

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

President:

WYNFORD VAUGHAN-THOMAS, O.B.E., M.A.

Hon. Treasurer:

J.D. Worsey,
Coghill,
1, Harold Street,
Hereford.

Telephone: 3833.

Deputy President:

Frederick Grice, B.A.,
91, Hallow Road,
Worcester.

Hon. Secretary:

C.T.O. Prosser,
8, Prince Edward Road,
Broomy Hill,
Hereford.

Telephone: 2094.

Asst. Hon. Treasurer:

Mrs. E.G. Peters,
18, Moor Farm Lane,
Hereford.

Telephone: 67375.

Temp. Asst. Hon. Secretary:

Mrs. N. Turner,
16, Poplar Road,
Cleghonger, Hereford.
Telephone: Madley (Hfd) 8050.

*Ordin. closed
Sept. 1977.*

OCTOBER 1977

Dear Member,

As you will see above, my name is crossed off as Hon. Secretary, temporarily I hope, and below it is the name of the Assistant Hon. Secretary, Mrs. N. Turner. This newsletter is being drafted out in early September and tomorrow I go into hospital for a long or a short stay ... we shall see.

The Autumn Commemoration Service is to be on Sunday, 16th. October, at LLYSWEN (that part of Breconshire in the Wye Valley which now helps to make up the County of Powys) about mid-way between Hay-on-Wye and Builth Wells.

Although Kilvert is not mentioned in the Diary in connection with LLYSWEN CHURCH, we don't know what's in the unpublished two-thirds; in any case, the Crichtons and the Bevans are much connected with this church.

Service at 3 o'clock, conducted by our member, THE REV'D. MARTIN JONES, Rector of Llyswen with Boughrood; Lessons read by the President and the Deputy President; Act of Remembrance by the Rev. Hugh Lewis who still lives in Llyswen after retirement as Headmaster of Llyswen School.

THE ADDRESS will be given by THE REVEREND G.P. DAVENPORT (now living in Builth Wells after many years in Essex; he is a native of the district and a cricket lover - supports Glamorganshire). BOTH ARE K. S. MEMBERS.

After the Service, there will be TEA (at 50p per person) in LLYSWEN PUBLIC HALL, provided by the Ladies of Llyswen; afterwards a period of TALKS as usual; and the usual bookstall in a corner of the Hall.

A MOTOR COACH will run from HEREFORD (from the Town Hall at 1 o'clock PROMPT and will run via Whitecross, Clyro, Hay and Three Cocks). Fare 80p per person, reduced to 50p from Clyro and beyond. Return via Hay and Bredwardine if no Clyro passengers. Booking with Wyeval Limited, Bridge Street, Hereford, and by post to Assistant Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Turner, at the above address. Picking Up Points: - Clyro, near Wye Pottery at 2 p.m., at Hay, by the Town Clock.

Please note that we have different arrangements for SALES OF PUBLICATIONS AND CARDS, ETC., (BUT ONLY BY POST)... Mr. and Mrs. R. Morgan of "Heulwen", Castle Gardens, HAY-ON-WYE, via HEREFORD, handle these; both are K. S. Members (also Committee Members, and be termed further Assistant Hon. Secretaries). There is also a "Team" to answer queries; BUT ALL MEMBERS MUST BE WARNED THAT THERE MAY BE VERY CONSIDERABLE DELAYS UNTIL THE SYSTEM GETS WORKING WELL.

Will Members who have not received publications which they have ordered and may have paid for, please get in touch with Mr. Morgan at Hay (address above).

There is a Kilvert Country Exhibition of Paintings and Mosaics at Treble Hill, Glasbury-on-Wye. This ends on Saturday, 15th. October. However, Mrs. Ursula Cooper, the Organiser, has kindly offered to re-open on Sunday evening, 16th. October, to enable members and visitors to call in after the Llyswen Service and 'Social Hour'.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Prosser
C.T.O. Prosser - Hon. Secretary.

GIFT TO LLYSWEN CHURCH

It has become our custom to make a gift to whichever Church we hold a Kilvert Service. For October 16th. 1977, it is to be an alms box wall safe. This will be quite costly. We find that members each year wish to contribute to this - all such contributions please send to the Assistant Hon. Secretary, Mrs. N. Turner, 16, Poplar Road, Clehonger, Hereford.

RECEIPTS

It is very likely that receipts both for subs. and donations to the wall safe will not reach you until the March Newsletter is sent out and we ask for your tolerance under the circumstances.

THE MADLEY SERVICE - (JULY 1977)

Another splendid occasion - the beautiful church was well filled and well decorated and all listened with keen interest to the Rev. John Goss and to the lessons read by our President and Deputy President. On this occasion, a very short report will, I am afraid, have to suffice.

AFTERWARDS - IN MADLEY VILLAGE HALL

This large village hall was filled to capacity with members and friends partaking of a splendid tea put on by the ladies of Madley and staying on afterwards for talks by Mr. Wynford Vaughan-Thomas and Mr. Frederick Grice and others, always a good climax to such a day.

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

"Curate of Clyro" in the September number of BLACKWOODS MAGAZINE ... a fine, long item by our Painscastle member, John Brereton.

"Victorian Country Curates" by our member, Brenda Colloms ... out in September.

"Clyro after Kilvert" by Lawrence Le Quesne ... out before Christmas.

WALK ON SATURDAY, 15TH. OCTOBER - This will start near the Baskerville Arms in Clyro at 11. 30 a.m. and will be led by some of our Hay and Clyro members.

A.G.M. may be last Wednesday in April.

SUMMER COMMEMORATION may be on July 3rd. at Condober in Shropshire, with the Rev. William Price of Lampeter to give the ADDRESS.

ST. GWENDOLINE'S CHURCH, LLYSWEN.

The little Parish Church of Llyswen stands today on ground hallowed by over a thousand years of Christian worship. The original Church may have been no more than a cell built by a Welsh saint or missionary. During the second half of the ninth century (840 on) a court or palace was built somewhere in the vicinity at the command of Prince Rhodri-mawr, hence the name of Llyswen - white court or white palace. This court was to be used as a convenient meeting place for the three sons of Rhodri-mawr to settle their disputes, for between them they inherited the suzerainty of nearly the whole of Wales. It was probably at this time that a substantial Church was first built at Llyswen in connection with the "white court", because in his Will, Rhodri-mawr, expressed the wish that all church and religious houses should be re-edified and adorned.

Between the ninth century and the Norman conquest the Parish Church adopted St. Gwendoline as its Patron Saint - she is a local Welsh Saint and is buried in Talgarth. During the Norman period the Church was certainly rebuilt and afterwards it remained substantially the same until the rebuilding of 1862. The Victorian builders must have retained the original Norman ground plan, for the simple but perfect proportions of the Norman architecture have survived the rebuilding of 1862; however, all that remains of the old Church is the Norman Font.

The roof of the Church was restored in 1964 at a cost of over £1,000. The original stone roofing slabs are retained on the Tower which houses a single bell dated 1666. The East Window was given by the villagers in memory of the men of Llyswen who laid down their lives in the 1914-18 War. Three of the stained glass windows in the Chancel depict the Sower, St. Gwendoline, and St. David, the Patron Saint of Wales, together with his mother Saint Non. These windows were the gift of Mrs. Christy, Llangoed Castle. The latter window, together with the organ and its gallery, were erected in

memory of her son Denzil. The fourth window depicts St. Christopher, the Patron Saint of travellers, and was given in memory of Amyas Chichester, a former Churchwarden of this parish.

The greatest treasure is a silver chalice and paten which has been used by the faithful in this Church, week by week since 1624, at the Services of Holy Communion.

=====

LLANSHIVER REVISED

Since writing last on this subject a short while ago, I have become aware that there are more ramifications to it than I was conscious of at the time. This awareness stemmed originally from a correction brought fairly speedily to my notice, that the name has an older form quite different from what it has since become, a form to be found as I blushing learned (although, to be fair, the book is not easy to get hold of) in W.H. Howse's work on Radnorshire, where it figures as Llys-Ifor, a name thoroughly Welsh in character and denoting "the seat or court of Ifor or Ivor". The blush was well called for since, as an Ivor myself, I had had little thought at the time of my visit that I was speaking, in all ignorance, with one who

"Dwells in the Hall of Ivor",

as Wordsworth puts it in 'Simon Lee, the old Huntsman'.

So much I learned partly from our Secretary, Mr. Prosser, and partly from Mr. Gordon Rogers of Ross-on-Wye, who is connected by marriage with the Lloyds who have occupied the house for a good many years (although Kilvert, visiting the house in 1870, speaks of a Morgan family as living there). Mr. Rogers not only confirms the form of the name as included in Howse's book (and, incidentally, rejects Kilvert's charge of unhealthiness - a point I haven't space to develop), but also points out that 'Llan' the Welsh element in the present name, must be as spurious as the English remainder; for 'Llan' indicates the existence, past or present, of some place of worship, a claim to which this site has never been entitled. He also underlines the relevance of the prefix 'Llys', which, in view of the oblivion into which Ifor or Ivor has sunk, might seem a shade grandiose for an isolated farm-house, by providing some interesting comments concerning the structure of the house and the approach to it. In my own previous article I remarked upon recent renovations, but this was based upon the hasty observation of a stranger to the place. Mr. Rogers, who has evidently known the house over a considerable period, is able to speak with much more authority and has, moreover, talked of the changes to the house with a member of the family. Unfortunately, however, human memory being what it is, a certain doubt still remains in the absence of documentary evidence (which may, however, survive somewhere) and the presence of so many transforming renovations of recent years. The present house is in two wings, an east and a west wing. It is very possible that the east wing, although newer, may have replaced a larger wing which may or may not have been a part of Llanshiver as Kilvert saw it. The interest of this for the present discussion is, as I have said, that the prefix 'Llys' would seem to indicate a house of fairly considerable proportions; and oral tradition does seem to support this view.

On the other point of approaches to Llanshiver, Mr. Rogers mentions two routes apart from the easiest one today (the left turning off the Clyro to Newchurch road, which goes past Saffron Hill): "a rough lane turning off the Clyro to Rhosgoch road by the bridge over the Bachwy at the approach to Rhosgoch", a track which "necessitated crossing a field or two at the end" (the said lane eventually "became more and more impassable, and recourse had to be made to adjacent fields to by-pass it in several places, and now any sort of reasonable access from this point is out of the question"); and secondly - what, on reflection, Mr. Rogers considers Kilvert's likeliest means of access - a track which has always existed down the hill from Cefn-y-Blaen to Llanshiver. In fact the Diary describes only one actual visit to Llanshiver made by Kilvert and in this account he does speak of calling at Cefn-y-Blaen before going on to Llanshiver.

The interest of this last paragraph may at first be less apparent than that dealing with the earlier dimensions of the house, for who, one might ask, wants to know what lane was followed by a curate heading for a farm-house on a remote Radnorshire hillside a hundred years ago? However, the point is neither so trivial nor so esoteric as it may at first seem.

As I see it, it links up with centuries of history in south Radnorshire, for it is a curiosity of antiquity that the greater part of what we loosely call 'Kilvert Country', at least that section of it which is north-east of the Wye, long maintained a distinct unity under the name of Elfael from pre-Conquest times, when it existed as a Welsh cantref or hundred. After the Conquest, except for a part of the 12th century when it came under the protection of the Lord Rhys, it belonged continuously to Norman overlords, always however preserving its basic size and shape and its two principal centres of Colwyn and Painscastle. (This is a rather crude simplification

of the turbulent history of these centuries, as readers of Howse's Appendices to his "Radnorshire" will realise). In recent years Colwyn has virtually disappeared from the map, but its position can be identified about half a mile west of the significantly named Hundred House, which also has, not far away, a little place called Lllansantffraed-in-Elvel. Painscastle, on the other hand, is distinctly there still, however much its glory may have departed, and it may well be that Lllanshiver and these seemingly uninteresting approaches to it may be connected with the fading of that glory.

It may be remembered that another of Kilvert's rare references to Lllanshiver (to be found in the entry for 28.11.70) has to do with old Welsh legends. The passage is an odd jumble of features, in which pre-history, the Norman era, and modern times ("Miss Phillips" - or is Kilvert being whimsical?) co-exist; but that is not the aspect of it which interests me at present, but rather the assumption of Painscastle as the chief place thereabouts, confirming what the maps constantly indicate, and also the linking of Lllanshiver with Cefn-y-Blaen as military strongholds substantially manned (indeed 'manned' by giants according to Kilvert's myth) and acting as secondary fortresses to Painscastle itself. This ancient association of the two farms adds to the simple fact of their being adjacent, to explain the path to which Mr. Rogers refers; but perhaps more interesting is that other path, so debased now, which used to lead down to Rhosgoch, for it hints at that lost magnetism of Painscastle, when the village was indeed the living centre of Elvael for so many centuries. Lllanshiver and Cefn-y-Blaen must have looked west to Painscastle rather than, as now, south and east to Clyro and Hay, so long as Elvael preserved its unity (its social or economic unity probably outlasting its administrative cohesion); and here we may recall that Radnorshire was formed from the land which the Welsh called Rhwyng Gwy a Hafren ('between the Wye and the Severn'). The Wye, as long as there was a dearth of bridges, must have turned the gaze of people on Clyro Hill northwards and, as for Painscastle itself, that probably survived after Colwyn had failed, because it stood conveniently on a West-East route, an old drovers' road out of Wales into England, passing through Rhydspence.

The present article may seem to have given the original topic an altogether different face, historical rather than linguistic, but in adducing these new facts or speculations, I should not like to turn away altogether from the theme of language with which I set out. The main point of that earlier essay was the way in which Welsh place-names along the border, from north to south, have been corrupted in the course of time, with 'Lllanshiver' being used as an extreme example of the process since it joins a Welsh prefix with what looks like an English root. The earlier history of that name, which has been looked at in this sequel, in fact serves to underline the observation, for we now see that in this territory the Welsh prefix could be introduced indiscriminately (its meaning having been forgotten locally) and attached to a stem spelt either SHIFR or SHIVER but, whether Welsh-looking or English-looking, clearly associated with the English meaning and producing more of a mongrel than the 'womanthrope' of Miss Prism, which caused such a shudder in Dr. Chasuble.

Both Mr. Prosser and Mr. Rogers were able to add considerably to my own selection of names habitually corrupted, mispronounced or anglicised along or near to the border. I hope that they will both excuse me if I do not draw upon all their evidence, for to do so might, I feel, extend this essay unduly. However, I think it only proper to mention at least two which figured in the lists of both of them. One of them is Craig-pwll-du (Vol. 1. p. 36 of the 'Diary') near Clyro, which is generally referred to now as 'Grapple-dee', and the other is the distortion of 'Bryngwyn', the name of a considerable area in the hinterland of Clyro, into something more like Brungwin. I have heard this myself on the lips of a Clyro member of the Society, whose blushes I will spare, and Mr. Prosser himself speaks of mildly chaffing his late wife for her use of it, Mrs. Prosser being a native of the region.

I should like to give an example from my own reading experience. No one would say that A.G. Bradley, the author of so many topographical works, including at least three on Wales, had no love or respect for the Principality. Yet I can remember puzzling for a long time while reading his 'Highways and Byways in South Wales' over a certain view which he referred to as "the beautiful dingle of the Matchway". It was only by a process of elimination that I discovered that this delicious stream could be no other than that tributary of the Wye, the Bach Howey. Perceptive readers will note a further discrepancy between this Ordnance Survey version and that employed in a phrase quoted above from Mr. Rogers, where it appears as 'Bachwy'. Since the name means 'little Wye', Mr. Rogers's form is unquestionably the more correct, although the order of the syllables is un-Welsh. However, such a sequence would explain the corruption into 'Bach Howey', especially when it is realised that 'Bachwy', although appearing to be a word of two syllables, in fact contains three and would be pronounced something like BACH-OO-WEE, which is not so unlike the Ordnance Survey rendering as at first appears. Mr. Rogers is not sure where he came across the form which he uses, but it does appear in a News Letter of June, 1967, in a passage written

by the Rev. Brian James and Kilvert himself uses the form 'Bach Wye' in Vol. III, p.281.

Elsewhere in the Diary Kilvert betrays a few inconsistencies, just as a more learned man but with a similar smattering of Welsh, the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins did. Hopkins uses the word 'voel' for 'hill' in his poem, 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', regardless of the fact that there is no 'v' in Welsh. The word which he is 'distorting' is 'moel', which is sometimes mutated into 'foel' and as 'f' in Welsh sounds like the English 'v', the 'error' may have come about in this way. I put the words distorting and error in inverted commas because, with Hopkins, you cannot be quite sure whether or not he knew very well what he was doing, but took this liberty to suit his own poetic (in this case, alliterative) purpose; still, whichever the case, it provides yet another example, at an elevated level, either of English ignorance or of a kind of audacity which the English have frequently shown towards other cultures with which they have been brought into contact.

A question of some general interest arises here as to what attitude people with some knowledge of both tongues should adopt to what they may be inclined to regard as corruptions, if not actual monstrosities. Apart from the ticklish question of correcting or reproaching an adult, there is the long history of lost causes to deter one. We know that the English, of all peoples, (to drive in the point), will be the last to respect alien peculiarities of language, this probably being some defence mechanism at work to disguise linguistic weakness or laziness. We knew it in the First World War, when Ypres became Wipers and Armentières became Arm in tears; and we know it still, even from our B.B.C. news-readers, who fare better with the names of African chiefs than they do with those of Welsh reservoirs.

However, this submission to our neighbours' negligence hardly settles the matter, for we are here dealing not so much with English visitors or temporary residents as with a distinct social group, the people of the border country, whose inheritance is neither wholly Welsh nor wholly English; and it seems to me unfair to expect them to possess either culture in its lamb-white purity or to refrain from making innocent fun of their variants. If it is a no-man's land which they occupy, where the border has constantly shifted, in fact if not in law, but sometimes in law too, it is not surprising that the ground should be verbally miry and not the smooth lawn of parts at least of the Home Counties. What matters is not so much the hybrid nature of the language as the vitality of the people, and if this (perhaps in part because of the unsettled or diverse nature of the speech) has not shown itself in any memorable literary achievement (Kilvert's Diary apart as not being the work of a locally born man), it has surely done so in the preservation of their own individuality in conditions not always favourable.

Ivor Lewis.

MAUD HEATH'S CAUSEWAY.

It was in 1474 that Maud Heath, who is depicted on her statue as a market woman, but must clearly have been a lady of some standing and substance, left land and property in Chippenham to the care of Trustees who were empowered to use the income for the construction and maintenance of a raised path so that folk going to market in Chippenham could go dryshod. The causeway, constructed through the generosity of Maud Heath, starts at the top of Wick Hill, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Chippenham, descends the hill to Tytherton, crosses the disused Wilts and Berks canal, and then the Avon at Kellaways, passes through Langley Burrell and continues as a footpath along the Swindon Road. It is an extraordinary fact that after 500 years the causeway is still in use.

From time to time stones have been erected along the side of the causeway. The first of them was the statue of the donor on the top of Wick Hill. In 1872 Kilvert went with his sister Dora and a friend to see the view from the Monument; and later in the year when the hounds met a Tytherton he wrote, "We went up into the hill by the Maud Heath's Monument and along the crest of the Hill which commanded a view of the covert and country below".

It is of interest to note that one of the Historians of the causeway was the Revd. J.J. Daniell the Vicar of Kington Langley for whom Kilvert occasionally preached, and whose penny readings he helped with.

F. Grice.

VICTORIAN COUNTRY PARSONS - BY BRENDA COLLOMS.

The reign of Queen Victoria witnessed 'the golden summer of the parson's progress'. Brenda Colloms begins her new book with a brief historical outline of the status - social and economic - of the cleric since Chaucer's day, culminating in the high noon of his prosperity in the latter part of the nineteenth century when 'the priest and his patron had in many cases been at the same school and University, and a much larger proportion of the clergy than previously belonged to the higher grades of society'. This more stable period at the parsonage sheltered and encouraged an immense flowering of talent: the budding naturalist, scientist, poet, artist, eccentric - and black sheep - prospered and developed in the atmosphere of ordered calm and comparative leisure. The lives of some of the most vivid of these marvellously individualistic characters are the subject of this book.

Brenda Colloms is a lecturer in history and honorary librarian at the Working Men's College, London. Her first book, a biography of Charles Kingsley, was published in 1975 and had an enthusiastic reception from the critics.

'Mrs. Colloms carries her extensive knowledge with unaffected ease' - The Listener, '...particularly good on Kingsley as social reformer' - Anthony Storr, The Sunday Times. 'She writes pleasantly, and has good judgment about the historical scene and people, most of all about her hero' - C.P. Snow, Financial Times.

Characters included in the book are Charles Tennyson Turner, the sonneteer; John Mitford, Editor of the Gentleman's Magazine; William Barnes, vigorous defender of the Dorset tongue; Octavius Pickard-Cambridge, who became an expert on spiders, and whose work is still valued and relevant in scientific circles today; Patrick Brontë, father of the Brontë sisters; and Francis Kilvert who recorded country life in the matchless prose of his diary as he went 'villaging'. The variety of experience and the achievements of the Victorian country parson were astonishing; they added colour and vigour to the Victorian scene.

The book is published by Constable and costs £6. 50.

A DAY IN THE BLACK MOUNTAINS ON HORSEBACK.

Marvellous to watch birds from a horse, said the organiser, and so it happened that a group from our Ornithological Club, some of them middle-aged, like myself, with note books and binoculars, set off for Hay-on-Wye on a beautiful July day.

We met in the car park, and thence followed a narrow, uphill road, which eventually brought us to a farm on the edge of the Black Mountains.

After assembling on the roadside we stopped to admire the glistening thread of the Wye far below, and waited. A miscellaneous collection of geese, ducks, turkeys, hens and dogs of all colours, shapes and sizes entertained us, while all around stood a motley selection of horses eating eagerly from string bags filled with hay.

Eventually our leader arrived a small, tough, unsmiling North-countryman. We were fitted with hard hats and when I say fitted, that was scarcely true of my model - being one size too large it added miserable point to my total inexperience. Now followed the briefing and the allocation of mounts. The latter done in a humiliating manner according to his assessment of one's weight. I came into the 'over 11 stone class', only just may I hasten to add, and instead of one of the small Welsh ponies I fancied, I was given 'Flo'.

Flo was a large chestnut, the result of a liaison between a Cart mare and a Cob. Her back was broad in a literal sense only, for she had an unrelenting hatred of her fellow beasts, and I was told we must keep our distance.

Mount, said our guide, some skilled performers had already done so. The stirrup was about shoulder level and my heart reached rock bottom but, making use of the sloping yard, and a man who had been hunting, together with some undignified pushing and heaving, I finally found myself astride this mammoth quadruped. With a sickly smile I patted her neck and tried to inspire confidence on both sides. My friend was safely saddled on a small roan, but conversation was impossible as Flo's ears flattened at the prospect of any closer acquaintance, and I was glad to keep my distance.

At last the moment arrived when we moved off, and I found myself, by Flo's choice, almost in the front. The only horse Flo could stand was Paddy, a huge creature ridden by my hunting friend. This was lucky for me as I increasingly found myself thinking of the 'Pickwick Papers' and Mr. Winkle's unfortunate experience on skates. I clung to my new friend as he had to Sam Wellar.

"Tuck your bum in and keep your back straight", advice repeated in scathing northern tones throughout the day. Soon we had passed the cattle grid and were now on the open mountain. With larks singing, ravens croacking and a brilliant sun, I began to enjoy myself - but not for long. Some idiot began to canter, Flo followed suit and I was subjected to a horrible loose shaking, bringing my hat towards the bridge of my nose. I dared not let go to adjust it. By this time my life had shrunk to one purpose, which was to stay on whatever happened, and I clung to the saddle until mercifully the trotting ended and we reverted to a leisurely pace.

Thus we journeyed beside streams, Flo requiring refreshment at every point, depriving me of the comfort of that great neck, along narrow, muddy paths, until after three exciting and exhausting hours, we were told that it was time for lunch. Never carry tomatoes and bananas in a pack on your back when riding. It might be a labour saving way to make butter, but that rhythmic jogging destroyed the more attractive features of my meal and I was left with a few soggy sandwiches. Although nothing could destroy the bliss of sitting on the solid earth, unless it was the thought of what lay ahead.

Past a deserted farmhouse, through two gates, and a short pause, someone said we had come through the Gospel Pass, but I didn't know. Two ladies fell or rather slipped ignominiously from their mounts, with wry faces they climbed on again, and I feared the worst. We were told of last week's rider who had broken a collar bone, and we knew that he thought it served her right. I felt sure that if I fell it would certainly be my neck. I clung grimly to the saddle and tried to grip with my knees.

Below us we could now see the Monastery of Capel-y-Fin, as we climbed higher up the mountain, and a coursing stream gambolled over waterfalls as a Ring Ouzel called from a Mountain Ash Tree, and a Merlin skimmed the heather. Alas for equine bird-watching, if the rarest Eagle had flown above it would not have induced me to release my hold on those reins and saddle. My binoculars were just useless lumber.

Higher and higher we climbed, until at last we reached the escarpment and a breathtaking view across the fertile patterned plain of Herefordshire. Dismount, said our guide and lead your horses. Dutifully we slid off and fearfully began the descent. I had two worries, firstly to avoid being trampled on and secondly, to keep clear of my neighbours. Eventually we struggled down feeling like travellers to Khatmandu and probably looking like them as well.

Again the agony of mounting and time was running out, we were an hour behind schedule. Our leader began to trot and we did likewise. I clung desperately and unashamedly to the saddle, and at last we were on the road home.

Dismount and lead your horses. Stiff and weary our cramped limbs brought us to the farmyard. We were instructed to water our steeds and then to take turns to groom and unsaddle.

Flo, cantankerous as ever, added conviction to the saying about 'taking a horse to water' - she had had her fill from the mountain streams. As we waited she persisted in tossing her head in a fractious and irritating manner.

It all ended when I tripped over the reins and cut my knee on the yard. Flo, glad to be rid of me, made a dive for the barn. She was probably laughing. I never saw her again, I hung my hat on the nearest post, limping thankfully to the car, and a heavenly smell of petrol !!

Josephine Bromley.

KILVERT AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

Some interesting information on Kilvert's connections with the Isle of Wight has reached Mr. Hugh Dearlove from Mr. A.G. Parker, Librarian of the Isle of Wight Local History Study Group. He confirmed that Newstead, where Mrs. Cowper Coles lived and where Kilvert stayed when he went on holiday to the Island, is still standing and is now a hotel called 'Fairhaven'. A photograph of the house just after its erection (probably 1870) can be found in Georgian and Victorian Shanklin - (plate 49) by Dr. Lindsay Boynton. The house seems to have been occupied by the Cowper Coles' family from 1875 to 1883.

Mr. Parker's letter also suggests a solution to a little mystery that has long puzzled Kilvert readers. Why was it that Kilvert was so keen to see Yaverland, and what was the nature of the fascination it exerted over him? Mr. Parker suggests that Kilvert may have read of Yaverland in the works of the Rev. Legh Richmond who was curate of Brading with oversight of Yaverland from 1797 to 1804. The Secoetary would be glad to hear from any member of the Society who possesses or has access to 'The Young Cottage, Memoirs, or Annals of the Poor' by Legh Richmond, and who may be able to throw more light on the Yaverland enigma.

HONOUR FOR THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

Among the recipients of the Other Award for Literature in 1977 is our Deputy President, Mr. F. Grice. The Other Award, which was inaugurated some time ago by the Children's Rights Workshop, takes the form of annual commendations of a number of children's books published in the preceding twelve months. The special commendation for 1977 was awarded to Mr. Grice for the body of his work and the citation read as follows:

'This distinguished and prolific writer for children is perhaps best known for his historical novels set in the North East of England. His books include, The Bonny Pit Laddie, The Oak and the Ash, A Severnside Story, Young Tom Sawbones, The Black Hand Gang, and Nine Days Wonder - (all published by the Oxford University Press) ...

Historical accuracy, credible characters and an ability to bring vividly to life his stories of ordinary people and their difficulties, are the hallmarks of this outstanding writer for children, whose books are particularly memorable for the tenacity and courage of their young heroes who must struggle hard to achieve the future they want ... '

Hon. Secretary.

THE POEMS OF FRANCIS KILVERT - BY NOEL BRACK, SURREY.

Monday, 11th. March (1878) "To-day I wrote to Mr. C.T. Longman to whom I had received an introduction from Mrs. Middleton Evans of Llwynbarried, to ask him if, and on what terms, he would publish a small book of poems for me".

Friday, 15th. March (1878) "This morning came a letter from Mr. Longman, very courteous, but not encouraging the idea of my publishing a book of poems".

These two extracts from Kilvert's Diary have been of much interest to me from the day, many years ago now, when I first read them. They were of interest for various reasons not least perhaps in that the last of Charles Longman's fifty-four years with his family firm - namely 1928 - was the first of my forty years with the House of Longman.

From many entries in his Diary we know how much Francis Kilvert valued his poems, and one of his dearest wishes must surely have been to have them published in book form. Of particular significance is the entry for Friday, May Day (1874) - "Walking up and down the terrace with my father telling him about the Poet Barnes and discussing with him the advisability of publishing a book of my own poems. I wish to do so. He rather discourages the idea". (The use of the word 'advisability' shows how strongly he felt).

It would seem that nearly four years were to pass before Kilvert took a definite step forward and wrote to a publisher. Surprisingly too, when he did write, it would seem that he did not also send his poems, or a selection of them. It is also surprising that his letter was written to a young man of twenty-six, who had only been in book publishing for four years. Further, though Charles Longman's father and grandfather had published for many poets - Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, Campbell and Moore amongst them - since 1842 (when Macaulay's very successful "Lays of Ancient Rome" had appeared) Longmans had published little poetry, because the market for it had decreased. Francis Kilvert may well have been aware of much of this, yet perhaps he hoped that Wordsworth's publisher might publish his own poems.

For me the problem, admittedly of no importance but of some interest, was what was the connection between Mrs. Middleton Evans and Charles James Longman. Could it have been an Evans family connection? Charles Longman married Harriet, daughter of Sir John Evans. These two Longman and Evans families were friends and neighbours in Hertfordshire, and were associated in business. A year ago, however, a friend of mine asked Sir John's youngest daughter - Dr. Joan Evans, now in her eighties - if she knew of any connection between her family and the Middleton Evans, but she felt sure there was none. (In passing, it is interesting to note that her father, her half-brother Sir Arthur Evans of Knossos fame, and she herself, were all Presidents of the Society of Antiquaries).

Could the connection have been Oxford? When Francis Kilvert stayed at Llwynbarried in 1870, he records that at dinner the first night (April 20th) "The talk was chiefly about Oxford, and Old Oxford stories were revived". It would appear from this that Edward Middleton Evans had been at the University. The Diary for the same day states that Edward had three sons at Radley - this would mean that the eldest, Henry, might well be about eighteen - born, say, in 1852. Now Charles Longman was born in 1852, and went up to University College, Oxford, from Harrow. If Henry also went to Oxford, he might have known Charles. The problem was solved for me by Mr. J.A. Stratton of Wellington (Salop) now of Llandrindod Wells, a member of the Kilvert Society, and his friend Mr. Reg Oliver. Mr. Stratton kindly wrote to me saying that Mr. Oliver was an authority on the Middleton Evans. Both Mr. Stratton and Mr. Oliver are members of the Radnorshire Society and members of its committee. And so I set the problem down in writing and sent it to Mr. Stratton, and very shortly he sent me Mr. Oliver's answers, which solved the problem.

Both Edward Middleton Evans and his eldest son, Henry, were at University College, Oxford, and Henry and C.J. Longman had entered the College on the same day, namely 15th. October, 1870. Both men were keen sportsmen and must have been prominent members of their college. Henry, Mr. Oliver thinks, was a rowing blue, and he certainly was in his college boat, which went Head of the River in 1871. Charles Longman was an Oxford soccer blue in 1872 and 1873, and later Champion Archer of England (1883). The two men may or may not have been close friends, but they must have known each other very well. Hence the introduction from Henry's mother to Charles Longman, which prompted Francis Kilvert's letter.

=====

MOCCAS PARK.

We entered the park by the white gate, having first obtained permission and signed the visitors' book at the white-painted lodge. The grass in the park was a bright emerald green and surprisingly dry and springy after heavy overnight rain. In this first week of May the sun was warm and bright, but the wind, coming from the north west, was bitterly cold, scything like a knife across the park and round the battered boles of the ancient grey oaks. The trees had a bare, wintry look still, almost as though they were all dead, but closer inspection revealed new young growth just breaking through. Many of those huge, ancient, grey oak trees described so vividly by Kilvert, still stand, battered and bowed by another century of unremitting cold and heat, rain and sun, wild winds and winter storms. Many of the oaks have lost huge limbs, some stand isolated in the vast, rotting debris of their own dead branches. Some, not yet succumbing to their tremendous age, are still sound and vigorous, putting forth their first, bright, golden leaves to greet the Spring sunshine. The bitter wind rattled the top branches of the vast oaks, hurling forth the black, ragged shapes of jackdaws, to sweep and flap on the rushing air with loud cries of "Jack, jack".

The marshy lake, at whose edge Kilvert and his friends had picnicked 100 years ago, glittered and sparkled in the May sunshine, the wind rippling the surface and making the reeds sway and dance. Some black and white tufted ducks that had been paddling sedately on the shining surface took off hastily as we approached, and a Canada goose, honking loudly in protest, made a spectacular, running take-off, large wings beating strongly. It circled the lake several times before landing at the further side to join several other Canada geese. Their indignant cries followed us as we skirted the shining water with its sun-sparked diamonds dazzling the eyes.

We crossed to where the wooded ridge rose from the pastures and began the long climb upwards. Sheep with their lambs fed contentedly around us and we scanned the higher slopes in the hope of seeing some of the herd of deer that roam the park. We stopped occasionally to get our breath and look back at the ever-widening view of the lush, green vale of the Wye that was spread out behind and below us. The upright, red-brick mansion of Moccas Court stood serene and beautiful in its green parkland, just as it must have looked to Kilvert as he surveyed the same scene which now enchanted us. Cattle grazed on the far emerald fields, made toy-like by distance, and to the left of Moccas Court reared the rose-pink cliff of Brobury Scar, crowned and dotted with beech trees already bursting into brilliant green. It was a scene to gladden the heart.

We pushed on upwards and came out onto a sort of plateau about half-way up the hill-side. Here, sheltered from the wind, it was warmer and we were able to hear the calls and songs of the different birds in the trees around us. With so many dead or half-dead trees, peppered with holes, it was a paradise for hole-nesting birds, and in addition, many of the trees had numbered bird-boxes attached to them. The laughing call of the green woodpecker came frequently from nearby. The soft, sibilant songs

of tree creepers were all around us, and the small mouse-like little brown birds could be seen, creeping up and down the tree-trunks, searching for insects. The short song of a redstart sounded from an oak tree and soon we could see the singer and his white forehead, slate-blue back and brilliant orange tail, flitting about among the branches and sometimes dropping down to feed in the grass which was littered with dead leaves and sticks. Our excitement was great when we suddenly spotted a small herd of deer much higher up the slope, among the trees. We were so busy watching the herd that we almost missed seeing a little group of five deer that was standing quite close to us over a slight dip. They were watching us with bright, placid interest, and we were able to approach them quite closely before they suddenly decided to scamper a little further down the slope. There they stopped again and stood watching with their wide, innocent stare. Their light brown and white coats were bright and immaculate. One was a stag that had lost one antler and this gave him a slightly comic air. The little group eventually moved further away and were last seen quietly browsing among the sheep and lambs, their short tails flicking back and for. The rest of the herd were moving slowly up a green ravine which took them gradually higher and higher until they were lost to view among the wooded slopes.

Our attention was next attracted by a small black and white bird that was flitting about among the branches of a beech tree. Every now and then it darted out in search of insects and then returned to perch in the tree. It was a pied flycatcher, only the second one we had ever seen, and it was with great interest and delight that we watched the small bird, busy about its own affairs.

Now, as we slowly descended the long hillside, the cold wind brought a scurrying grey shower of rain with it. We looked back at the little group of deer, still feeding contentedly among the sheep, at the sparkling lake which the tufted duck had again left, to circle the park on swiftly beating wings, and at the many gnarled, twisted and massive oak trees, spread around the green parkland. Contented, we let ourselves quietly out of the white-painted gate and left.

.

Gwendoline Calderbank, Cheltenham.

The Snow Drop Field.

The snow-drop fields alive with sounds of children past and new
With games of chance and hide and seek and the early morning dew.
The snow-drop field was once a home - with children of its own
But soon the sad decay of life had taken every stone.
But still the children come to play - the games that children do
And yet they knew not of this house - I wonder now - Did you?

.

David Edwards.

Mr. Edwards who now lives at Lewisych, Lyonshall, Kington, at one time lived for a while in the stable block of the Old Court, Whitney-on-Wye, one time home of the Dew family, and his poem, 'The Snow Drop Field' is based on the Old Court, remembering with sadness its decay and loss.

Hon. Secretary.