

## THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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JUNE 1979

Dear Member,

A brief paragraph on last month's A.G.M. and Walk, before full particulars of the Centenary Events! Some 90 members attended the A.G.M., and were welcomed by the Deputy President. Officers were re-elected en bloc, and after refreshments our member, Ms. R. Billingham, spoke on Kilvert's tastes in the visual arts, a much appreciated lecture, amply illustrated with slides on pictures ranging from Murillo and Zurbaran to Monet and Pissarro. She was warmly thanked by Mr. G. Dearlove, and thanks were also extended to Mr. Godfrey Davies who has for many years provided technical equipment. As for the Walk on the following day, the incessant rain made it quite impossible and the brave souls who turned out contented themselves with visits to the churches Kilvert wrote of.

### THE CENTENARY EVENTS

LANGLEY BURRELL (NEAR CHIPPENHAM) SERVICE: JULY 1ST. at 3 p.m. Preacher: Rt. Rev. O.S. Tomkins. The service will also be part of the Patronal Festival (St. Peter). Tea (50p per head) will be available for members at Langley House, in the garden if fine. Afterwards Mrs. Hurlbutt will present to the Society the original letter written by Kilvert to her grandmother, Mary Ann Powell. A coach will leave Hereford Town Hall at 10.45 a.m. Members and their friends can book seats at £1.15 per head at Messrs. Wyeval, Bridge Street, Hereford, or by contacting the Secretary. The Society's gift to the Church will consist of a visitors' book and a set of "100 Hymns for Today". I understand that through the kindness of Mr. A. Scott-Ashe some of the rooms of Langley House may be visited.

WOOTTON (WOODSTOCK) SERVICE: AUG. 19TH. at 3 p.m. Preacher: Rev. D.N. Lockwood (a Vice-President of the Society). It is also a Flower Festival weekend. Tea (50p per head) will be available for members at Wootton Place, owned by Mrs. Clutterbuck, who has most kindly allowed members also to view her garden. Tickets must be obtained to ensure both admission and tea, and the Secretary will distribute these at the Church. A coach will leave Hereford Town Hall at 10.45 a.m. Members can book seats, at £1.25 each, at Messrs. Wyeval, Bridge Street or by contacting the Secretary. The Society's gift to the church will be a sum of money towards the purchase of 100 copies of "Hymns Ancient and Modern".

CENTENARY LECTURE: FRIDAY, SEPT. 21ST. This will be given by Sir Victor S. Pritchett, C.B.E. at the Town Hall, Hereford, at 8 p.m. Tickets, price 75p, can be obtained from the Secretary after June 30th.

BREDWARDINE WALK AND PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH: SATURDAY, SEPT. 22ND. - details of this appear elsewhere in this issue.

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION AT BREDWARDINE: SUNDAY, SEPT. 23RD. at 11.15 a.m. Celebrant: Rev. D.T.W. Price, a Vice-President of the Society. The Society's gift to the church will be a pair of gates.

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING AT CLYRD: SUNDAY, SEPT. 23RD. at 3 p.m. Preacher: Rt. Rev. Charles Edwards. A coach will leave Hereford Town Hall at 1.45 p.m. Members and friends can book seats at 70p. at Messrs. Wyeval, Bridge Street, Hereford, or by contacting the Secretary. There will be facilities for eating picnic tea at the Village Hall. The Society's gift to the Church will be a Lectern Bible and Hymnbooks.

"READINGS FROM KILVERT": SUNDAY, SEPT. 23RD. at 8 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, given by H. Colin Davis (Writer and Broadcaster) and Timothy Davies (National Theatre Player). Tickets (to include Wine and Cheese) price £1.00. can be obtained from the Secretary after June 30th.

EXHIBITION IN HEREFORD LIBRARY AND MUSEUM: The Curator, Miss A. Sandford, has very kindly consented to allow a display of Kilvertiana from mid-August to the end of September, so as to coincide with both the Three Choirs Festival and the Centenary Weekend. The Three Choirs Festival Committee handbook will contain an article entitled "Kilvert and Music", which our Bristol member, Mr. Vincent Waite, has written.

I am given to understand that the Summer number of "The Countryman" and the September number of "Illustrated London News" will also contain articles on Kilvert.

Older members will recall Mr. H. Colin Davis and his brother Mr. David Davis both as memorable speakers (at Eignbrook Hall) and broadcasters (of "Oh Daisy!"). The former gentleman tells me that they will be broadcasting on Radio 4 a "Kilvert Calendar" - "Spring" on May 21st., "Summer" on July 23rd., "Autumn" on Sept. 24th., but the date for "Winter" is not yet fixed. He tells me too that for the "Epilogue" on September 23rd. he is using passages from the Diary.

Despite assurances that they were to be repeated last Autumn, neither the Poet Laureate's "Vicar of this Parish" nor the BBC 2 series of episodes from the Diary has appeared, nor do I have any confirmation that either will be shown in this centenary year.

The Committee looks forward to members' support of the centenary events. It will be noticed that more gifts are being made this year to "Kilvert" churches and if any members would like to make a special donation to one or more of these gifts, such donations would be most gratefully received.

In conclusion, if any member would welcome further information or details, I will be happy to help in whatever way I can.

Yours sincerely,

E.J.C. West.

Hon. Secretary.

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BREDWARDINE: THE WALK AND PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH, and "KILVERT'S BREDWARDINE".

Those members participating in the Walk and Ploughman's Lunch are asked to meet at the church at 10. 30 a.m. (The approach to the church gives good parking space). Our member, Mr. Kenneth Clew, and Mr. H. Entwisle (Secretary to Bredwardine P.C.C), who are organising this walk, assure me that it will not be strenuous. Ploughman's lunch will be served at the end of the tour. For this we are indebted to the ladies of the parish. Tickets (at £1. 00 each) are essential, since the numbers must be communicated to the ladies 24 hours previously. They can be obtained from the Secretary after June 30th. Should the number exceed 60, an afternoon event will be also arranged, starting with lunch at 1. 30 p.m. Proceeds from the Walk and lunch will go to Church funds. Members familiar with the village will know that it is a small one, and will appreciate the efforts made to keep the church in good repair. To raise further funds the two gentlemen mentioned earlier have produced "Kilvert's Bredwardine : A Centenary Booklet". It will be A5 size in landscape format, its 16 pages will include 10 photos, a line drawing of the church, a reproduction of Kilvert's Wedding Banns, a location map, plus 7 pages of text. At 55p (inclusive of postage and packing) it can be obtained from Mr. H. Entwisle, Hill Cottage, Bredwardine, Hereford - as can also the leaflet of the church and chief buildings of the village. This latter is priced at 20p (inclusive of postage and packing).

P.S. Since writing the above, I have been informed by Mr. Clew that members participating in the Walk may opt for either the morning or the afternoon session, but 60 is the maximum number for each.

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OBITUARY:

It is with deep regret that we record the death of the following members:-

Col. E.P. Awdry of Chippenham, a Vice-President of the Society. His great-uncle was the Rev. Edward Awdry of Kington St. Michael, frequently mentioned in the Diary. At the tea following the Society's service at that church in 1976, Col. Awdry spoke very entertainingly of Mrs. Prodders (see Diary entry for February 16th. 1875).

Mr. W.E. Morgan of Staunton-on-Wye. A native of Hardwick, he was for many years churchwarden at Bredwardine, and was present at the service there last September.

Mrs. A. Meintzies of Bulawayo. She wrote to the Society on the death of Mr. Prosser, and in subsequent correspondence with the Secretary, conveyed the deep pleasure she had derived from her membership.

### KILVERT AND BETTWS.

Anyone who has read the Diary of Francis Kilvert will remember his deep affection for the little church (or chapel, as it was then known) of Bettws, set high on the sunny slopes above, and to the north-east of Clyro.

On Sunday, 9th. July, 1871, he wrote:-

"I was glad to go to Bettws. It was sultry hot climbing the hill, though there was the blowing of a wind from the west. In the Chapel field the tall brown and purple grasses were all in billows like the sea, as the wind coursed over the hill driving one billow after another, sheen and dusk, up against the chapel wall. And the chapel in the grass looked like a house founded upon a rock in the midst of a billowy sea".

"A house founded upon a rock" - an apt phrase indeed to describe its spiritual value to the people who perhaps for many centuries had met for worship at that spot. I think that Kilvert found the services there much to his liking - less formal than at the parish church, simpler, with the music well-known, and the sermon more of an informal talk rather than a learned discourse. And of course the homely, country folk who gathered there he loved most of all, and lost no opportunity to draw them to himself, and to his Lord and theirs, with bonds of friendship and true pastoral devotion.

The earliest records of Kilvert's ministry at Bettws come from the diary of his vicar, Rev. R.L. Venables, and cover the years 1867, 1868 and 1869. For all the information regarding these years we are indebted to Mr. Laurence Le Quesne's article entitled 'The Venables Diaries', published in 'Miscellany Two - The Oswin Prosser Memorial Booklet'.

On March 17th. 1867, we are told that Kilvert went to Bettws. And again, on March 31st. "Kilvert went to Bettws in the morning". Mr. Le Quesne's article records 17 journeys during the 3 years - twice in the morning, and all apparently referring to Sunday duty. From 1870 onwards we have the evidence of Kilvert's own diary, and there is no further mention of a morning service.

Before we leave Mr. Venables' diary, however, there is an entry, longer than his usual terse comments, which is of particular interest in view of its connection with the main Bettws story.

On March 20th. 1867, a weekday, it appears that both vicar and curate went to Bettws:-

"Walked with Kilvert to Bettws", writes Mr. Venables, "drifts all the way, in places 10 feet high. Beyond Pentwyn blacksmith's shop the whole road piled high up the tops of the hedges for full half a mile. Quite unprecedented".

But in fact, in Kilvert's account of his ministrations at Bettws, including incidents that concerned his vicar also, the weather plays a prominent, and at times a dominant role. This is hardly surprising, as the little church stands 750 feet up on a slope that is pretty exposed to the elements. Even in good weather conditions, a 3 mile walk involving a climb of around 500 feet calls for a considerable physical effort. In such circumstances, bad weather means a struggle that is only too likely to be remembered and recorded in a diary.

"February 13th. 1870 - Septuagesima Sunday, St. Valentine's Eve. ... the weather fearful, violent deadly E. wind and the hardest frost we have had yet. Went to Bettws in the afternoon wrapped in two waistcoats, two coats, a muffler and a mackintosh, and was not at all too warm. Heard the chapel bell pealing strongly for the second time since I have been here, and when I got to the chapel my beard, moustaches and whiskers were so stiff with ice that I could hardly open my mouth, and my beard was frozen on to my mackintosh. There was a large christening party from Llwyn Gwilym. The clerk (Wilding) thrust a tallow candle between the bars of the stove grate, lighted it and set it upon the table that once probably did duty for a communion table. I had it put out again as the daylight was sufficient. The baby was baptized in ice which was broken and swimming about in the font. A sad day for mother and child to come out".

A month later it was still wintry: "March 13th. 1870. This morning showed a fall of 3 inches level snow, and the snow fell straight and even, as there was no wind. The mountains evidently deep in snow. ... I went to Bettws, a lovely walk in the glorious afternoon. The chapel field, Bettws, deep in snow. The clerk and two other men lounging about the W. end of the chapel till they saw me crossing the white waste, when the clerk (Wilding) disappeared round the corner, and immediately the bell pealed out over the snow. Mrs. Collett rode a pony up to chapel on a man's saddle and was churched. The baby came in after the sermon and was baptized 'Alice Shelburne', an old name in Collett's family, he says. The baby very good and quiet".

January 21st. 1872, was another difficult winter's day: "A cold raw frost fog, dark and dreary. Went to Bettws. The chapel bell tolled out sharp and sudden through the white mist to give notice of the service a quarter of an hour beforehand. The hedges were hoary with rime and frost, and the trees were hailing large pieces of ice down into the road. Few people in chapel. I preached the New Year sermon about the three divisions in the life of Moses from Deuteronomy 34. 7, with some satisfaction to myself".

Sometimes it was the vicar, Mr. Venables, who had to face the rigours of the climate.

On Christmas Day, 1870, he went to Bettws in a bitter frost, so intense that his curate's bath tub had been covered with thick ice in the early morning. And again, on Palm Sunday, March 24th. 1872, he "went to Bettws in a dense snowstorm". While on April 21st. of the same year it was "a day of wild driving snow, with a fierce bitter wind from the east. Mr. Venables had a terrible journey to the chapel, one of the worst he said he ever had".

By contrast, let us turn to the diary entry for Easter Day, April 17th. 1870, "the happiest, brightest, most beautiful Easter I have ever spent", as Kilvert describes it. Yet the walk to Bettws took its toll again. Here is what he says: "I went to Bettws Chapel in the afternoon. It was burning hot, and as I climbed the hill the perspiration rolled off my forehead from under my hat and fell in drops on the dusty road". But later, "coming down the hill it was delightful, cool and pleasant. The sweet suspicion of spring strengthens, deepens, and grows more sweet every day". Between these two references to the weather we are introduced to 3 young members of the family of Mr. Wall, the churchwarden. "Lucretia Wall was in chapel looking pale and pretty after her illness. I went into the farmhouse after chapel, and when I came away Lucretia and Eliza both looking very pretty were leading little Eleanor about the farmyard between them, a charming home picture".

March 19th. 1871, surprisingly early in the year, is remembered by Kilvert for its warmth: "What a magnificent day. As I walked to Bettws it was so sultry that I thought it would thunder. The sun was almost overpowering. Heavy black clouds drove up and rolled round the sky without veiling the hot sunshine, black clouds with white edges they were, looking suspiciously like thunder clouds. Against these black clouds the sunshine showed the faint delicate green and pink of the trees thickening with bursting buds".

The entry for October 1st. 1871, contains a special reference to Kilvert's sermons: "As I went to Bettws the lane between Court Evan Gwynne and the Bird's Nest Dingle was choked by great flocks of sheep travelling with their drovers. At Whitty's Mill I was caught by a heavy scud of rain and a rainbow arched over Herefordshire. I preached extempore on Love and Duty from I John 3. 18. Somehow I cannot confine my 'extempore' sermons within less than half an hour. Half an hour seems like 5 minutes when you are talking or preaching". Several times in his record of visits to Bettws, Kilvert repeats the phrase, "preached extempore with some satisfaction to myself". This may sound a little irritating, but actually the mastery of the art of extempore preaching was of some importance to him because of his poor eyesight. While it would have been difficult to dispense with a written address on most occasions at the parish church, at Bettws he could feel free to try his hand without undue fear of criticism, and would naturally make a note of instances when he felt he had done reasonably well. As indeed he did in the course of the entry for February 4th. 1872: "As I went up the hill to Bettws a flying scud of rain drove over the hill. Below in the valley was a tumbled mass and wild confusion of storm and sunshine, green meadow and mist and gleaming river shining in brilliant rays of sunlight that streamed from behind dark clouds, a strange wild beautiful variegated scene.

Preached extempore on the Conversion of St. Paul with some satisfaction to myself. ... And the sermon seemed to interest Wall, judging from some remarks he made afterwards. I went into their house after service and sat with them an hour, but I seemed to miss Lucretia and Eliza. 'It's a beautiful time of year coming', said Mrs. Wall, looking thoughtfully out of the window towards Clifford. The coloured primroses were in full bloom in the little round garden plots under the windows. As I came down the hill the air was cold, it had turned cold suddenly, and I noticed that the sky was wild and stormy, bright and tumbled".

Six weeks later, on March 17th. 1872, Kilvert notes: "Went to Bettws, and preached from Daniel 5. 5 on the Handwriting on the Wall. Went into Wall's house after chapel and had some talk with Dyke on the Tichborne case". On this occasion there is actually no mention of the weather.

Kilvert had an ear for church bells, as we hear in the entry for Good Friday, March 29th. 1872: "For the first time I heard to-day the sweet bells of Clyro chiming

down in the valley just before I reached the chapel. I could even hear the 3 bells chime change, for the single bell. The west wind brought the sound of the bells up the hill so clearly that it arrested me even while I was walking". Kilvert records on this day a long and detailed account of his pastoral visit to Emma Griffiths of the Chapel Dingle, to whom he gave a cross bun. "She said she should so much have liked to come to chapel, but her child kept her at home. She was scarcely ever able to leave home, and went nowhere and heard nothing. She could not go to chapel to-day because her husband Evan was at work at Llwyn Gwillim". She described how she went to work on a farm when a mere child, and how one day she was caught and attacked by a bull. "It was a great mercy the bull did not kill me", she said, "but my time was not come. The Lord was very merciful to me and saved me from him. He had something else for me to do". Nevertheless, she had "never been so strong or well since", and an early marriage, "too early", at 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ , had not helped either.

Kilvert continues: "We had some talk about Good Friday. She had forgotten why we kept the day holy. I read to her some hymns and Luke 23. When I came in she was trying, poor child, to spell out a word here and there in a hymn. Trying to do the best she could for herself. She nearly made me cry by the touching way in which she said she was no scholar, she wished she could read, but she went to work so early, when she was only 10 years old, that she never had any schooling except a little on Sundays at 'Llandewi's Church', where Mr. Williams the vicar used to hold a little school every Sunday before service. When I rose to go, we found I had been there more than an hour. 'The time hadn't seemed long to me. I feel so much lightened. I am so much obliged to you for coming and reading to me', said the poor girl gratefully, with a beautiful and touching smile and the tears standing in her eyes".

Sometimes the diarist's own ailments combined with the weather to make his ministry more difficult. Thus, on April 16th. 1871, : "Preached in church this morning on Job from James 5. 11" (a most appropriate subject!). "For the last 3 days I have been suffering from a large boil on the left thigh, and I had much ado to rise and sit down in church this morning. Also I had an uncomfortable and rather painful journey to the chapel this afternoon, for the boil prevents my walking easily. And as I was suffering from a racking headache at the same time, I feared I should break down in my extempore sermon on the Charge to Peter from John 21. 15, but contrary to my expectations and fears, I never preached with so much ease and fluency and satisfaction to myself. As I went to the chapel I saw over Bettws a low broad bright rainbow. And when I was at the cross roads violent rain came on, which made me so wet that I would not stop at the Chapel Farm after service, but came limping straight home in great misery from the boil on the thigh, which is painfully tender, and the drawers fretting the sore place at every step of the 3 miles".

On November 26th. 1871, November gloom joined forces with his poor eyesight to produce a minor crisis: "A dark dismal day, scarcely any daylight. I went to Bettws. A drizzling rain came on. The afternoon grew dark and darker. The darkness in chapel was fearful. I have seldom been so hard put to it to read. Before I began the lessons the darkness became appalling, and it seemed as if night were coming on all at once. I asked Wilding in despair if there were a candle in the chapel. 'No', he said. So with the courage of desperation and a wild beast at bay I went at the lessons and scrambled through somehow, stumbling and blundering frightfully. Then it grew lighter. I preached extempore with great satisfaction to myself, better than I have ever done before, on citizenship".

As usual with Kilvert, the narrative of his Bettws experiences is punctuated by humorous incidents of one sort or another:

September 3rd. 1871: "I went to Bettws in light rain and preached extempore on the Good Samaritan from the Gospel for the day. A red cow with a foolish white face came up to the window by the desk and stared in while I was preaching".

January 21st. 1872: "I thought the markers in the Bible and Prayers had suddenly become very short, and after service Wilding the clerk told me the church mice had eaten them off".

February 4th. 1872: "A black and tan collie came and looked through the window" this again during the sermon.

March 29th. 1872: "After chapel I learnt that Mrs. Wall" (the churchwarden's wife) "had been happily brought to bed of a son at half past one this afternoon. Wall said he feared he should not have been able to come to chapel, and when he did come, honest man, he was so bewildered that he could not find the place in his prayer book. Wilding the clerk, missing the accustomed support of the churchwarden's voice and in great agitation at hearing his own voice alone, stumbled and blundered through the psalms in a fearful and wonderful way, sometimes on his head, sometimes on his knees, now up, now down again, till King David would never have recognised his own divine songs".

In December, 1871, the Prince of Wales became seriously ill, but rumours about his condition were contradictory. We read in the Diary under December 10th: "We do not know whether he is alive or dead. When Mr. Venables (in the morning at Clyro Church) "came to the petition in the Litany for the Royal Family, he made a solemn pause and in a low voice prayed 'that it may please Thee (if he still survive) to bless Albert Edward Prince of Wales'. It was very impressive. But this suspense between life and death is terribly sad. Before afternoon service a form of prayer for the Prince came down by telegraph from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the first prayer that I ever heard of as coming by telegraph. Mr. Venables used it in church and spoke about it before the sermon, but it came too late for me to take it and use it at Bettws, so I could only use the provisional form of prayer which Mr. Venables used this morning".

At this point Kilvert aptly echoes the mood of gloomy foreboding which had seized everyone. "The blue mountains", he writes, "were silver ribbed with snow and looked like a dead giant lying in state - a Titan".

"Hodgson was at chapel", he goes on, and then, "the Prince, the Prince is in everyone's mouth. We went into Wall's farm house after chapel and I stayed there till dusk, then home by the upper road crazy with face ache, weak and wretched, and the road never seemed to be so long".

Kilvert was always deeply moved by the misery and suffering endured by the poorer folk of those times, even when he was not actually involved. The entry for Sunday, December 18th. 1870, reads: "I could not get out of my head a horrible story Wall was telling me this evening of a suicide committed by an old man named William Jones in the old barn, now pulled down, which stood close by Chapel Dingle cottage. The old man used to work for Dyke at Llwyn Gwillim, but becoming helpless and infirm he was put upon the parish. It is supposed that this preyed upon his mind. He was a very good faithful servant and a man of a sturdy independent character who could not bear the idea of not being able any longer to maintain himself and hated to be supported by the parish. 'I used to bake his bit of meat for him that was allowed him by the Board', said Mr. Wall, 'for Rachel Williams with whom he was lodging at the Chapel Dingle was out at work every day. My baking day was mostly Friday. On Friday he had been up with his meat and I did not notice anything more than usual about him. At noon on Saturday Rachel's step-children missed him. They had seen him go towards the barn some hours before. They went and looked through a lancet hole of the old building and saw the old man lying on the floor, and they came back saying that old William Jones was lying in the barn dead. The master and I went down to the barn. Inside the barn there was a door leading into a beast house. The old man could not shut the barn door from the inside, so he had gone into the beast house and had shut himself in. Then he had leaned his stick up in a corner quite tidy. He had then taken out a razor, unsheathed it, putting the sheath back into his pocket. He was lying on the floor on his face when we saw him. The master turned him over. Heaven send I never see such a sight again.....' ".

There is no need for us to dwell upon the details of that fearful scene which met Mr. Wall's gaze: only perhaps to observe that Kilvert, who so loved to describe the beautiful in nature and in human form and character, was not content to gloss over all that was ugly and evil, including what we might call the unacceptable face of Victorian social conditions.

At last the time came for Kilvert to leave Clyro, which he did on September 2nd. 1872.

August 25th. was his last Sunday on duty at Bettws, and his love for the place and its people can best be illustrated from his own words:-

"Irvine" (Kilvert's successor as curate) "and I walked to Bettws. It was my last visit to the dear old chapel. Every tree and hill and hollow and glimpse of the mountains were precious to me, and I was walking with a stranger to whom it was nought, and who had no dear associations with the place. I took the whole service and preached a farewell sermon from Philippians I. 3. 'The Prisoner of the Lord'. 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you'. It was for the last time. I could not help it. I burst into tears. After chapel I went to the Chapel Farm and Llwyn Gwillim and to the Forge, and sweet Emma of the Chapel Dingle to say Good-bye, and then to Whitty's Mill, the dear old Mill, to see sweet dying Margaret. It was a sad, sad day".

A week later, September 1st. 1872, Kilvert's last Sunday at Clyro, Irvine had a discouraging start to his ministry at Bettws. Kilvert writes: "Irvine went to chapel in the rain and would not put on leggings as I advised him. He came back wet and weary, saying there were a man, a woman and a boy in chapel". Very shortly afterwards more trouble was in store for the newcomer, Irvine.

On September 25th. 1872, less than a month after leaving Clyro for a second spell as curate to his father at Langley Burrell, Kilvert went down to Chippenham Station to meet Mrs. Bevan of Hay Castle and members of her family who were passing through on their way to Weymouth. In the course of a brief 15 minute chat before their train moved off, Kilvert learnt of the minor calamity that had disturbed the even tenor of parochial life at Clyro and Bettws on a recent Sunday. In fact, both the vicar and the curate had arrived at Bettws in the afternoon, leaving Clyro unprovided for.

"Irvine sitting in the desk and ready to begin service, saw the door darkened by a portentous shadow and heard the terrible voice of Mr. Venables saying, 'Are you aware that there is no one at Clyro Church?' Mr. Venables suspected something was wrong before he entered the chapel and saw Irvine sitting in his robes, for he heard some one say, 'Well, it isn't often we have two parsons at the chapel'. He said no more, but turned and ran back to Clyro where the bells had been ringing for half an hour, and the clerk, suspecting something wrong, had sent to Irvine's rooms, and finding he had made this fatal journey to the chapel, had gone to Mr. White who was staying at Llysdim and had happily come down with Mr. Venables for the Sunday, and got him to read the service. Mr. White said he would gladly read the prayers, but could not preach as he had no sermon with him. However, Mr. Venables arrived in time to preach, coming into church hot and flushed with his 3 miles run from Bettws, in the middle of the second lesson. Irvine described himself so unnerved by what had happened and the sudden and dreadful apparition of Mr. Venables, that he could hardly go through the service. It seems he thought it was an understood thing that he was to go to the chapel every other Sunday".

On Sunday, September 13th. 1874, Kilvert was paying a visit to Clyro, where Prickard was now the vicar with John Trumper as curate. "I asked leave of the vicar", he says, "to go to Bettws Chapel this afternoon to preach in the old chapel once more, that I might have an opportunity of seeing some of my dear old friends. No one knew that I was at Clyro, and when Wall the churchwarden saw me coming across the field he stared and could hardly believe his eyes. Sweet Annie Dyke was standing by the gate and she was equally surprised. Lucretia Wall was with her, and Elizabeth Anne Evans from Clyro School, staying at the Chapel Farm on a holiday visit. Lucretia Wall is blooming and much improved in health. After chapel I went down to the Chapel Farm and sat with them awhile. Then I went to the Chapel Dingle to see sweet Emma Griffiths. She was as true and loving as ever. She said, 'I do often think of that Good Friday you came to see me here'.". (This refers to the long pastoral visit on March 29th. 1872).

On April 30th. 1876, Kilvert was again staying at Clyro. He writes, "A cold rainy morning which became a cold bright afternoon. I walked up to Bettws Chapel for the 3.30 afternoon service by the desire of the curate(Trumper) and the Bettws people. The chapel bell struck out as of old when I came in sight round the corner of the chapel barn. How dear and familiar were the scene and the kind friendly faces grouped about the chapel door. And within how things were changed and improved. A little vestry under the old gallery, a new harmonium, and Annie, dear Annie Dyke seated at it with her little choir, her brother Willie and her cousins round her. Such nice singing, the Glorias, canticles and three hymns, one of them 'We love the place, O God', and another my favourite 'Lead, kindly Light'. There too were good Mrs. Dyke and Mrs. Wall, my kind friend, Lucretia and Eliza Wall, my dear old schoolgirls and pupils, and their father, the honest churchwarden with his beaming face, sitting in his accustomed place and his fine growing boys opposite. After service I went to Llwyn Gwillim to tea with Annie and Willie Dyke and Lucretia and Eliza Wall, stopping for a few minutes at the Chapel Dingle to see dear Emma Griffiths who has been very ill".

Finally, Monday, February 10th. 1879, on another visit to Clyro: "Came back at 5 to a meeting at Clyro Vicarage to raise funds for the completion of Bettws Chapel" and Tuesday, February 11th. 1879: "Walked with Prickard, Crichton, Morrell, Williams and his little girl to see the new chapel", now apparently with restoration nearing completion.

There are three passages in the Diary which are concerned with weekday visits in the Bettws area, and which are of special interest.

The first forms a prelude to the Collett baptism on the day following, already mentioned (March 13th. 1870), and is typical of Kilvert's 'villaging' activities, so natural and homely. Saturday, March 12th. 1870: "..... Went to Upper Cabalva where Mrs. Dyke gave me a pocketful of golden pippins. Annie up at Llwyn Gwillim, but before she went she had gathered a glassful of primroses from the rickyard hedge. On to Lower Cabalva. .... Mrs. Collett with a new baby to be christened at Bettws Chapel tomorrow. Mary Collett proud to show me her Whitney School prizes and all her little treasures. She is a very good girl very fond of reading and going to school and devours books. I lent her Miss Edgeworth's 'Parent's Assistant'. She has good eyes

but she will never match her mother's beautiful noble face. Mrs. Collett says they must have their turkey cock killed because he knocks the children down and stocks (pecks) them. Collett set one child to drive the turkey with a stick, but the bird flew at her, knocked her down and stocked her too, so there were two children roaring at once and the turkey triumphant".

The second introduces us once again to the Wall family, with whom we are already so familiar. It is Wednesday, 28th. June, 1871:-

"I went on to the Walls' new farm house where they have been settled a week. The two nice girls Lucretia and Eliza were at home and quite unspoilt by the Bristol school and as simple and nice as ever. Their mother was gone to Hereford to buy furniture for the new house, but their father came in from the farm. Pretty Lucretia was burning to show me over the new house and do the honours. She went out leaving the door open and lingering outside as if inviting me to come. The father and children took me all over the new house. Lucretia showed me her bed, a French bed, blue and gold, the prettiest piece of furniture I saw. Wall pointed out to me with satisfaction the door with a lock which separated the sleeping rooms of the servant boys and girls".

The third passage is dated March 15th. 1873: "A bitter east wind blew furiously over the hills as I stood at the exposed door of Llwyn Gwillim". (The next two visits are quoted in the reverse order). "At the new Chapel Farm I found Wall and his wife at home, and little Nellie lay lovingly in my arms".

"At the lone cottage in the Chapel Dingle my dear friend sweet Emma Griffiths" (whom Kilvert visited at some length on Good Friday, March 29th. 1872) "was almost beside herself with delight when I opened the door. But her joy was soon turned into sorrow. I had not many minutes to stay, and when I rose to go poor Emma clasped my hands in both of hers, gave me a long loving look, and turned away with a burst of weeping, in a passion of tears. What is it? What is it? What do they all mean? It is a strange and terrible gift, this power of stealing hearts and exciting such love".

Yes indeed - Francis Kilvert could certainly inspire affection and devotion in the hearts of many who met and knew him. And the charm and beauty of his writing is equally captivating. One returns to it again and again, wondering at times whether it can still hold us in thrall, and never ceasing to marvel that it does - it always seems as fresh, as wonderful and as fascinating as when we first opened the pages of this amazing Diary.

I was in the middle of piecing together the Diary references to Kilvert's ministry at Bettws, when the idea came to me to pay a visit to the little church. So after lunch on Sunday, July 16th. 1973, we set off from Hereford in the hope that a service was being held at Bettws that afternoon. It had developed into one of the few really hot days we had last summer. At length we reached the Rhydspence Inn, and turned right up the steep lane towards Bettws. In a sense we were following in the steps of Kilvert the diarist - we were climbing up the same slope, though by a different lane, and from a different direction. There was a more important difference, though: we were climbing without effort in the comfort of a modern car whereas on such a blazing hot day Kilvert would have been plodding upward bathed in perspiration, and an appropriate comment would have appeared later in his diary. We reached our destination safely just after 3. 30, and the presence of other cars showed that there was a service. Unfortunately it had begun at 3, but we crept inside and joined the little congregation as the vicar began his address. Afterwards, we joined in the singing of the closing hymn, "Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim". How good it was to find the present vicar of Clyro, the Rev. D.E. Rees carrying on a faithful ministry in this remote and beautiful spot. We were able to have a few words with him before he left to continue his Sunday duties.

We were in no hurry to go, and as we came out through the church door we were amazed by the splendour of the view. The northern and north-eastern escarpments of the Black Mountains were framed exactly in the porch and made a perfect picture. Further out, at the point where the church path joins the farm road, we stood spell-bound by the wonderful panorama that stretched out before our eyes in the brilliant light and colour of a perfectly clear summer afternoon. The sun poured its intense heat on our heads and we longed for more shade, but the view was superb. The mountains towered in all their glory on the right, and directly opposite lay Clifford, with its castle ruins down below, and its two lanes leading upward, one to the church, hidden by its surrounding trees, the other, to the left climbing past the disused railway station. It was easy to trace the path of the old Golden Valley line coming round the corner from Green Sidings station, and sliding gently downwards through Clifford to the floor of the valley. Eastward rose the summit of Merbach Hill, and beyond again one could discern the woods of Garnons far behind the top of Tin Hill.

To the left was Ladylift and the Weobley country. Here indeed one could praise God for having made the world so beautiful, as Kilvert himself puts it, and carry away in the mind afterwards a vivid picture of that countryside that the diarist knew and loved so well.

J. D. Worsey.

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MORE REVERBERATIONS FROM THE FINDON WEDDING:

On August 11th. 1874, as we all know from the Diary, Charles Heanley married Adelaide Cholmeley. This Adelaide (Addie) was the eldest child of Adelaide (Adèle) Mary Kilvert and Capt. Montague Cholmeley. Mrs. S.J. Wyndowe in her valuable "Rambling Recollections" states that Capt. Montague Cholmeley of the Indian Army, was the son of the Rector of St. Mary's Wainflete (or Wainflete) Lincs. She does not name him.

The Rev. Robert Cholmeley lived from 1780 to 1852, and was Rector of Wainflete for 35 years, from 1817 until his death. He had 15 children - 9 sons and 6 daughters - all now identified. The fourth son achieved fame. He was William Cholmeley, born on 30 March, 1823. He studied at St. Bartholomew's Hospital and became an M.D. at St. Andrew's University in 1850. At the time of the Findon wedding, therefore, William Cholmeley was a well-known doctor, having founded Holloway Road Hospital in London in 1856, remaining senior physician there for many years. He was also Editor of the "Medical Times and Gazette". He died in Notting Hill, London, in 1896, and his obituary can be found in the Times of that year (June 23). In 1871, William delivered the annual oration before the Medical Society of London. This was published, but the British Museum reports that its copy is missing! It is unlikely that Francis Kilvert had not heard of this distinguished brother of his "delightful Adèle"'s husband.

Another brother - son also of Rev. Robert of Wainflete - was the Rev. James Cholmeley, whose daughter married her first cousin, Montague Cholmeley Junior. Montie, on crutches, attended the Findon Wedding. He was, of course, Addie's brother.

Mrs. Wyndowe mentions the four children of Adèle and Montague Cholmeley: Adelaide (Addie), Montague, Penelope Eleanor (Penella) and Norman (born 5th. May, 1863). Of Norman Goodford Cholmeley, Mrs. Wyndowe wrote that she knew he was married, but "I never heard what his wife's maiden name was". We are luckier. His wife's name was Mary Katherine Batten, whom he married in 1903 at the age of 40, and by whom he had two sons and one daughter. Norman Goodford Cholmeley was educated at Charterhouse and Balliol and was with the Indian Civil Service from 1883 to 1911, rising to the rank of Commissioner in Burma. During the First World War, he was active in the Anglo-French Red Cross. At the Findon wedding, he would have been 11 years old. He died in 1947.

Mark Doughty.

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TWO BIOGRAPHICAL CONUNDRUMS:

Kilvert refers twice to an episode in his life of which we seem to know nothing.  
Wednesday 10 Jan 1872.

'After dinner I went to see old Jacob Smith, who used to be head-carter at Sheldon when I lived at Lanhill'.

(Vol. 2. 113)

Thursday 24 Sept 1874

'Near the entrance to the village (of Kington St. Michael) I fell in with a team of red oxen, harnessed, coming home from plough with chains rattling, and the old ploughman riding the fore-ox, reminding me vividly of the time when I used to ride the oxen home from plough at Lanhill'.

(Vol. 3. 87)

When did Kilvert live at Lanhill? The second reference suggests that it was in his boyhood; and perhaps it refers to a holiday spent there. But the first reference says specifically 'when I lived at Lanhill'. Was there a period when he was temporarily separated from his family? Did he serve as a curate for a time at Kington St. Michael? I wonder if there is any Wiltshire member of the Society who can throw any light on this little enigma.

The second conundrum may be easier to solve. The official Kilvert family tree mentions four daughters to the Rev. Robert Kilvert - Thersie, Emily, Frances and Dora. But towards the end of the Diary (Vol. 3. 442), Kilvert in the course of the account of his visit to see the dead Little Davie of Bredwardine, includes these words. 'Before I left the room I stooped and kissed the child's forehead, and the mother did the same ... I had not touched death for more than thirty years, and it brought back the sudden shock I felt as a child when I was taken into a room at Hardenhuish Rectory where our little sister lay dead and was told to touch her hand'.

Who was this fifth sister who died so young and when did she die? We can fix the date to within a few years. She must have died around 1848 (the entry was made on Christmas Eve 1878). I wonder if there is any Wiltshire K.S. Member who has access to the Hardenhuish registers and could carry out this little piece of research for us.

F. Grice.

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KILVERT AND BRISTOL:

As every reader of the Diary will know, Francis Kilvert had several close associations with Bristol. He was ordained in its Cathedral and his Diary contains several descriptions of later visits to the city when he was curate to his father at Langley Burrell and was able to make the journey by train from Chippenham. It was on a beautiful morning in October 1872 when he took the 9.25 to Bristol to attend a Conference of Clergy and Laity at the Victoria Rooms. After the morning session the weather tempted him to play truant from the afternoon meeting - "It seemed a pity to sit in a stuffy room any longer, so I mouched and stealing down Park Street unobserved I breathed freely again in College Green". He made his way to the Cathedral and "knelt in the old place upon the same altar steps" where he had been ordained. Then after a visit to the Lord Mayor's Chapel where he noted that "in this chancel sit the Charity Girls' School called 'The Red Maids', one of the many Bristol charities", he hurried to "the glorious church of St. Mary Redcliffe". He remarked that well over four centuries after the original structure had collapsed in 1445, "a noble spire" had at last been built on the old truncated base. Inevitably the visit to this church recalled its associations with the tragic Bristol poet and Kilvert could not refrain from writing in his Diary, "Poor Chatterton. Poor Chatterton".

Almost a year later Kilvert travelled to Bristol with some friends to hear a performance of 'The Messiah' during the Bristol Musical Festival. They arrived at the Colston Hall to join the queue for unreserved seats five minutes before the doors opened. "A great crowd had assembled and had been waiting some time. Directly the doors were thrown open a dreadful struggle began. People got wedged in the doorway and were shot like cannon balls by the terrible pressure from behind". In spite of this inauspicious start the performance impressed him and he included a long account of it in the Diary.

Kilvert was always "highly susceptible to all feminine beauty, the younger the better", as William Plomer has put it, and goes on to admit that "some readers have found his super-charged rhapsodizing over young girls mawkish". Yet these emotional entanglements, however much they may have tempted him, were always contained within the bounds of decorum, a decorum supported by a high moral sense of his priestly calling. It was sentimental recollections of one Janet Vaughan whom he had known in Radnorshire and who was now at the Clergy Daughters' School in Bristol which prompted him to pay her a visit there in 1874. He travelled on a cheap 'market ticket' from Chippenham with his mother who left him in the 'Centre' in order to see a friend living at 6, Oakfield Place, Clifton. After buying some roses for Janet, Kilvert went into "a confectioner's shop between the Drawbridge and College Green". From the window he caught sight of a little beggar girl who immediately attracted his attention with her "fair hair tossed and tangled wild, an arch espiègle eager little face and beautiful wild eyes, large and grey". Kilvert could not resist the appeal of her winning, beseeching smile as she lingered there, dressed in "a poor faded ragged frock; and her shapely limbs and tiny delicate beautiful feet were bare and stained with mud and dust ... Christ seemed to be looking at me through the beautiful wistful imploring eyes of the barefooted hungry child". He bought her a bun which she accepted gratefully and began to eat hungrily. He asked her name but the roar of the street made it impossible to hear what she said. "Never mind", he wrote, "I shall know one day".

Continuing his way up Park Street he was at first uncertain exactly where the school was in Great George Street but was soon led to "the large old-fashioned red-brick house" by the sound of practising on two or three pianos. Enquiring for Miss Vaughan, he was shown into a room upstairs overlooking an attractive garden with steep sloping lawns and in the distance a view of the cathedral and the river beyond. At last he heard Janet Vaughan singing as she came along the passage; he found her "much grown and with her hair cut short over the forehead, but unchanged in other ways and as sweet and simple and affectionate as ever. She gave me a long loving kiss and we sat by the open window to talk". Later they went out into the garden down into "a secluded walk, dark and shady, called the 'Poet's Retreat' and upon the stem of a young beech whose bark was grimy black with Bristol smuts" Kilvert romantically carved Janet's initials J.V. and his own R.F.K. above. Later Kilvert was much amused to discover that "the Lady Principal of the school was horrified to discover that I was not, as she thought, quite an old gentleman".

Two months later Kilvert went to the wedding of a friend, Adelaide Cholmeley, and fell in love with one of her bridesmaids, Kathleen Heanley, whom he secretly called 'Kathleen Mavourneen'. After her marriage Adelaide went to live at 1, Carlton Place, Clifton, and visits to the newly-married 'Addie' provided an excuse for several journeys to Bristol. During the first visit Kilvert found himself one of a small party at lunch and afterwards they went to Clifton Down and then into "the slush and mire and darkness of the Giant's Cave" - that is, all except Kilvert himself and Adelaide who sat on a seat overlooking the Suspension Bridge and talked of his beloved Kathleen Mavourneen. "I shall never now see the Suspension Bridge from the Cliff", wrote Kilvert afterwards, "without thinking of Kathleen. The Bridge, the river at low tide, the steep lofty cliffs, and the green-foliaged dingle and slopes of Nightingale Valley are now inextricably bound up with thoughts of her".

A month later Adelaide wrote inviting Kilvert to come to Clifton to meet Kathleen who was staying with her. He eagerly accepted the invitation and travelled to Temple Meads by the very next 'Thursday Market Day' train. He found his adored Kathleen "very pretty, and most sweet and kind in her manner". There was much laughter and fun, but the amusement was of a most innocent kind with Kilvert and Kathleen comparing notes about Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' and showing each other their favourite passages. On his return to the station, the girls came with him in the cab to visit St. Mary Redcliffe on the way. The church was still under repair, although the roof of the nave was almost completely restored. They climbed the spiral staircase to the Muniment Room "and saw the old worm-eaten remnants of the chests in which Chatterton, 'the marvellous boy, the sleepless soul that perished in his pride' averred that he had discovered the poems of Rowley the monk". And as Kilvert stood beside the pretty Kathleen "in the great windy dusty room, looking out through the mullions of the glassless windows over the murky smoky city there came a sweet reminiscence" of the sunny August day when he had first met her and fell in love with her.

Although parental opposition made it impossible for this particular romance to flourish, Kilvert still longed to see her again and was told when he next visited Carlton Place that Kathleen still "liked me and wanted very much to write to me and could not understand why she should not". During the next recorded visit to Clifton over a year later, however, Kathleen Mavourneen is not mentioned and the diarist's main business in Bristol was to visit "the bookbinder's, Williams, above the Drawbridge", and to purchase a hamper of wine and a box of groceries. Then he returned home by the 7 p.m. train "which rushes up from Bristol to Chippenham in 39 minutes".

During the following June when meeting his father and mother at Chippenham station there was an unexpected encounter with Kathleen who was on her way to stay in Clifton. "She was so beautiful and grave and shy and tender and sweet" that his former passion was aroused, and three days later he cut the Archdeacon's Visitation which was being made to his father's parish and took the train to Bristol. As he humorously describes it in his Diary, "Leaving my Father to 'undergo' the Visitation alone I constituted myself Archdeacon and went to Bristol to make a Visitation upon Adelaide Cholmeley and Katie Heanley. It was a lovely summer's day, superb for haymaking, clear and hot. Queen's weather and the bells ringing and the flags flying in Bristol City for the Queen's Accession". After tea they drove down to the Cathedral to attend Evensong and inspect G.E. Street's now completed nave which had been begun eight years before. It had been a happy day for Kilvert: "dear Katie was very nice and sweet and kind", but alas, like other ardent mostly one-sided romances of Kilvert's this one came to nothing. Yet he never failed to feel a special affection for Bristol. It was, he once wrote in the Diary, "a grand city, how much grander than Bath. I breathe freely here. Here is life, movement and work, instead of the foolish drawl and idle lounge".

Vincent Waite.

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#### A SILVER VOICE:

On Sunday, March 19, 1876, Kilvert's father paid his son this tribute:

"As you were preaching there came back upon my ear an echo of the tones of the sweetest human voice I ever heard, the voice of John Henry Newman. No voice but yours ever reminded me of him". (Vol. III, p. 244). That this accolade constitutes high praise is indicated by a typical contemporary account of Newman's conduct of worship. Principal Shairp wrote:

The service was very simple - no pomp, no ritualism ... the most remarkable thing was the beauty, the silver intonation, of Mr. Newman's voice, as he read the Lessons. It seemed to bring new meaning out of the familiar words ... And the tone of voice in which they were spoken, once you grew accustomed to it, sounded like a fine strain of

unearthly music.

(Quoted in Faber, Geoffrey, Oxford Apostles - (Revised Edition 1936) ).

Would that we had a tape recording of Kilvert reading his Diary aloud!

Rev. D.R. King.

Mr. King has also sent two reviews of the one volume edition, published in the U.S.A. in 1947:-

"It is unquestionably one of the most original, charming and literarily artistic journals in the English Language. The author is a stylist of very rare quality. No discriminating reader will want to miss it, but it will not be popular". ("The Library Journal") .

"The excitement of these pages is a literary one of a very pure and rare kind. The man who wrote these entries was an unmistakable poet, and this is, in a very high and unrheterical sense, prose poetry. These are notations of a spirit, delicately articulate and intensely responsive. This loving and dearly lovable man had a sharp eye and occasionally a sharp wit. But for the most part he is engaged in recording the more radiant surfaces of life as they impinged on his rare, radiant spirit. This diary is a caressing record of things lovely and pleasant, which become for a generation much later and far distant the remembrance of things past and, at this remove, serene and lucid images of themselves". ("N.Y. Herald Tribune").

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#### A DAY IN TAUNTON - 1978

'The christening was at St. James at a quarter to three. I baptised the child, having come down for that purpose. The child was named Lancelot Cuthbert Baines and he was wonderfully placid during the ceremony'. (Diary, Vol.2, 292).

One of that child's sons, John Hockin, and his wife Joan, are members of the Kilvert Society, and it was in their company that Guy and I spent a day in Taunton.

At the Natural History Library we were shown beautifully coloured plans of intended building on the ferneries and market gardens which Kilvert had so much admired when staying at The Ferns with his friends William and Emma Hockin. But a few yards away from the library we were able to see the shop used by William Hockin for the sale of his flowers, fruit trees, shrubs, conifers and forest trees. An advertisement for his shop, now used by the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society, is to be found in the Morris and Co. Commercial Directory of Somersetshire (1872).

Next came a visit to the beautiful church of St. Mary Magdalene, from which, in a storm, part of a pinnacle had fallen on a man who was only saved, Kilvert tells us, by his hat!

After picnicing beyond the boundaries of Taunton we inspected the breath-taking carved oak bench-ends and pulpit of Trull Church, before returning to Taunton and the main event of the day. The present owners of The Ferns had kindly promised to show us the house. Standing at the top of the Avenue, the Estate Avenue in Kilvert's day, the house has been divided into two, the main body now known as Elmhurst and the servants' wing as Elm Lodge.

Even as I write, the gardens of Elmhurst are again being divided, as the occupiers build their retirement bungalow in the grounds.

Time then for a visit to St. James, the church where the christening took place, and in passing, a glance at Tauntfield House, Silver Street, in which, Goodman's Directory tells us, the Hockins lived in 1887.

Hugh Dearlove.

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