

## THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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FEBRUARY 1981.

Dear Member,

It is with great pleasure that I report that Mr. Harley J. Dance has accepted the post of Treasurer of the Society, all the more so because he and our late Treasurer, Mr. J.D. Worsey, had been great friends from their boyhood days. We are most grateful to Mr. Dance.

Only two events have to be recorded, the Walk on September 20th. and the Service at Aberedw the following day. For the former occasion 33 members turned out, among them Canon and Mrs. Boake from Eire. The weather was mild and sunny, and in the evening the party walked from Whitehall to Bettws and back. The longer afternoon walk was from Crowther's Pool over the little Mountain to Newchurch. A most enjoyable day and once more our thanks go to Mr. and Mrs. R.I. Morgan for arranging it! Thin but persistent rain on the following morning threatened to damp the spirits, but the afternoon brought bright sun and sharp visibility. The venerable church was filled to capacity, churchwardens and sidesmen having to bring in seating from the Inn next door. Father Luff's sermon was most impressive, and the Society hopes to publish it. A sumptuous tea followed, made even more enjoyable by the warmth and friendliness of the parishioners, and in the evening light Llandeilo Hill and the Edw valley looked superb behind the dark yews of the churchyard. No wonder, one felt, that Aberdwr meant so much to Kilvert. (Mr. J. Burrell, our Bristol member, reminded me that the aged Canon who acted as guide to Kilvert at St. David's had earlier been vicar here). I tried to convey in a letter to Rev. Roger Williams the immense pleasure derived from our visit to his church and his parishioners. As always too, we are most indebted to Rev. D.T.W. Price for all his organisation, and no doubt his many friends will want to congratulate him and Mrs. Price on the birth of a daughter in December.

Membership steadily increases. Our first New Zealand member, Miss E. Madigan of Dunedin, reports that the BBC series "Kilvert's Diary" has been shown there, and aroused much interest. Other correspondence has praised the record and the cassette of Mr. Timothy Davies's readings - members might like to be reminded that these are obtainable from Saydisc Records, The Barton, Inglestone Common, Badminton, Glos. GL9 1BX. The record and cassette are each £5. 99. post free. Our Canadian member, Professor Doughty, has compiled a family tree of the descendants of Kilvert's uncle Richard. I have received also reports from members who attended the service at Langley Burrell for the "inauguration" of the new organ - an event which gave them very great pleasure.

And now to the present year's programme. The A.G.M. will be held at Hereford Shirehall at 7. 00 p.m. on Friday, April 24th. Mr. Godfrey Davies, our veteran member and archivist will show a film entitled "Kilvert Country". The summer service will be at 3 p.m. on June 28th. at Langley Burrell (by kind permission of Rev. D. Copeland), and the autumn one at 3 p.m. on September 20th. at Llanbedr, Painscastle (by kind permission of Rev. P. Ralph Bowman). Three Saturday walks are planned - for April 25th., June 27th. and September 19th. The first will be, weather permitting, in the Black Mountains. Those participating are reminded to bring picnic lunch and tea, and to be stoutly shod. The usual venue - The Baskerville Arms, Clyro, at 11. 00 a.m.

Mr. Clew reports that in his preparing a booklet on Langley Burrell (similar to the one he produced on Bredwardine in 1979) there has come to light a photograph of the group at Dora Kilvert's wedding. At the time of writing this, identification of the 28 people shown is not complete, but that of Kilvert, his fiancée, his sisters Emily and Fanny, his parents and brother-in-law, William Smith has been ascertained. The photograph is a wonderful discovery, and will appear in the booklet, stocks of which Mr. Clew hopes to bring in person to the A.G.M. For members unable to attend, copies will be obtained at £1 (post free) from Mr. J. Payne, Old Brewery House, Langley Burrell, Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 4LQ. Publication date is late April. All profits from the book are to go to the Langley Burrell Church Restoration Fund.

Mr. Clew has also provided a great deal of information and advice in the compilation of a leaflet for those who wish to visit the Kilvert Country but lack private transport, but before elaborating on the contents of the leaflet, I would like to express to him the Society's grateful thanks for all his work for the well-being of the Society. The leaflet will contain a list of guest houses, advice on the best centres, and bus timetables with hints on how to reach spots not easily accessible. It should be ready for March and should not cost more than 25p. Enquiries to me, please.

Yours sincerely,

E.J.C. West

Hon. Secretary.

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OBITUARY:

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

Mr. Geoffrey Bright of Leominster. A Vice-President of the Society, well known as a writer and broadcaster, he was one of the directors of the well-known firm of auctioneers, Messrs. Russell, Baldwin and Bright. He it was who conducted the sale of the contents of Llanthomas when the Thomas family emigrated to what was then Southern Rhodesia.

Mrs. E. Phillips, a life member, who, using the pen-name of Maxwell Fraser, was a well-known travel writer.

Mrs. M. Davies of Leominster. Five times Mayoress of the town, and a great lover of the Diary, she had been a member of the Society for the last 13 years.

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PUBLICATIONS NOTICE

Kilvert's Diary. The publishers of Kilvert's Diary have advised us of an increase of £5. 00 in the price of the current three-volume edition of the Diary. Consequently the price of three-volume sets, post-free, from the Society, will be £26. 50. until further notice.

R.I. Morgan, Hon. Publications Secretary, Heulwen, Castle Gardens, Hay-on-Wye, via. Hereford.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Kilvert's Kathleen Mavourneen - (£1. 00 post free)

Kilvert's Kathleen Mavourneen by Mrs. Eva Farmery and Mr. R.B. Taylor is the result of exactly the kind of research which the Kilvert Society is right to encourage and publish. This forty-page booklet, generously illustrated by Mr. Taylor's photographs, throws a flood of light on many figures who play a shadowy and at times enigmatic part in the Diary, enlarging greatly our knowledge of the Cholmeley and Heanley families, uncovering new facts about Kilvert's movements and his relationship with Katharine Heanley, and completing the story of the sad fate that befell 'Kathleen Mavourneen' in the years following Kilvert's death. It is a very moving story, clearly and persuasively told. No certain photograph of 'Kathleen' has survived but Mr. Taylor has one portrait which he feels might with some certainty be identified as hers. Most readers of the booklet will not need to be reminded that two members of one of the families whose fortunes are traced here are still active members of the Society - Mrs. Victor and Miss Cholmeley of Hereford.

F.G.

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Twenty-Four Walks in the Kilvert Country by M.M. Morgan - (£1. 10 post free).

During the last three years there have been many requests in the Society correspondence for detailed information about the walks in the Diary and a real need for a booklet on them. When Mrs. Morgan revealed she was undertaking such a production, I looked forward to its appearance with the greatest pleasurable anticipation, for she has lived in the area all her life, has long been a Committee member and with her husband leads the Walks which form so enjoyable a part of our yearly programme.

The result has been all one wished for and more. The walks vary in length from 2 to 5 miles, but the arrangement is such that two or more can easily be combined for the more energetic; directions are very clearly and simply given; each building

and site mentioned in the Diary is printed in capitals with the Diary reference following in brackets. By way of bonus there is advice on where to park your car; there are interesting asides which Mrs. Morgan has gleaned from old inhabitants; there are references to the plant and bird life for the nature lover, and to spots where views are panoramic, lying just off the routes. As if that were not enough of a bonus, there is a most interest introductory chapter on Kilvert's Clyro, sad in that the village has much changed but valuable also in that the old scene is recreated for us. What Mrs. Morgan has provided for the Diary lover is a kind of gazetteer of the area around Clyro, an indispensable piece of topographical research, quite the most valuable publication of its kind; and I am very pleased to be able to thank Mrs. Morgan publicly for all her research, to congratulate her most warmly on its appearance! and to recommend it wholeheartedly to members!

E.J.C.W.

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#### SOME HEREFORDSHIRE SQUARSONS:

(The following extracts are taken, with his kind permission, from Rev. J.R.Williams's sermon preached at the Eardisley Commemoration Service of June 1980).

In November 1877 Kilvert became Vicar of Bredwardine, and thus more in the social circle which included such families as the Palmers of Eardisley, the Cornewalls of Moccas, the Davenports of Foxley and the Stanhopes of Byford. His brother-in-law was at Monnington, just across the Wye, and his friend Andrew Pope at Preston-on-Wye, just beyond Moccas. Henry Dew was Rector of Whitney, where he had been instituted to the family living way back in 1843, and although Kilvert found him looking "old and worn", having been laid up for 5 Sundays during the Spring of 1876, he was still there as Incumbent in 1895. The coming to Bredwardine was thus a return to be among relations and friends.

The pages of the Diary are full of parsons - but for Kilvert, most of them would go unremembered today. Among them are several splendid Squarsons - that combination of Squire and Parson which today must be totally extinct. Among the ranks of the parochial clergy today there must be very few land-owners, or Justices of the Peace, or Fellows of All Souls'.

Among them was - The Rev'd. GEORGE HORATIO DAVENPORT, M.A., J.P. of Foxley, Lord of the Manor of Yazor and sole landowner, twice Vicar of Yazor (1863-81 and 1881-89) and later Vicar of Mansel Lacy (1890-94). The year 1866 was significant in the family history for it saw his marriage to a Miss Dashwood and his sister's marriage to John Hungerford Arkwright of Hampton Court, near Leominster. No fewer than seven stained glass windows were installed in Yazor Church commemorating the event! As well as meeting socially, Kilvert and he were both among the twelve trustees of the Jarvis Charity, an important charity of some considerable wealth, shared between the parishes of Bredwardine, Staunton-on-Wye and Letton (the income derived from the dividends on about £74,500 stock, the money bequeathed by a Mr. Jarvis in 1790).

Another Squarson was The Rev'd. Sir GEORGE HENRY CORNEWALL, Baronet, M.A., D.L. J.P. of Moccas Court, Lord of the Manor and chief landowner, Rector of Moccas from 1858 and still the incumbent in 1895. His curate, in the tiny parish, was in Kilvert's time RHYS BISHOP mentioned many times in the diary. (After fourteen years at Moccas, as curate, he became Rector of Letton with Willersley in 1884 and was, I think, still there when the First World War began). Sir George endears himself to the reader of the diary. He was a man of many parts. When Kilvert visited Moccas in April 1875 Rhys Bishop took him to see the little Norman parish church in the park. From within the church came the strains of the organ. The curate said that "Sir George Cornwall, the Rector, was playing, but we need not be afraid of interrupting him. When Sir George had finished playing he came up into the chancel and courteously showed me round ..." (Vol. 3. p. 165).

One remembers another occasion in August 1872 at Miss Newton's Picnic in Moccas Park, "When we came into the Park again we saw the smoke of the gipsy camp-fire framing the oaks and found Lady Cornwall, Miss Newton and Mrs. Berkeley Stanhope busy making tea by the shore of the rushy lake. Sir George Cornwall, who had been attending the funeral of his aunt, Miss Cornwall, now joined us dressed in black with a white straw hat and black ribbon. He made himself useful by cutting bread and butter ...". (Vol. 2. p. 253). Sir George and Lady Cornwall were kind and thoughtful neighbours to the new young incumbent of Bredwardine. Lady Cornwall brought him bottles of the Syrup of Hypophosphate of Lime (4.4.78) when he was ill, Sir George generously contributed towards the restoration of the Church Tower at Bredwardine with a cheque for £13. 10s. Od. (21.5.78), he came over to help with the weekday evening Advent services, and when Kilvert had walked to Hardwick Vicarage



for a meeting of the Wyeseide Clerical Association on a January morning Sir George drove him again at five, wrapped in a horsecloth. The discussion at the meeting was on Diocesan Synods.

Another notable aristocratic local clergyman was the Rev'd. the Honourable BERKELEY LIONEL SCUDAMORE STANHOPE, a Scholar parson, Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, before becoming Rector of Byford and Vicar of Mansel Gamage in 1866. Later on, post-Kilvert, he became Archdeacon of Hereford (in 1887), presumably succeeding another aristocrat Lord Saye and Sele, the Archdeacon who preached in the afternoon on 26th. February, 1878 at the re-opening of Mansel Gamage Church after the Restoration. Kilvert thought the Bishop's sermon in the morning "a screed" and the Archdeacon's in the afternoon "a rigmarole" but on the whole preferred the latter as being generally more suitable to the occasion. "Many people laugh at the old Baron's sermons, but the cottagers like them for he is plain and homely and speaks of names and places that they know". (Vol. 3. p. 374). Kilvert enjoyed "a nice luncheon at the Stanhopes' at Byford Rectory" that day. On New Year's Day (1878) Mr. Berkeley Stanhope had been most helpful to Kilvert's parents. They had been expected to arrive at Bredwardine Vicarage by 5. 30 p.m. and his father was to preach at a service at 6. 30 p.m. But by then they still hadn't arrived. "The post horses they had ordered from The Green Dragon at Hereford had been forgotten or the order had been wrongly entered, and they were an hour late leaving Hereford. Near Byford the hind axle broke and they thought they should have had to spend the night on the road, but the driver galloped back on one of the horses to Mr. Berkeley Stanhope's and borrowed his wagonette with which they came on, leaving the broken carriage lying in the ditch with its lamps burning. All's well that ends well and they arrived safe and sound. My father had promised to preach for me tonight, and after a hurried cup of tea he came into church in the middle of the prayers and preached a New Year's sermon from Psalm 25.10" (Vol.3. p 347) - (For thy Name's sake, O Lord: be merciful unto my sin, for it is great). And on another occasion it seems, he helped Mr. Arnold the St. Harmon's Schoolmaster who visited Kilvert at Bredwardine on his way back from looking at a school in Somerset. He landed at Hereford with only just enough money for a night's lodging and then in the morning, remembering that Kilvert lived somewhere in Herefordshire, wandered generally in the right direction to be guided on his way by a gentleman about five miles from Bredwardine; presumably it was Mr. Stanhope of Byford. The schoolmaster after a good meal felt a different man and "went on his way rejoicing home with half a sovereign in his pocket to carry him to St. Harmons" (Vol. 3. p. 433).

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#### KILVERT'S HEREFORDSHIRE:

The Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club was formed in 1851 and was well established by 1871 when Kilvert declined to join a crowd of people gathered around a reputed burial mound, situated on the high plain just below Hay Bluff in the Black Mountains, known as "Tywn-y-beddau", in order to see it "formally opened" by the Club's members. "I had intended to be present", he wrote (May 26), "but I did not go - as I hate seeing the mountain desecrated by this particular herd".

It is to be hoped that this unflattering appellation was intended only for the crowd of hangers-on and gawpers who would inevitably turn up on such an occasion and not for the eminently respectable members of the Club. At this time there were about one hundred and fifty members, of whom fifty were clergymen, including the honorary secretary, the Rev'd. Sir George H. Cornwall of Moccas Court, Vicar of Moccas; someone Kilvert was to know quite well when in later years he became vicar of the adjoining parish of Bredwardine. Sir George, in fact, was honorary secretary of the Club from 1866 to 1875.

Revelatory of the rigid class-structure in the 1870s is the distinction made in the list of members, as printed in the Club's "Transactions", between those styled "Esq" and those designated merely as "Mr". No doubt the former were all landed gentry or members of the very restricted band of professions to which it was permissible for a "gentleman" to belong; the latter being merely moneyed tradesmen, accorded membership by virtue of their affluence. There were no women members: in fact, as late as 1890 a member reporting a Woolhope excursion in a popular naturalists' periodical called "Hardwicke's Science Gossip" announces with some pride: "The Woolhope does not encourage ladies except once a year, so that ordinary field-days are restricted to gentlemen".

In addition to the ordinary members there were about thirty "Honorary members", including such internationally eminent scientists as Sir Charles Lyell, Sir Roderick Murchison and George Bentham; and although these luminaries obviously took no active part in the Club's proceedings, being members by invitation rather than by application, their very acceptance of a place in the honorary membership

could not but reflect the high status enjoyed by the Club in the scientific circles of the day.

This was the great age of the amateur scientist, in its last flowering before the trained professional took over. Greatly outnumbering amateurs in the sciences such as astronomy, chemistry and physics were those who, like the gentlemen of the "Woolhope", called themselves "naturalists", which rather arbitrary term was applied to those who pursued the sciences of botany, zoology (mainly its ornithological and entomological branches) and geology. Quite often, as did the Club's members at Twyn-y-beddau, they strayed across the border into the realms of archeology. The vast majority of Victorian naturalists, amongst whom were a high proportion of clergymen, were men of leisure, who could spare plenty of time for what was to them a pleasurable pastime, yet whose combined efforts greatly contributed to the accumulation of scientific knowledge. There is little doubt that had Charles Darwin been under the necessity of earning a living "The Origin of Species" would never have been written. Of course the great rank and file of naturalists were not Darwins or Lyells and never individually affected the course of science; but each, in his small way, contributed his mite to a vast body of scientific knowledge.

Sir George Cornewall, who was to show much friendship towards Kilvert during the latter's incumbency at Bredwardine, was himself an enthusiastic and experienced naturalist, who had, one suspects, a good library of natural history books at Moccas Court, for, as Kilvert records (p. 338, vol. 3), we find Tomkyns Dew of Whitney Court here on one occasion consulting some works on botany.

Now the Woolhope Club, which incidentally is named after the interesting geological district around the Herefordshire village of Woolhope, was, and still is, headquartered at Hereford, and its activities being mainly concerned with the natural history and archeology of Herefordshire (in which county is the parish of Bredwardine, where Kilvert, as vicar, spent the last one and three quarter years of his life), it is not altogether surprising to occasionally find in the Club's well bound "Transactions", amongst the minutiae of cryptogamic botany and palaentology, in incidental passages of topographical and historical interest which throw light upon what Kilvert recorded and described in his Diary. An example of this occurs in a paper which appears in the 1870 "Transactions", entitled: "Incidental Notes on Remarkable Trees in Herefordshire". The author prefers to be anonymous, whilst adopting the grandiose nom-de-plume: "A Commissioner from the Woolhope Club". In a section of his paper headed "Moccas Park" he tells us:

"The chief approach to Moccas (from Monnington) now leads through part of that grand avenue of Scotch Firs and Yew Trees, which bears the name of MONNINGTON WALK .. The Walk extends in a direct line from Monnington Court to Brobury. It occupies the high ground on the northern side of the river. It is very nearly level, well turfed, and nearly a mile long... The Walk is continued on the same line through Monnington Coppice of Oakwood, by oak trees of a much later date; but over Brobury Scar the avenue is formed of Sweet Chestnut trees of a size and character that carry the mind back again to the original formation of the Walk ... Monnington Walk has long been an object of great interest in itself, but history is silent as to the exact time and cause of its formation. There can be no doubt, however, that this extensive piece of ornamental planting was made as an approach to Monnington Court from the Welsh Borders by Bredwardine ford (before the bridge was built) - and by inference its foundation may be dated about the middle of the 17th. century. One of the trees in the walk was blown down about three years ago, and on carefully examining the annual rings of growth there were found to be 240 - this would show the date to be 1628".

The Commissioner, in mentioning the "Scotch Firs", above, is using the term "fir" in a very loose sense, as was common in his day. More properly these trees (Pinus sylvestris) should be called "Scots Pines". Kilvert (p.261. Vol. 3) also calls them "Scotch Firs". This avenue still exists. The huge pines are showing signs of age and decay and many are missing, but the yews, with which they are interplanted and which they dwarf, still flourish with unabated vigour. (Kilvert, curiously enough, does not mention the yews in his description of the Walk). Scots pines are known to attain an age approaching three hundred years, a mere quarter of the life-expectancy of yew trees, so that the latter may well survive their present companions by almost a millenium. The garden of Monnington Rectory, where Kilvert, as he walked one morning, "thinking of Ettie's last letter and all the wild sweet sorrowful past", heard "the great everlasting sigh of the majestic firs, as mournful and soothing as the sighing of the sea", is adjacent to Monnington Walk. Monnington Court is a building of modest dimensions and almost bereft of grounds, though of undoubted antiquity, standing between the entrance to the Walk and Monnington Church. The Welsh border, incidentally, is several miles west of Bredwardine bridge, so that the Commissioner's remark, above, is misleading.



"About this time", the Commissioner continues, "Monnington Court was the seat of the Tomkyns family. Sir John Tomkyns, Knt., lived there. His son, Uvedale Tomkyns, is believed to have built Monnington Church, for his initials are to be seen on the Church Porch, Font and Communion Table... and the architecture of the church moreover corresponds with the period ... From the Tomkyns family Monnington Court passed into the possession of the Capels; thence to the Whitmores... and by the Whitmores the estate was sold to Sir George Cornwall, the grandfather of the present Baronet".

The initials of Uvedale Tomkyns are still to be seen in all three places mentioned above, though those carved into the stonework above the porch are beginning to suffer the ravages of time. According to Thoresby Jones, in "Welsh Border Country", Monnington Church, except for the tower, was rebuilt by Uvedale and Mary Tomkyns in 1679. Close by the porch is the grave of William Smith, vicar of Monnington and Kilvert's brother-in-law, who died in 1889. His wife, Thermuthis, Kilvert's sister, who died in 1922, is not buried with her husband, William. She married again, becoming Mrs. Valentine, and I do not know where she was buried, although she remained in the Monnington district after her second marriage, for our late honorary secretary, Mr. Prosser, who spent his boyhood at Monnington, knew "Thersie" in her old age, long before her brother's diary came to the attention of the public through the agency of her son, Percival.

Continuing his "Notes" the Commissioner goes on: "Two centuries earlier, tradition has it, that Owen Glendower and his two daughters lived in hiding at Monnington Court. He is said to have died there (1416) and being a wizard, to have been buried under the walls of the original church, half in and half out - his head and shoulders inside, and his body and legs outside. This story must be left and the road to Moccas taken over the new bridge built by the late Velters Cornwall, Bart., in 1868".

The Glendower tradition, believed by Kilvert (pp. 160 & 162, vol. 3), is now known to be fallacious, arising from the fact that there is another Monnington Court, near Vowchurch, in the Golden Valley, some few miles from the Monnington Court on the Wye. In "Welsh Border Country" (1946) P. Thoresby Jones sums up the belief of modern historians on this subject in the following passage: "It is important to note that it was ... at Monnington Court near Monnington Straddel - not at Monnington-on-Wye - that (if tradition is credible) Owen Glyndwr remained in safe obscurity during his uneventful closing years. The error of locating his place of refuge at Monnington-on-Wye has been repeated by one writer after another; some of them have actually identified his tomb in Monnington-on-Wye churchyard.... An excusable lapse, for Monnington Straddel is remote and little known; yet the Monnington manor held by the Scudamore who married Glyndwr's daughter Alice was Monnington Straddel. The Wyese Monnington was at the time in question (1415-17) a manor of the Audleys and lay in a district then already anglicized and strongly anti-Glyndwr".

It is also interesting to note that modern historians do not incline to the sentimental view of the great Glyndwr shared by Kilvert and his contemporaries. Kilvert calls him "the strong wild heart", but modern commentators take a distinctly less romantic and starry-eyed view of him.

"The new bridge" (Moccas toll bridge), alluded to by the Commissioner in his last paragraph, above, was, according to another part of his extensive paper, built of stone, but I seem to remember it as a steel structure when I saw it some time during the late 1960s. It had been wrecked in one of the great periodical floods which occur on the Wye and was subsequently dismantled and never replaced. Kilvert refers to it, also, as "the new bridge" (p. 362. vol. 3).

Having crossed the river into Moccas Deer Park the Commissioner makes voluminous and mainly dimensional notes about notable trees, which information need not detain us here, with the exception of what he has to say about what he calls the "Moccas Oak".

"THE MOCCAS OAK", he says, "so well known, and so often described and figured, was next visited. Strutt, in his "Sylva Britannica" gives a good engraving of it, and says 'The Moccas Park Oak is thirty-six feet in circumference at three feet from the ground. It stands in the park at Moccas Court, the seat of Sir George Aymand Cornwall, who times his ancestry from Richard, second son of King John, Earl of Cornwall, and King of the Romans.....' Since Strutt's drawing was taken decay has made progress in lessening the amount of foliage still borne by the tree. It measures at 5 feet from the ground 36 feet in circumference".

This, no doubt, was the tree which Kilvert saw when walking in the deer park in April, 1876 (p. 263. vol. 3): "As we came down the lower slope of the wooded hillside into the glades of the park the herds of deer were moving under the brown oaks and the brilliant green hawthorns, and we came upon ... what seemed at first in the dusk to be a great ruined tower, but which proved to be the vast ruin of the king

oak of Moccas Park, hollow and broken, but still alive and vigorous in parts and actually pushing out new shoots and branches. That tree must be 2000 years old. It measured roughly 33 feet round by arm stretching". There is now no sign of this gargantuan tree whose size, though by no means constituting a record, was certainly exceptional. Kilvert's estimate of its age was on the high side, though it could well have been between a thousand and fifteen hundred years old. There are still deer in the park and a number of old oaks, though nothing to match the departed "king oak". Strutt's "Sylva Britannica" was, as a point of interest, first published in 1822.

Kilvert also records (p. 372. vol. 3) that Houseman, then Vicar of Bredwardine, had taken him, on June 5th. 1872, "to see the Mistletoe oak at Bredwardine". This tree, naturally enough, does not escape the eagle eye of our Commissioner.

"THE MISTLETOE OAK", he informs us, "on the Moccas Estate is situated in the parish of BREDWARDINE, about half a mile west of the Park. It was discovered a few weeks ago by Sir George H. Cornwall, Bart., when engaged with his steward in marking trees for felling. It grows in the hedgerow of a field called Lower House Meadow. It is a thoroughly mistletoe-possessed tree, for the mistletoe was observed to be growing in fifteen different places ... This tree makes the tenth known example of a Mistletoe-bearing oak, and is a far larger and finer tree than either of the three others in this county".

The Commissioner, after noticing a yew tree, "a contemporary, it may be of the old Moccas Oak, for it gives the very considerable circumference of 22ft. 9ins.", crosses a field where "a surprise is created by the appearance of a hanging bank of Box trees on the river side, growing luxuriantly - a sight unique for Herefordshire, and a very pleasant one. Where can they get the lime from? is the question that rises involuntarily - and a little examination shows numerous springs trickling down the bank, depositing large masses of travertine at their exit from the gravel. They are all petrifying springs, so to speak, and doubtless come from the Cornstone of the hill. They deposit now, as for ages they have done, travertine. The walls of the old Norman church were built in it, and in its restoration cartloads of Travertine have again been used for the same purpose. This bank, with its hanging wood of Box is commonly called Dipple".

Box is reckoned to be indigenous to chalk soils, like beech, grows well on other soils, at least in cultivation. It may be that when having to rely upon natural regeneration both trees prefer the calcareous substrata of their natural habitats. There are still a few shrubs of box to be found on the Moccas bank of the river, and it is noticeable that there is a quite sizeable plantation of box in Moccas churchyard, as well as a few shrubs of it in Bredwardine churchyard, though the soil in neither is calcareous.

Travertine, a form of limestone containing numerous small cavities, somewhat after the fashion of Gruyere cheese, is deposited by springs as described by the Commissioner, and is sometimes referred to as "tufa", but as this term embraces other forms of cellular stone, including that of volcanic origin, the Commissioner is correct in calling it travertine, which is tufa of purely calcareous origin, and from which Moccas church is mainly built. The voids in this material are formed by carbon dioxide, as the water containing the limestone bubbles up to the surface from deep underground. These springs, which Kilvert saw, situated in Dipple Wood (pp. 400 and 404, vol. 3), about a mile upstream from Moccas Church, are no longer active.

At Moccas Church the Normans used sandstone, which is capable of accepting a much finer degree of carving or moulding, for the door and window surrounds, employing the coarser travertine, in the form of more or less regular blocks, for the plain wall surfaces. Much of the original sandstone work still exists, but most if not all of the original travertine seems to have been replaced. Sir George Cornwall is recorded, in an interesting booklet currently on sale at Moccas Church, as stating: "When my church was being restored, I found great difficulty in procuring a supply of travertine (tufa) for the needful work. I got two waggon loads from Dipple Wood, where its formation may now be observed, and I was enabled to obtain several truck loads from Southstone Rock, near Clifton-on-Teme". It is noticeable, too, that the fabric of the neighbouring Bredwardine Church contains blocks of this material patched into the original sandstone, no doubt to save expense, where the latter had disintegrated.

It is heartening to report that these three adjacent parishes of Herefordshire, Bredwardine, Moccas and Monnington, so well known by Kilvert, are, in contrast to Clyro, remarkably unspoiled and well worth visiting.

R.I. Morgan. Hay-on-Wye.

# KILVERT AND KEATS:

When we consider which of the poets most influenced Kilvert's sensibility, it is Wordsworth and Tennyson who come immediately to mind. (There are a number of references to Burns as well). Wordsworth reinforced his strong taste for mountain scenery, for moments of solitude, and for those outside the conventional social pattern. Tennyson's influence is more subtle, but it seems to be present in Kilvert's delicacy of observation, one at least of his types of ideal woman, and his chafing against the class system, when that does occur. Few might be inclined to mention Keats, and indeed the surviving Diary contains only one quotation from him, the rather hackneyed last line of the 'Ode to Autumn'. However, there is evidence that Kilvert responded to certain of Keats's ideas and attitudes, if not to anything more. After his early death Keats was neglected for a time, despite being championed by writers of the calibre of Hazlitt and Shelley. It appears to have been the first biography of him by Monkton Milnes, coming out in 1848, which began the revival of his fortunes, and he was well represented, on the lyrical side, in Palgrave's 'Golden Treasury' which, produced under the guidance of Tennyson, was first published, as we are apt to forget, as long ago as 1861. Keats's own prediction of 1818, made without vanity, was being fulfilled: "I think I shall be among the English poets after my death". These years of Keats's re-emergence were those of Kilvert's youth and early manhood, the time when poetic preferences are formed, sometimes to be rejected later, sometimes to become more firmly rooted.

It was Ms Billingham's lecture on Kilvert and the Visual Arts, which I heard in 1979, that suggested to me the affinity with Keats, a notion only strengthened when the talk was published. The lecture contains a number of passages from Kilvert's descriptions of paintings drawing attention to his "sense of timelessness" in great art; these passages are characterized by the repeated use of the word "still", which brings out Kilvert's awareness of "the contrast between actual circumstances and painted situations which are not subject to the normal processes of change". Ms Billingham noted that Kilvert "was acutely aware of time passing and change" and she claims that his application of this sense to his experience of works of art "showed an insight into the nature of painting that was not at all conventional". These observations were worth making, but I should be inclined to say that, although not conventional, the insight is almost certainly derivative, the source being the great odes of Keats, his 'Ode to a Grecian Urn' particularly.

The echo is most audible if we place side by side Ms Billingham's main quotation with one from Keats's poem. Writing of Rembrandt's portrait at Dulwich of a servant girl, Kilvert said that she

"still leaned on her round white arms a-smiling from the window as she has leaned and smiled for three hundred years since that summer's day when her master drew her portrait and made her immortal, imperishable and ever young".

And here is Keats:

"Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
And happy melodist, unwearied,  
For ever piping songs for ever new;  
More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,  
For ever painting, and for ever young....."

He refers, of course, to the timeless figures, caught in the moment of glad anticipation, on the surface of the Greek urn.

A rather different explanation, more prosaic in every way, is possible and had better be mentioned here to forestall possible criticism. Kilvert's passage on the Rembrandt comes from his entry for 24.6.76, describing a return visit to Dulwich. Four and a half years earlier (4.1.72) he had described the servant girl before; thus the word "still" could be taken as referring to the interval since his previous viewing of the picture. However, his last words in this passage clearly go beyond this and there is the additional evidence of his similar approach to other pictures, as quoted by Ms Billingham. But the fact that the Rembrandt passage does arise from a personal experience of the changelessness of great art is worth observing and probably explains why this is Kilvert's most memorable expression of the idea.



There might seem to be nothing further to say. But perhaps a little more significance may be wrung from these parallels. The question which arises is whether Kilvert's longing for permanence was 'merely' the feeling which we all share, that life is short, its joys fleeting, or whether it had more in common with Keats's acute, intense form of the sentiment, that of a young tubercular genius who had had medical training and the experience of nursing a brother through the final stages of the same (at that time incurable) disease.

Kilvert's health is a subject still being debated. Gaps in the Diary and in our knowledge of his life before 1870 are large factors here. We know that both of his parents survived him and that there seems to have been something fortuitous about his own early death, and our first impression of the Diarist is that of a robust young man capable of making little of long mountain walks in hard conditions. And yet, when he records his convalescence (1.3.78), after a late winter illness (a passage quoted frequently in 1979 for its ironical pathos), he gives us a new glimpse of sickness or frailty which urges us to look at such evidence as we possess again.

In that entry he says, "After how many illnesses such as this have I taken my first convalescent walk on the sunny terrace and always at this time of the year when the honeysuckle leaves were shooting green and the apricot blossoms were dawning and the daffodils in blow". These words were written at Langley Parsonage. At Bredwardine there had been an attack of chest trouble in the middle of February which had been slow to clear up. He was still affected on his arrival at Langley, although references do not occur between February 16th. and March 5th. and he went about his normal business. That it had come on at all is only too understandable when we read of the January entries describing his walks to Crafta Webb and elsewhere on steep Bredwardine Hill, sometimes in pouring rain, with no chance to change into dry clothes. That his health was more than superficially affected is plain from the offer of the Chaplaincy at Cannes in June, on which he sought the advice of several and which he pondered for some days. Characteristically he does not say, as far as we know, what tipped the scales against it. But let us look briefly over the record of the preceding years.

Working backwards, we find that he was Vicar of St. Harmon's during the winter of 1876-77, but we do not have journal entries for this period. A similar gap occurs in the winter of 1875-76, although here entries resume on March 1st. Kilvert had spent this winter at Langley Burrell and the March entries contain no mention of illness. There is no reason to suppose that these gaps indicate illness (William Plomer, in his Introduction to Vol. III, merely says, "Now it happens that some of the later notebooks...are lost"), although 21.3.76. recalls "memories of last December....and those wild sad sweet trysts in the snow" with Ettie, which may not have improved his health. 1874-75 was also spent in Wiltshire, and this time Kilvert does mention a brief illness, saying on February 5th. "At last I am down with the prevalent cold and cough and have been within door all day. I wonder I have not been laid by before as I have been perpetually in an influenza atmosphere. The weather without has been very uninviting, cold, raw, grey and foggy". But on the 9th. if not before, he is up and dining out as usual. The previous October, that is, the October of 1874, provided fair evidence of his general fitness up to that date at least; for, on the 12th. he had walked from Langley to Malmesbury and back (a distance of about 18 miles on a warm day) and was told a week later by a villager who had been informed of the feat, "Well, you must have had a good nerve to walk to Malmesbury and back. I always heard you were a noted walker in Wales and you seem to be keeping it up here". In fact some of his walks from Clyro had been a good deal longer and steeper than this one. 1873-74 was a Langley winter as well, with a March visit to familiar places in the Wye Valley, but no illness lasting more than a day or so. In 1872-73 too he was at Langley, except for three weeks in March when he deputed for the new curate at Clyro. This visit did result in a chill which he attributes to being in the snow at Emmeline Vaughan's grave (17.3.73), and he has a cough until the end of the month; but it soon goes on his return to Wiltshire and there is no talk of a slow convalescence. The winter of 1871-72 was his last at Clyro; during the first months of '72 there are frequent references to the hard climate, but no mention of illness. The first part of 1871 brought some days of what Kilvert calls "face ache", but nothing worse; however, we might note the entry for that glorious day of 7.5.71:

"There is usually one day in the Spring when the beauty of everything culminates and strikes one peculiarly, even forcing itself upon one's notice and a presentiment comes that one will never see such loveliness again at least for another year".

The points to notice are that Kilvert felt such premonitions in years of undoubted health and that, in Keatsian fashion, they were prompted especially by moments

of ripeness and radiance in the natural world. The opening of 1870, with which the Diary begins, contains only a sprained back from falling off a pony, despite his freezing bedroom at Clyro and the ice in the font at Bettws. This rather hasty review of Kilvert's health in the 70's may well be guilty of omissions, but does not, I believe, pass over any serious episode both recorded and included by Dr. Plomer. Of Kilvert's twenties we cannot speak for lack of evidence; but, if the energetic young man of the Clyro years is anything to go by, Kilvert is unlikely to have experienced serious illness during them.

Why then did he write in that vein in 1878? There are lost years, we know, but none of those documented suggests precarious health before that first winter at Bredwardine. It seems to me possible that Kilvert, as - clearly - a reader of Keats, came to associate himself more and more with the doomed young poet whose physical weakness reached out in the Odes to the permanence of art, or, if that is too assertive, with a life-span of the same kind. Had not Kilvert himself, in healthier days, sought a smaller yet comparable immortality in his Diary ("it almost seems a pity that even such a humble and uneventful life as mine should pass altogether away without some such record as this")? From his own 'villaging' as a clergyman he had had intimate experience, as Keats had done, of a world

"Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies"

and the conviction seems to have grown upon him that he himself would not live to "comb grey hair". Again the sense, derived from Keats, of the eternity of art shows through as early as the first Dulwich passage of 1872 ("Rembrandt's pretty servant girl immortalized by himself") and pervades the later passage of 1876, suggesting a deepening of the influence. The point is easily exaggerated and important evidence has disappeared; but it appears to me more probably that Kilvert typifies here the mid-Victorian obsession with early death, as 'immortalized' in Henry Wallis's painting, 'The Death of Chatterton' of 1856, than that he displays the premature onset of a valetudinarianism so out of character with his springy, tireless youth.

Ivor Lewis.

"P.S. The cough of March 1873 was the one which the Diary recalls the following year (3.7.74), when Kilvert is musing upon Daisy and her anxiety about him at the time - he was a guest at Llanthomas for one night. There are remarks about the bitterness of the weather off and on in April 1873, which may indicate incomplete recovery, but no definite mention of continued ill-health. Admittedly, we have only six entries for the month".

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### THREE LITTLE MAIDS TO SCHOOL:

(This article comes from our Brecon member, Mr. Melville Thomas, as a consequence of information given him by his kinswoman the late Miss Angela Parker, member of the Society).

The maids were Anne Elizabeth Pateshall of Hereford, born in 1815 and known as "Annabette"; Arabella Emma Gowland of Capebrook, Eaton Bishop (Herefs) known as "Bel"; Catherine Thomas of Welfield, Builth Wells, born 1814.

About 1830, the three families came to some arrangement about sending the girls to school in Bath. The journey was undertaken by coach, probably the Welfield coach, all the way. They undoubtedly would have had one, for Llanthomas owned one and Castle Madoc had a heavy model known as the "Britzka" (1820) which had boxes made to fit under the seats, and must have served the family for nearly 100 years. Catherine was the first to start, travelled from Builth to Hereford (about 40 miles) and stayed the night with the Pateshalls. The next day Bel Gowland would have been driven into Hereford, and the three girls would have proceeded through Ross to Gloucester (31 miles) where they probably stayed the night. On the third day the final stage of 40 miles from Gloucester to Bath would be completed. All this would have to be repeated in reverse at the end of term.

Annabette, who after her marriage was known as Aunt Evan, was a "character", and this comes out quite early, for when she was 16, she managed to persuade the headmistress of her Bath school to send her home for a rest. During this time she went six nights running to Balls at Stoke Edith, and only got up each day in time to dress for the next Ball.

The romantic outcome of all this coming and going was that Bel married Catherine's eldest brother, Edward David Thomas Welfield in 1837. Two years later Annabette's first cousin, Anne Elizabeth Jones, married another of Catherine's brothers, Rev. William Jones Thomas (later of Llanthomas). In 1842 Annabette herself married a third brother, Evan Thomas, (of Ffynnonau) - and outlived them all, dying in 1910 aged 95! In 1843 Catherine married the Rev. Essex Holcombe, son of Rev. John Holcombe, Rector of Cocheston, Pembs.

The story moves on to 1854 when Evan Thomas (now living in Brecon, and a solicitor) received the following letter which had been addressed to his wife Annabette's uncle, Edmund Burnham Pateshall of Allensmore Court near Hereford. The writer was the Rev. P.H. Symonds.

My Dear Sir,

Cagedale January 6th. 1854.

May I communicate to you, in confidence, the following intelligence? I am, of course, very anxious to prevent the establishment of a Roman Catholic Church Community in this locality, either Allensmore or Clehonger, but I have heard that offer has been made to a Miss Pritchard of Hereford for the purchase of a small Freehold adjoining the Allensmore Estate of Webtree for the purpose of building a Church, etc. (and which I once before mentioned to you) but the present offer is a recent one - other sites having met with obstacles of an insurmountable character.

As you have an interest in the Allensmore property, I appeal to you to prevent, if possible, the dreadful evil by anticipating the would-be purchase. I speak in fear and trembling as I may be driving the evil nearer to your doors, but I think where secrecy is observed we may confidently prevent the calamity which threatens either parish, and deprive Rome of a permanent lodgement here.

The aggression here and everywhere is very active, and requires every exertion on our part to successfully meet it.

Mrs. Symonds joins me in very kind regards to you and Mrs. E. Thomas, and wishing you both many happy returns of the present season.

I remain, my dear Sir,

very truly yours,

P.H. Symonds.

P.S. A fence only divides the sought-for field from the Allensmore Land : the erection would be a great nuisance.

It is not, unfortunately, known how Evan Thomas replied to this letter. However, events took their course, as the following quotation shows, taken from the diary of Julia Ford who, some twenty months later, was staying with Mrs. Burnham Pateshall at Allensmore Court for the Hereford Music Festival of 1855:-

"Saturday, August 26th. Dinner at 2 o'clock, Mrs. Pateshall's hour when alone. Carriage round at 3. Drive to call on Mrs. H. Symonds. They had walked to tea with her sister at Manfield. We went on to Cagedale to enquire after Mrs. Thomas (formerly Bel Gowland) who was very ill there. She was much better. Mrs. Gowland was very anxious, and Mrs. P. sat with her some minutes. I would not leave the carriage.....Mr. Wegg Prosser, who has turned Romanist, is building a most perfect little Cathedral in his own grounds, having first built a beautiful school with rooms in it for two nuns who have charge over it. His wife, Lady Harriet, remains firm to her English church.....They say Mr. Wegg Prosser is running himself near short of money with building.....I saw it on our road this day. Mrs. P. put me down 100 yards off it, and the carriage walked up and down till I came back. This she had done for other friends, having (rightly, I think), made up her mind not to enter it herself where she is so well known".

(The "little Cathedral" is now known as Belmont Abbey, two miles south-west of Hereford and the school is now a large and highly respected establishment which boards well over 200 boys. Its second Abbot, Dom Bede Vaughan, was the friend and mentor of Gerard Manley Hopkins. The Allensmore estate passed to Daisy's brother, Henry, but the family has died out and the handsome brick mansion has been demolished).

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ON FIRST VISITING CLYRO

Dear Kilvert's Clyro, distant now in time,  
And showing signs of torture on thy face,  
Yet when I up from sweetest Wye do climb  
I know within myself by God's good grace  
That this is Holy Ground, as would'st himself define,  
Where he once lived and breathed and worked apace.

At first I thought, the Spirit's gone, it's garnered bare  
Where Mr. Venables, Baskerville and Francis gave  
So generously of themselves. Almost the very air  
Was scented by their presence as they held sway  
Among the folks for whom they loved to care  
In this, God's earthly Eden, so beautiful and gay.

Dear souls, John Morgan, Hannah Whitney and Mary of Penllan  
There are none alive today with whom I can compare,  
I thought. There is today a hardness in my fellowman.  
People do not love, and seem as though they do not care  
For days and ways now gone, or Him whose gentle hand  
Did place them here, life's joys and griefs to bear.

The cars and lorries never cease to roar and bump  
So heedless of thy heritage and always passing by;  
And now I see that next the very Castle Tump  
And on down by the Mill man's stark creations lie.  
I really thought perhaps the Lord's Last Trump  
Had sounded ere I first crossed the sweetest Wye.

But look again - God still clothes this green and sacred land,  
God's House is loved and echoes still with timeless prayer.  
Men don't really change, their needs are still the same, and  
Will respond to one who seeks God's love to share,  
Dear Francis, still in Clyro you feel close at hand,  
For Christ indeed has manifest in all your labours there.

MICHAEL SHARP.

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