

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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SEPTEMBER 1978.

Dear Member,

In was in July 1948 that the inaugural meeting of the Kilvert Society took place at Hereford. In his remarks at that meeting the late William Plomer spoke the following words:-

"My own view is that the most important of all ways to commemorate Kilvert is to read his Diary and make it known, because after all it is through the Diary that we know him at all. I think too it is important that there should be tangible and visible memorials to him in places where he lived and is remembered. Then there are a lot of jobs that admirers of Kilvert might do. It would be worth while to collect miscellaneous notes and records of his life, and somebody might go through old files of 'The Hereford Times' for news of Kilvert and for contributions from his pen. And I wish somebody would make an index and a sort of 'Who's Who' of all the people mentioned in the Diary. And I should like to see a well drawn map or two marking all the places mentioned in the Diary; as well as a collection of good photographs of these places as they appear today, and if possible any old photographs of these places as they used to be".

Thirty years later it can be said that Mr. Plomer's suggestions for commemorating Kilvert have been carried out by dedicated researches and devoted admirers. However, the coming year claims more commemoration, being the centenary of the diarist's death. It is the desire of the Committee to celebrate it worthily, they are working on a programme of events and the following dates are already arranged:-

July 1st. - Summer Service at Langley Burrell by kind permission of the priest in charge, the Rev. Derek Copeland.

Sept. 21st. - Centenary lecture at Hereford given by Sir V.S. Pritchett (described recently in "The Times" as the "master critic of the age").

Sept. 23rd. - a.m. Service of Holy Communion at Bredwardine by the kind permission of the priest in charge, the Rev. J.C. de la Tour Davies, a member of the Society.

- p.m. Service at Clyro by the kind permission of the Vicar, the Rev. D.B. Rees.

The Committee intend to arrange events for September 22nd. thus making a weekend of Kilvert celebrations, based on Hereford. It is hoped that the full details of these events will appear in our next Newsletter. Our Hawaiian members, Mr. and Mrs. Hurlbutt, have already indicated their intention to come over, and to donate to the Society the original of the letter written by Kilvert to Mrs. Hurlbutt's grandmother, Mary Ann Powell of Brobury, and also a prayerbook inscribed by him and given to Mary Ann's sister, Jane. These gifts will be made in memory of Mrs. Hurlbutt's father, Mr. Edward Morris, who died this year aged 80. The Society is most grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Hurlbutt for their kind gesture.

In this issue appear both Mr. Timothy Davies's most interesting, perceptive article, and the critical reactions of Society members to the series of episodes by the BBC last year.

Mr. Derek Trimby of BBC (Wales) has indicated in a letter to me that Sir John Betjeman's exploration of the Kilvert country and the Diary will be shown again on T.V. this Autumn, under the title of "Vicar of this Parish".

Yours sincerely,

E.J.C. West

Hon. Secretary.



AID FOR BREDWARDINE CHURCH:

My correspondence this year has contained many appreciative references to the small, secluded church of Bredwardine set amidst an unspoilt landscape. The parish has a very small population and in order to raise funds our member, Mr. K.R. Clew, has written a leaflet of the history of the church and village (and paid full justice to Kilvert). This is priced at 10p and can be obtained from Mr. H.H. Entwisle, Hill Cottage, Bredwardine, Hereford, plus a stamped addressed envelope of at least 9" x 4". A postcard showing the church is also available at 5p.

E.J.C.W.

PUBLICATIONS ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Address at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Lives and Work of Oswin and Joyce Prosser, held at Clyro Church, April 8th. 1978, by the Reverend D.T.W. Price, M.A. Mr. Price's Address is now available in the form of an 8-page duplicated booklet, price 25 pence post-free if ordered separately, or 20 pence, post free, if ordered with another (or other) publications.

Christmas Cards. The range of cards is now reduced to eight - Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 on the blue (October 1977) price list. Price, 8 pence per card and envelope. Minimum order accepted = five cards, assorted as required. Price includes postage.

After Kilvert. An order has been placed with the publishers for a quantity of Mr. Le Quesne's book, but up to the present time they have not yet come to hand. It is hoped to make a definite announcement about availability and price in the next newsletter.

R.I. Morgan, Publications Department, Heulwen, Castle Gardens, Hay-on-Wye, Via Hereford.

Members will also like to know that our Deputy President, Mr. F. Grice, has had another book published. Entitled "Johnny Head in Air" and published by Oxford University Press at £2. 50, it is the story of a boy who finds an early flying machine, reconstructs it and tries to fly it.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LANGLEY BURRELL AND ITS ENVIRONS:

Mr. Millard, who used to live at Langley Burrell, has given us an excellent set of colour photographs of Langley Burrell, Chippenham, Nonsuch, Langley House and many other places associated with the Wiltshire section of the Diary. It is hoped that they will make at least part of an exhibition of 'The Other Kilvert Country' next year.

F.G.

We have also to thank Mr. Millard for solving a botanical mystery in the Diary. Many have been puzzled by "Wag Wantons". Mr. Millard has ascertained for us that the reference is to Quaking Grass (*Briza media*)

E.J.C.W.

AN INCIDENT AT TRULL:

In Vol. 2, p. 267 of the Diary there occurs the following entry:-

An Archaeological Society was holding its meeting in Taunton and exploring the object of interests (sic) in the surrounding country. As we passed Trull Church a number of drays were drawn up in the road and the Archaeologists were in the Church.

Mr. R.W. Dunning, Editor of the Victoria History of Somerset, has sent, in a letter to Mr. Hugh Dearlove, the following note:-

This was an unofficial excursion by some members of the 'Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society' which was holding its 24th. Annual Meeting in Taunton. The main party had been on a day's excursion in the Quantocks, and after the last scheduled visit, to Bishops Mill, 'the excursionists returned to Taunton. Many, however, paid a visit to Trull Church'.

F. Grice.



WOOLHOPE NATURALISTS FIELD CLUB.

On May 3rd. 1969, members of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club, Herefordshire's learned society, founded in 1851, paid a visit to the upper Usk valley, above Brecon. This fertile agricultural area was then seriously threatened by a scheme to create a huge reservoir, and the Woolhope Club's outing was associated with a vigorous protest against such an undertaking. No less than 4 full coaches - a record for the club - took part in the expedition, which included visits by special permission to two historic mansions in the valley which would have been submerged had the plan gone through. First of all, Penpont - built about 1670, and refronted in 1815 with a long colonnade of 22 Doric columns - its lawns running down to the Usk, and a wealth of gorgeous trees in the grounds and along the river, and also an interesting church on the estate. Then, Abercamlais, the seat of the Lord Lieutenant of Breconshire, built about 1571, enlarged and altered in the 18th. century, and again full of interest within and without. Club members were greatly impressed by the beauty and historic importance of what they saw, as well as by the area's valuable farms, and fortunately the reservoir project was subsequently abandoned.

Along this valley, on the north side of the Usk, used to run the Neath and Brecon Railway, a line noted for its varied, and sometimes breathtaking scenery. Running up from Neath through the Dulais valley, part of the one-time heart of the anthracite industry, it climbed eventually into and over the mountains. Then, passing near Craig y Nos, famous for Madame Adelina Patti and also for the Dan yr Ogoth caves, it began its spectacular descent through Cray to Devynock and Sennybridge before turning eastward into the lush countryside of the upper Usk, and so to Brecon.

All rail services on this side of the mountains ceased in 1962, though I believe they are still maintained in the industrial belt above Neath. Back in the year 1875, the line was barely ten years old, and after many early difficulties was in the process of being taken under the protection of the powerful Midland Company, which had obtained running powers over it. Four years earlier, in 1871, only mixed trains - i.e. passenger and goods combined - were running.

And it was then - in 1871 - on October 18th. that Kilvert and his father, returning from a visit to St. Davids, joined the Brecon train at Neath. "The lower station", he writes, "was full of Breconshire people who had been at Neath market and were waiting for the train to take them home towards Brecon. They were a nice set of people, pleasant, courteous and obliging, and all seemed quiet and sober. A number of them got into the carriage next to ours, and soon they began to sing. It was a rich treat. They sang in perfect time and tune, all together, the trebles of the women blending exquisitely with the tenors and basses of the men. Then a man sang a solo to the company, and then they all chimed in together again. At every station some of the simple, kindly folk got out with their large baskets".

"Soon after we left Neath we crossed and recrossed the beautiful Dulais winding through a lovely valley among gorgeous woods. Then we came into a wild, bare region of mountain and deep, desolate valleys, with waterfalls leaping down the steep hill sides. The mountains loomed in gloomy grandeur, dark, grey, indigo and purple under a heavy, cloudy sky. As we drew near Brecon again, we got into a beautiful rich woodland country, highly cultivated, with lovely dingles and deep green meadows, and a fine gleam of sunshine at sunset lit the dingles and hill slopes and set the gorgeous wood aflame. The country around Aberbran, Abercamlais and Penpont seemed to me unusually beautiful".

As it seemed also to us, nearly a century later, in the month of May, 1969, when the Woolhope Club visited that lovely valley.

(Halfway through putting together these notes, I broke off for tea, and was delighted to hear our President's account of his second day's tramp over the roof of Wales - the section between Penderyn and Treacastle, completed on June 12th. He must have crossed the old Neath and Brecon Railway somewhere near Penwyllt, for there he was by Craig y Nos letting us hear a recording of Adelina Patti singing "Home, sweet Home", and then he was talking with caving experts about their activities. It was good to hear him in such good form, and it occurred to me that Frank Kilvert might well have liked to join him on this walking marathon - it would have been quite in his line, I imagine!).

J.D. Worsey.



### THE PENTWYN QUESTION:

The following was received from a gentleman in Leeds who, though not a member, is deeply interested in the Clyro countryside.

Pentwyn No. 1.	grid ref	211439
Pentwyn No. 2.	grid ref	220466
Pentwyn No. 3.	grid ref	228483

Pentwyn No. 3 can be left out of consideration. It does not lie in Clyro parish and is not mentioned in the published Kilvert. Whatever 'Pentwyn' means, it is very common in this part of Britain - there is another at Bryngwyn and yet another in Llanstephan parish near the Begwns.

Pentwyn No. 2 was the Forge, and the blacksmith in Kilvert's day was Mr. Nott. Whenever Kilvert visits it we hear also of numerous places which are geographically very close to P.2 - in particular Whitty's Mill, now an evocative ruin in the trees just below Tump Farm. This, incidentally, is not named on the O.S. map, but the site was confirmed for us by a woman whose husband is the grandson of Carrie Gore, Kilvert's friend at the mill. Pentwyn No. 2 is now totally ruinous, covered in nettles and willowherb, and lying just behind a gate on the left of the road to Llwyn-Gwilym.

Pentwyn No. 1 (the Hollom household) was the home of Miss Bynon, also visited by Kilvert, and mentioned too in connection with James Jones the sawyer who seems to have worked nearby.

The index in Plomer's Kilvert confuses Pentwyns 1 & 2, listing them under a single entry and ignoring references which do not include the actual name 'Pentwyn'. I believe the correct references are as follows:

#### Pentwyn No. 1.

(Bynon/Hollom)	Vol. 1.	153, 236, 248, 362*3, 367*
	Vol. 2.	156-7, 196
	Vol. 3.	82, 283, 402.

#### Pentwyn No. 2.

(The Forge)	Vol. 1.	53, 54, 121, 380
	Vol. 2.	123
	Vol. 3.	79

\* a reference to the Old Mill, now a barn by the stream, which then as now belonged to Pentwyn No. 1.

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### OBITUARY.

Members of the Society will be sorry to hear of the recent death of Col. E.P. Awdry of Rowden Hill, Chippenham. Many will remember listening to Col. Awdry and his son, Mr. Daniel Awdry, M.P. for Chippenham when we visited Kington St. Michael some time ago. I had many conversations with him during the last few years, and he told me a great deal about the Meredith Browns of Nonsuch and Mr. and Mrs. Prodggers of Kington St. Michael. I conveyed the sympathy of the Society to Mr. Daniel Awdry, and in his reply he told me that right to the end his father retained his wonderful memory and his sense of humour.

F. Grice.

We also regret to record the deaths of the Hon. Sir Ralph Cusack and Mrs. I. Hamer.

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Since the series, 'Kilvert's Diary' is due to be repeated this autumn, it is hoped that the following contributions, unfortunately postponed from our earlier issues, will be of added interest.

E.J.C. West.



"KILVERT'S DIARY" - MAKING THE TELEVISION SERIES.

It all started for me on the 10th. of January, 1977, when I was summoned to the BBC Television Centre in Shepherds Bush to meet Peter Hammond, Rosemary Hill and Ann Kirch in connection with a series called, "Kilvert's Diary". Just one of those general interviews, I thought, perhaps with the chance of a part in one of the eighteen episodes. It quickly became apparent that I was being considered for the role of Kilvert himself.

I knew virtually nothing about the man, and at that time (I might as well confess straight away) I hadn't read the Diaries. The brief details given by the producers intrigued me. As it happened we were both born in Wiltshire, separated by about a hundred years, and fifteen miles. Kilvert had been to Oxford, I to Cambridge. I was asked if I liked walking and was pleased to say that the previous day I had walked eight miles or so along the Ridgeway, near my parents' home in Marlborough. Could I grow a beard? Definitely! I was sent away to read the Diaries.

I found myself on a short list of five actors. Our own choice of excerpts from the Diaries were read by all of us in turn and recorded for reference. There were long chats with the director, followed by sessions of trying on false beards to obtain a likeness. Our previous work was discussed. I was fortunate in having worked with Rosemary Hill before, in a tiny part that involved a lot of sympathetic listening, which apparently I had done well, and Kilvert, Rosemary felt, was definitely a good listener! Three weeks after the initial interview I was cast, and a contract drawn up. It included an additional clause of requirement; "walking and cycling in rough, hilly terrain". Quite where the cycling came in I never discovered, but the BBC is nothing if not thorough.

When I left the Centre after that first meeting, I went to the library and managed to obtain Volumes I and III of the Diaries. So began my first real acquaintance with Kilvert. I tried to cast a fairly clinical eye at the work, looking for suitable extracts to record at my next interview - some descriptive pieces of course, some anecdotal, but all revealing as much of Kilvert as possible.

I was struck by how freshly he spoke and how quickly I became involved in his world. It needed no effort of will to identify oneself with the man. A strange and exciting process happened - I became Kilvert as I read him. I don't think I was being unduly influenced by the fact that I was hoping to portray the man; I am sure that this feeling must be experienced by everyone who reads the Diaries, and it explains to a great extent the extraordinary appeal that Kilvert has for us. He doesn't appear to be writing for a large public; there are no professional tricks to lure the reluctant reader, no self-conscious appeal to a likely audience, (although he is aware that his diary might be read by posterity) he is simply putting down his thoughts and feelings in an ordered yet spontaneous style to satisfy the very deep and personal need that we all have for self expression, and through which we come to terms with ourselves.

So when one reads the Diaries one has the uncanny sensation that those thoughts and feelings are one's own. Elements of one's own personality are reflected back from the page. One is Kilvert while one reads him. His loneliness, his love of the countryside, his romantic impulses, are ours too, however varied our individual characters. I must say that I was delighted by what I read.

I began to understand why Kilvert has such a devoted following, and how easy it must be to become a little possessive about someone who is so close and intimate. No wonder that the news that the Diaries were to be filmed for Television was received with mixed feelings in some quarters! The imaginative relationship one enjoys with a favourite character from fiction or with an artist like Kilvert, can so easily be ruined by someone from outside imposing his own interpretation. However, since Kilvert had left considerable documentation about himself, and a photograph, we had a good starting point for creating the reality of the nineteenth century diaries as honestly as possible.

As well as my own choice of pieces, which included Volume III pages 272-3, 28th. April 1876, the section on Florence Hill, which seemed to me to be a quintessential piece of Kilvert, I had been asked to read Volume II pages 276-8, 14th. October 1872, "A strange and horrible dream", which was to form a substantial part of the final episode, "Birthday". It's a vivid and dramatic piece of writing, and the object of the exercise (I discovered) was not to overdramatise the piece - a great temptation - but to let Kilvert speak for himself. The words are sufficient



and don't require any extra weight or colouring from the actor. It was important for me to bear this in mind throughout the making of the series. When in doubt, and I often was, rely on the simplicity and truth of Kilvert's words. Peter Hammond felt that this was really quite crucial, and his advice was invaluable. Early on he said, "you must become Kilvert and Kilvert must become you". The role of the diarist must be realised effortlessly, not through an act of conscious impersonation, which would come between the viewer and his appreciation of Kilvert, but by simply drawing on as many of one's own resources and feelings that one felt were in tune with those of Kilvert.

Work began on the 17th. of February and the first task was to record as many of the interior scenes as could be created inside the studio: The Solitary's Hut, the Venables' Drawing Room, Kilvert's Study, Mr. Horden's Bookshop. We rehearsed in London, and each week for four weeks we travelled North to record about half an hour's worth of material from various episodes in the Manchester Studios. Many of these scenes were to be linked directly with film of exterior locations, and great care was taken to match lighting and setting. One very impressive technique for linking say Mr. Horden's establishment with a real street in Hay, would be to record the actor waving through the shop window in the studio, (carefully designed to match the exterior of the shop to be used in Hay), then in Hay, place a large mirror in front of the shop window and film the reflection of Kilvert returning the wave and walking away down the busy street. These two images would be superimposed on one another during the final editing and you would ultimately see Mr. Horden waving from his shop window, in which, apparently, Kilvert was reflected waving back. One would not know that the two events were recorded at totally different times and places! Obviously it is more convenient to build the inside of the shop in the studio, where walls can be removed to create camera positions, and the technique avoids the problems of expense and availability in keeping Mr. Horden under a longer period of contract than strictly necessary!

The work in the studios, where time is at a premium, can be very exacting and we all felt a great relief when we came to Clyro on the 18th. April to start filming for six and a half weeks. The schedule was very tough, but to work in the open air and discover the countryside was a tonic for us all, despite the gloomy, misty weather early on. We were able to watch the Spring emerge, slowly and uncertainly at first, the lowlands more positive than the high. By mid May in the Wye valley it was glorious.

We had to film between five and seven minutes of edited material a day. A feature film would be very happy with two minutes! Incidentally, the fifteen minute length of the programmes had been decided upon after a lot of careful thought. It was felt - rightly I think - that it kept close to the feeling of a diary entry and avoided the tendency of the half hour episode to fall into a contrived story with a beginning, middle and an end.

My day began with the ritual of gluing on the extra piece of beard. Inevitably I hadn't had time to grow my own beard to Kilvert's splendid dimension, so an artificial piece was carefully fashioned and glued into place over my own hair, which had patches shaved quite close to give a good purchase for the spirit gum. (I looked a bit mangy out of costume!). Strands of real beard could then be dressed over the somewhat hard edges of the false one, and with home grown moustache and neck fuzz, the whole impression was quite real and lifelike. Washing strong glue out of one's beard everyday with large quantities of acetone and surgical spirit, was one of the less pleasant aspects of the work!

We found that even if the weather was bad during the day, it would often clear in the evening, giving beautiful light as the sun set in the Black Mountains. At the end of our normal day's schedule, we would set off, director, actor and cameramen alone, to film Kilvert in his most appropriate setting, the "grand solemn beautiful hills". The sense of freedom was immense as I walked and climbed, enjoying the air and the wonderful scenery while Peter and David Jackson freely composed and improvised their shots. It really was "a fine thing to be out in the hills alone", and I could appreciate the affinity Kilvert felt with the mountains. A natural man with strong feelings and appetites, trapped in a repressive age, frustrated by the strict codes governing social behaviour and disadvantaged in sexual relationships by the importance of class and money, yet fully accepting the values of his day, he must have felt a joyous sense of release as he left society and its encumbrances behind him. 6th. March, 1871, "I like wandering about these lonely waste and ruined places. There dwells among them a spirit of quiet and gentle melancholy more



congenial and akin to my own spirit than full life and gaiety and noise".

At times like these, released from the day to day rigours of completing specific scenes, I felt very close to Kilvert. Sitting by the Wye, walking along the lanes or in the hills it was easy to share his delight in the countryside. This discovery was by no means mine alone, I am sure. It must be made by many readers of the Diaries when they make their first visit to Clyro and Kilvert Country.

By June 18th. my contribution was complete. The final task had been to record the voice commentaries - all of them taken verbatim from the Diaries. The long process of editing and dubbing would continue for the next few months without me. By the time the programmes reached the screen, I was beardless and playing a silly Duke in a French farce at the National Theatre. Two odd coincidences reminded me that my ties with the character weren't entirely broken. My birthday took place just three days after Kilvert celebrated his in the last episode of the series, and in the week that "The Boil" was shown, I was actually suffering from such an affliction - on the nose!

#### TIMOTHY DAVIES - 1978.

(Mr. Davies is still at the National Theatre, and is working on a television series entitled "The Strange Affair of Adelaide Harris", which will be seen on BBC 1 in January 1979).

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#### THE BBC TELEVISION SERIALISATION OF THE DIARY:

It is certain that wherever Society members met during the winter months the main topic of conversation would have been the BBC 2 series of episodes from Kilvert's Diary, and there has been expressed a wish that a cross-section of members' opinions should be featured in a Newsletter. These follow, but first come some brief extracts of what the leading Sunday papers and London weeklies had to report. They merely confirm the truth of the old Latin saying, "Quot homines, tot sententiae" - (as many men, so many opinions) !

"..... almost a new form of television : perfect cameos over almost as soon as they are begun, leaving one with an ache for more. It has been made to work perfectly. I think it is exactly the quality of charitable inquisitiveness in Kilvert which grips us ....."

"..... may improve when Kilvert starts chasing the girls ....."

"At least once a week there should be a programme so certain to be excellent that I can cancel all subsequent engagements for the sheer pleasure of watching it - Kilvert's Diary which seems to me to be a perfect exposition of the adapter's art. My only grouse is that it should be so meanly ladled out".

"Television cannot come to terms with the fact that the whole point of good writing is that it makes its own pictures in the mind and that these are more vivid than those on the little screen, be it the most expensive colour set available. This explains why productions like 'Kilvert's Diary' don't come off. Kilvert is for reading, and a television version of his book is as pointless as a book of 'The Generation Game'".

Miss M.V. Noake (Worcester). "Those of us who know the Diary found the tiny 15 minute programmes trivial and often pointless; half an hour at a time, showing (for instance) the contrasts of a country curate's life, would have been more effective. One or two episodes, such as the dyeing of Morrell's hair, were absurd and unjustified. Others added nothing at all to the story. Those who had never heard of Kilvert before must have been all at sea, unless they had read with care Mr. Grice's article in the "Radio Times" when the series began. Apart from some lovely photography and a few well-chosen incidents, the series was one quickly forgotten".

Mr. E.E. Dover of Epsom. "I thought the camera work excellent and mostly authentic. Mr. Timothy Davies's portrayal of Kilvert was very good; his personality grew on one as the series progressed. The character acting was first rate, especially the Solitary, Mr. Venables and Mrs. Crichton, but some scenes disappointed, notably the hair-dyeing incident. I enjoyed the scenes of Kilvert with his Daisy, who was attractively portrayed. Despite the inaccuracies and telescoping, my wife and I looked forward to the 15 minutes every Friday and generally enjoyed them".



A member who wishes to remain anonymous writes:-

"In considering the BBC television presentation of episodes from Kilvert's Diary the limitations of the medium should be borne in mind. These limitations were particularly clear in the BBC 'War and Peace' series. The narrative flowed easily, the interior decoration and costume were well done, but Tolstoy's analysis of character and philosophy of history were beyond the scope of the medium.

Consequently the task facing the producer of Kilvert was formidable as it is a poetic reaction to humanity and nature against the background of Victorian society.

The opening episode was unfortunate. Normally the BBC is sound on costume. Why then was Kilvert given a sombrero? From his own drawing (and, be it noted, he was a respectable draughtsman from his sketches in 'The Nutting in Seagry Wood') his head-gear was the normal round, black felt hat with a wide brim which was still in use in the first quarter of the present century. Why also was he shown prancing about like the 'British Tourist' he so detested? Kilvert was very much the child of his times. He adhered to a rigid social code and could be pontifical when occasion demanded.

Again, he hated tobacco as much as James I and was shewn smoking a pipe! Had he smoked, in fact, it would have been a cigar. Gentlemen, surely, did not smoke pipes, and the cigarette came later.

The scene in the Vicarage at the presentation of the clock was well done. But Mrs. Venables would have been horrified had she known that one day she would be depicted as walking in the country with Kilvert in a manner entirely out of character.

Kilvert's love of nature and children came over quite well, but his pastoral visitations to the sick and the poor seemed to be beyond the comprehension of the producer.

The instalment, in which the enigmatic personality of Mr. Morrell of Cae Mawr had apocryphal hair dye washed out by the rain, which so distressed our late beloved secretary, should have been cut. Fact or fiction, it just did not get off the ground.

The actors strove manfully with their parts, but it is the peculiar felicity of Kilvert that he could evoke the spirit of a place with a minimum of action. It was said of Dean Swift that he could write elegantly about a broomstick and Kilvert can be fascinating with a similar illumination of the daily round. This is particularly so in the Langley Burrell entries. There is also an uncanny similarity between the visit to Chiverlings and the description of the farm of Ge fosses by Hanbert in "Un Coeur Simple".

It must therefore be that the Diary is not suitable for television but comes over best when read aloud. It was one of the virtues of William Plomer that his reading of the text aloud was beautifully done. He said that when he lectured on Kilvert to the Royal Society of Literature his reading of the misfortunes of old Mrs. Dew made one distinguished lady laugh so much that the tears ran down her face.

What then remains to be said? Perhaps it is that just as Billy Graham is justified if he makes one convert, so is the BBC if it introduces one fit reader to Kilvert".

M.W. Atherton (Bebington, Wirral). "I had made up my mind not to watch this series as I was sure that the BBC would have made a hash of the adaptation of Kilvert's Diary. However, when it got to about the third episode my husband (who has not read it) wanted to watch so much, I had no choice. I was agreeably surprised and very impressed by Timothy Davies's sensitive performance and the beautiful photography. I thought the hair dyeing episode was ridiculous and there is so much in the Diary there was no need to make up silly stories like this.

I felt the episodes could have been longer and if I had not read the diary it would not have made me want to do so. Of course much of its charm and appeal lie in the descriptions of the countryside and Kilvert's comments on life and people and this could not be transposed to TV.

I felt it was a great pity that all the little railways have been closed because if not we would have been able to see F.K. (in the person of Timothy Davies) leaving Clyro with all his parishioners waving 'Goodbye' along the line to their much loved curate".

C.J. Marshall (Leamington Spa). "I enjoyed this series for the most part and indeed many of the episodes had moments of superb artistry, magic even, which offset a tendency to dwell overmuch, I thought, upon some of the less pleasant events and



encounters in the Diary. The episode of the madwoman which, although movingly and very convincingly presented, is one such that comes to mind - and for the sake of contrast and completeness worth doing - but not worth an entire episode, when so much else was left out. The whole series was visually superb and the camera work brilliant. The colours, the backgrounds of hill, stream, garden were magnificent and captured the very essence of this beautiful part of the marches. It was intriguing too to play 'spot the location! '.

Timothy Davies was just right as Kilvert, his voice, gaze and manner fitted exactly my conception of R.F.K. The actor's long, loping stride, even, was well suited to the portrayal of a man so fond of walking the hills of his beloved Radnorshire and Herefordshire. Episodes and incidents which linger in my mind are: Mr. Thomas 'refusing' Kilvert, the School Inspection, the visits of Fr. Ignatius and the Old Soldier - in particular the conversation in the latter's garden, and Kilvert's birthday and the presentation of the clock.

As we know the Diary contains little dialogue and whereas I think the Producers of the series were right not to introduce too much specially written additional dialogue - this, paradoxically was, to my mind, one of the weaknesses (or perhaps it was an insurmountable difficulty) of the whole thing. One was very often conscious of what appeared to be a struggle to 'fill-out' the time and several episodes had their 'longeurs' - particularly when Kilvert out visiting was discovered engaged in stilted 'wooden' conversation or else sitting tête à tête in strained silence!

Finally, although some aspects might have been better handled and some rather more obvious choices of material made, I find it difficult, on the whole, to understand Mr. Prosser's opposition to the BBC - even though one had to respect his opinions on all matters to do with Kilvert".

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And lastly, here is a copy of the letter sent to the Editor of the 'Radio Times' by our Deputy President.

Dear Sir,

There have been several things to admire in the current series of programmes based on Kilvert's Diary - sensitive photography, careful casting, an appreciation of the extraordinary scenic beauty of Radnorshire and, on occasions, a reasonable fidelity to the text. It is a pity, however, that James Andrew Hall has been so ready to credit figures in the Diary with words they never uttered, and never would have uttered. A script writer with a better knowledge of the Diary would never have shown Kilvert, in one of the first shots, striding across the hills and mouthing the very last text he would ever have chosen,

'And I contended with them and cursed them  
and smote certain of them and plucked off their hair  
and made them swear by God'.

- the words not of Kilvert, but of the ludicrous and belligerent 'Parson Button'. Mr. Hall too completely failed to understand the nature of Daisy's father (who was a clergyman not a retired military man) and the kindly Mrs. Crichton, who was too good a Victorian to go sketching on Sunday.

Some measure of adaptation is, I suppose, pardonable. What is less easy to forgive is Mr. Hall's falling into the all-too-common error of assuming he is at liberty to rewrite a great text. Viewers ought to be warned that if they look through the Diary to find the episode in which Kilvert's friend Morrell dyes his hair (screened on Friday, 17th. February) they will be wasting their time. This incident was pure invention on the part of Mr. Hall. It was not only a feeble piece of comedy, but an act of deceit.

Yours sincerely,

F. Grice.

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#### VISIT TO CHEDDAR AND WESTON:

On Saturday, 6th. May, about forty members of the Society enjoyed a most interesting excursion to Cheddar Gorge and Weston-super-Mare. The outing was brilliantly organised and led by Mr. Hugh Dearlove, who was, as many members will recall, responsible for the earlier visit by the Society to Bristol. The more energetic members of the party enjoyed two fine walks, one through the spectacular gorge which Kilvert visited in the company of his friends the Hockins, past Gough's Cave through



which Kilvert was guided by that macabre old man whom he described so vividly, to Cox's Cave where he had a more enjoyable experience; and, in unexpectedly dry weather, along the sea front to the old Birnbeck Pier from which Kilvert and his mother, in the course of their family holiday at Weston, embarked on that stormy trip to Ilfracombe - a journey which they made in better spirits than most of their companions who suffered dreadfully from sea-sickness. The weather was congenial enough for us to pause near the pier, and just outside the house in Princes Buildings where he had lodgings, and hear the passages from the Diary dealing with his stay there. From the pier we went on to Trinity Church where he went to hear a sermon by Mr. Hunt the incumbent of this fine Victorian church. We had the warmest of welcomes from the present Vicar, the Rev. Robert Williams and heard a short talk by Mr. Blathwaite, whose grandparents had actually known Mr. Hunt. After we had inspected the church we were treated to a splendid high tea served by the ladies of the parish in the cosy room which had been ingeniously made in the spare space at the west end of the church. The weather was surprisingly favourable, and we all owe a great debt to Mr. Hugh Dearlove, whose arrangements were faultless, to Mr. Williams who could not have been kinder and more welcoming, and to Mr. Blathwaite for his interesting and amusing reminiscences of the remarkable Mr. Hunt, which follow.

"William Hunt was instituted as the first Vicar of Trinity Church by Lord Auckland the then Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1861. The Church had been dedicated as Trinity Church and only became popularly known as Holy Trinity Church in comparatively recent times. In the middle of the last century there was considerable under-employment and even unemployment among the Clergy of the Church of England and many young Clergymen of the time had little prospect of ever getting a benefice. William Hunt probably owed his appointment to three things. First his extremely low Church views which were the same as those of the first Patrons of the Church. Secondly his Father had been very much the largest contributor to the Building Fund of the Church and thirdly he had a large private fortune of his own so it was not immediately necessary to endow the Church or even pay the new Vicar a stipend.

Whatever the reasons for his appointment William Hunt was an immediate success as a Vicar. The Church was filled to capacity at all the main services and there was a long waiting list for "sittings". Throughout William Hunt's incumbency the services were much longer and plainer than nowadays. The morning service on Sundays at 11 a.m. comprised morning prayer followed by the Litany in full which in its turn was often followed by Anti-Communion and William Hunt rarely preached for less than three quarters of an hour. It was very unusual for the service to be finished before one o'clock.

In William Hunt's time Trinity Church was much the most popular Church in Weston and he himself the most influential Clergyman in the town. He was of a masterful disposition and tolerated no interference in Church matters. He was popularly known as "The Pope of Weston". At this time there were several small day schools in the Parish in all of which William Hunt took a great deal of interest. No school had the slightest chance of survival unless the Vicar approved of it. He was generally very popular with children and it is possible that one of the reasons may have been that all schools had a whole holiday on such days as his birthday.

William Hunt paid all the expenses of running the Church out of his own pocket and there were no collections for Church expenses in his time. Any money collected in Church was given to various Evangelical Societies of which the Vicar approved.

The Vicar would never wear a cassock of any kind and he preached in a Geneva Gown. Both he and his curate were rather absent minded and they often got their surplices mixed up with the result that the curate frequently came into Church wearing the Vicar's surplice followed by the Vicar wearing the Curate's surplice. The difficulty over this was that the Vicar was a very tall man and the curate a very short man with the result that the curate's surplice trailed along behind him and the Vicar's did not even cover his waistcoat, leaving the whole length of his trousers exposed.

The Vicar at times adopted a then fashionable affectation of speech namely the dropping of aitches in the most unexpected places. This fashion was as popular in certain well educated circles at the time as the so-called "Oxford accent" was in more recent times. An old parishioner who remembered William Hunt well once told the Writer that he vividly remembered when his Father was ill the Vicar saying to his Mother "'Ow's your 'usband".

The Church had no official Vicarage until 1917 and William Hunt lived in his own private house at the top of Highbury Hill. It has since been converted into flats and is now known as Holmer Mansions. William Hunt was made a Prebendary of Wells Cathedral during his incumbency. He was a popular and much respected Vicar of the old school".

(Mr. Grice points out that though the connection with the Diary is slight, this



account of the Rev. William Hunt helps to show what competition poor curates had to face in the search for a living in the latter half of the 19th. century).

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In the village church at South Harting in West Sussex are some interesting memorials to members of the Cowper-Coles' family whom Kilvert wrote of in his diary.

This is the inscription on a bronze plaque to the memory of Capt. Cowper-Coles, who was lost on H.M.S. Captain, and to his wife -

"To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Captain Cowper Phipps Coles, R.N., C.B., born July 9th. 1819. Lost on board H.M.S. Captain which foundered on September 7th. 1870.

Also of his wife Emily Cowper-Coles, daughter of Richard Pearson Esq. Born March 16th. 1830, died January 11th. 1876."

Erected by their children.

This is the Mrs. Cowper-Coles whom Kilvert pushed in her wheel-chair, when he was staying with the family in the Isle of Wight. The memorial is decorated by the design of a star, a ship and a wreath, and the names of the following ships, H.M.S. Scorpion, H.M.S. Wivern, H.M.S. Royal Sovereign, H.M.S. Prince Albert, H.M.S. Monarch, H.M.S. Cerberus and H.M.S. Captain. Were these ships he commanded or designed?

The second of the bronze plaques is a memorial to Commerel, the youngest son of Capt. & Mrs. Cowper-Coles. It reads as follows:-

"To the Glory of God, and in loving memory of Commerel Markham, youngest son of Captain and Emily Cowper-Coles. Born September 17th. 1869, died at Kendu, East African Protectorate, July 21st. 1903."

Kilvert mentions Commerel several times. He would have been only 4 years old when Kilvert speaks of "Gussie and Commerel met me (at the station)" on June 9th. 1874.

I wonder what took him to Africa, and only in his early 30's when he died.

The third brass plaque is to the memory of Sherard, whom Kilvert also mentioned. He took Sherard to the church service "in the wheel-chair" on June 14th. 1874. I note Sherard was an inventor and scientist but I could find nothing about him in the biographies in the Reference Library. Here is the inscription on the plaque.

"In loving memory of Sherard Osborn Cowper-Coles, Scientist and Inventor, born 8th. October, 1866, died 9th. September, 1936.  
Son of Captain Cowper Phipps Coles, C.B., R.N."

This tablet was placed here by his wife, Constance. This plaque, which is badly worn, is decorated by badges of various exhibitions, such as "Crystal Palace", Brussels, Paris, St. Louis, the Franco-British Exhibition, etc. Did he win awards at all these?

There is also a stained glass window in the church to the memory of Capt. and Mrs. Cowper-Coles, also to a Colonel Cowper-Coles, with no date, and then there is the tomb of the family's ancestors, with three painted effigies, and with a long genealogical inscription, and the tomb dates back to 1620.

Ditcham Park, where the Cowper-Coles' family lived up until 1868 (according to Kelly's Directory) is over the Hampshire border and in Buriton parish. I don't know why they should be buried at South Harting unless parish and county boundaries have been altered some time in the past. South Harting is 4 miles from Petersfield, and it is only recently that I noticed in Mr. Grice's booklet "Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary" that the Cowper-Coles family came from Ditcham Park originally, and I also had guide books to both Buriton and South Harting churches, so reading of them in the Harting guide, I made a hasty visit there (19 miles from where I live) although I have been to Harting Church many times in the past.

R.E. Jeffery - (Southampton).

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#### THE CHIPPENHAM RIOTS:

Mr. Millard has sent us a very interesting account of the quarrel between the men of Langley and the men of Chippenham which took place in 1822, and which Kilvert recalls having heard of from John and Hannah Hatherell on February 4th. 1873 (Diary Vol. 2 317-20). The account is to be found in Wiltshire Notes and Queries Vol. 2. pp. 470-3.



There are two versions of the quarrel and the battle that ensued. The first is by the Revd. J.J. Daniell, Vicar of Kington Langley and friend of Kilvert. It comes from his History of Chippenham. Mr. Daniell says that a party of lads from Chippenham gave offence to some Langley men on the occasion of the Langley Fitzurse Revel. Some days later, on 7 September, some thirty or forty Langley men marched into Chippenham to avenge the insult, went up and down the streets, calling on the people to come out and fight and attacking everyone they met. There was a furious battle in which 31 persons were injured. Mr. Daniell has little sympathy with the action of his own parishioners on this occasion.

The second account is given by a Mr. Dowding in his 'Statistics of Crime'. He states that the riot began from simpler causes. A party was dancing in the Bear Inn, Chippenham, when out of nothing a furious quarrel sprang up in which Thomas Pearce, almost gratuitously, assaulted two Langley men. Other Langley men went to the assistance of their ill-used companions and a general battle ensued in which the Langleyites were driven out of Chippenham, but not before a great number of people had been injured, some severely, and two men, Mr. Hull, a saddler, and Mr. Reynolds, a brazier, killed. The account concludes with a list of the 'killed and wounded' in the battle, which includes the names of the two men killed and eleven severely injured, two of whom lost an eye.

It is interesting to compare Kilvert's report with these accounts. The version given to him by the Hatherells was clearly a very partial one. In this all the blame is laid on the Chippenham 'blackguards' and the Langleyites are credited with an impressive strategic victory which neither Daniell nor Dowding mentions. However, he gets the names of the two dead men right, though on one occasion Hull is inaccurately transcribed as Hall; and he does add a few colourful details which neither Daniell nor Dowding supplies.

The account throws a certain amount of light on Kilvert's temperament. He puts down John and Hannah Hatherell's version of the story without questioning it, just as he put down, without checking, the story of the Ricardo monument at Hardenhuish and the sculptor who committed suicide. Kilvert is no academic historian - he is too credulous for that. But it is his very credulousness that is one of his charms and his strengths. It is because of his readiness to believe all that he hears that we get in his diary, not merely one man's version of history, but a many-sided picture, sometimes inaccurate, but if not a reflection of truth, a reflection of how people of his time thought and felt.

F.G.

Our member, Mr. C.J. Marshall of Leamington, sends the following article, written after reading certain items in K.S. publications bought at the recent A.G.M.

As a native of Pontypool I was intrigued to learn (from Diary's Who's Who) that the famous Gypsy Lizzie also originated there and I would be interested to know what strange sequence of events took her, at that time, from the welsh mining valley town to rural Radnorshire. As a resident now of Leamington Spa I was also interested to read (in O.P. booklet) that the Pitcairns spent part of their honeymoon in the town. The long hilly street (!) Dora refers to as the Parade - Leamington's very fine, principal (and no doubt, at that time, more fashionable) thoroughfare. The Clarendon Hotel (now a Trust House Forte) where they stayed still stands at the top of the Parade - on the right as you ascend. (Was the Mr. Forte, who provided the feast on 31st. July 1897 an ancestor of the present owner of the Clarendon?!). The pretty public gardens the couple explored were, no doubt, the Jephson Gardens, still remarkable for their fine floral displays. Jim Pitcairn was quite right too in his assessment that parts of Leamington look 'foreign' - French, supposedly. The broad walk mentioned I presume to be Holly Walk which again is a very fine avenue leading away from the Parade, adjacent to the massive Victorian Town Hall. The Walk leads away up from the town and out into open, hilly countryside near where we live. At one time, as its name suggests, it was lined with holly trees and hedges, but today only a few ragged specimens remain at the upper end. Nearby Clarendon Square too, has a French appearance and Napoleon III must have felt reasonably at home there during the brief period of exile he spent in one of the town houses (today called Nap. III House) which border the square.

The Warwick Arms, where the Pitcairns lunched on August 1st. is still to be patronised in High Street, Warwick, but Guy's Cliffe House which they later viewed is now, unfortunately, a ruin and difficult to see through the wilderness in which it stands. However, the same fine view of Warwick Castle may still be obtained from the bridge on the Banbury Road, and, of course, the interior of the castle is well worth a visit - the only vandals in evidence today however seem to be the present Earl and his son who are busy disposing of many of the Castle's more valuable and noteworthy contents - including the famous Warwick Vase and the Archives!

C.J.M. - 5.5.78.



