Secretary's note ... I remember being taken as a small boy (in about 1914) to see "Bostock and Wombwells Menagerie" at Eardisley, Herefordshire.

WITH GREAT PLEASURE.

This is the title of a 45 minute broadcast which DAVID AND COLIN DAVIS are doing on Radio 4 on Saturday, August 2nd. at 10. 15 p.m.

Those who were at the A.G.M. on April 24th. 1974 will vividly remember these two brothers in "The Happy Highways where I went ... some memories of the Kilvert Country" and will want to make a note of August 2nd. and hear them then. (It will be repeated on Friday, August 8th. at 11. 05 a.m.). They tell me .. "It is really the story of our lives, and will include our discovery of Kilvert and a reading of "The Ball at Clifford Priory". Members everywhere (and their friends) are recommended to try to hear this.

THE MINI-MUSEUM

The long awaited news of what amounts to a KILVERT MUSEUM in HAY-ON-WYE has just come to hand. We are to have a LARGE GLASS SHOWCASE in the new branch of the County Library in Chancery Lane at Hay, and probably a second such case to follow. Or it may be that we can have one on the wall and one floor standing now. It was only passed by Powys County Council a few days before this newsletter was duplicated so final details are not yet to hand. The Kilvert Society will buy and own all or any showcase(s). The Committee at its March meeting voted a substantial sum for any such Museum idea, although it was all then very much just "in the air". The idea originated at the Attingham Park Conference in January and was put up to the Libraries Committee of the P.C.C. soon after that, and there has since been much correspondence, journeys to Llandrindod Wells, a visit to Crickhowell to see a similar library that has been open for some time, etc. Mr. Grice and I have shared these visits and we have had useful help from some of our members in the area. The new HAY BRANCH LIBRARY is well on towards being finished and is likely to be opened in September.

AN APPEAL.

Although the Committee voted money for showcases, etc. it is felt that members may like to subscribe. We propose dedicating the first as a memorial to the late William Plomer. It will cost £300 and will have an inscription denoting its dedication to him. Please send any donation for this purpose to the Hon. Secretary of the Kilvert Society. It would be nice to think that the first case could be bought entirely with members' donations. The money voted from funds would then be available for the second showcase.
