

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Formed (in 1948) to foster an interest in the Rev. Francis Kilvert,
his work, his diary and the countryside he loved.

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MAY 1981

Dear Member,

About 120 members attended the A.G.M. on April 24th. While the great majority might be described as "local", we were pleased to think that some had travelled from as far as Devon and Sussex, North Wales, the Midlands and the Home Counties. Apologies were received from Miss Gostynska, Miss Imogen Holst, Miss Lane-Smith, Miss Spurway, Mr. J.R.G. Comyn, Mr. E.F. Jelfs, Mr. & Mrs. Howard Kilvert, Mr. A.L. Le Quesne, Mr. W. Palmer (Kent), Rev. D.T.W. Price, Mr. D. Bentley-Taylor, Mr. R.B. Taylor and Mr. J.P. Whitehead.

In welcoming the company, the Chairman (Mr. F. Grice) had especial pleasure in that Mr. K.R. Clew, Father S. Luff and Mrs. Teresa Williams were present, for each of them had made significant contributions during the past year. He spoke of the loss of our esteemed Treasurer, Mr. J.D. Worsey, and paid tribute to Mrs. E.G. Peters for her many years of devoted service to the Society. The Minutes of the last A.G.M. and the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts were approved, and the officials thanked.

The Secretary reported the Committee's concern with regard to subscriptions. The printing and dispatch of the three newsletters now cost £1 per member, and it was felt that the minimum subscription should now be £2, and Life Membership £20. After some discussion this was agreed. Members are asked to note this.

The officers of the Society, having been re-elected en bloc, a presentation was made to Mrs. Peters by Mr. Godfrey Davies. A founder member of the Society like Mrs. Peters, he spoke of its beginnings at Eignbrook Church, Hereford, and of Mrs. Peter's wholehearted involvement for over 33 years. On behalf of the Society he thanked her most warmly for all she had done, and presented her with a cheque and a bouquet. Mrs. Peters in reply spoke of the enjoyment she had received over the years, and thanked the Society for their gesture.

Mr. Grice then gave a short talk on "The Background of the Diary"; how newspaper articles often elaborated incidents and characters briefly or partially described in the Diary; how in "The Hereford Times" appeared a full account of the gale at Clyro Court; how characters like Revs. Welby and Andrew Pope and Squire Ashe appear from newspaper items, to be other than they do in the Diary.

Refreshments over, Mr. Godfrey Davies, assisted by his son, showed his film "Kilvert Country", made during the earliest days of the Society. The audience was delighted by it, and, as Mr. Grice said in thanking the Messrs. Davies, it has now the quality of a historical record, showing buildings since demolished, scenes now marred as well as the founding fathers of the Society now no longer with us - Dr. Plomer, Sid Wright, Oswin Prosser.

The WALK on April 25th. is reported elsewhere in this issue.

WALK, JUNE 27TH. BASKERVILLE ARMS, CLYRO, 11.00 a.m. Picnic Lunch and Tea. LANGLEY BURRELL, SUNDAY, JUNE 28TH. at 3.00 p.m. The preacher will be the Rev. A.G. Martin, until recently Vicar of Axminster, and the Act of Remembrance will be performed by the Rev. J.C. Day, Rector of Pewsey. Both gentlemen are members of the Society, and have links with Kilvert associations. Mr. Martin was a native of Fordington (see Diary entry for May Eve 1874), held two curacies in Wiltshire and was vicar of Puriton where Kilvert's brother-in-law, Rev. W.C. Rowlands, had

previously served. Mr. Day's great-aunt, of the Matthews family of Rawlings Farm, (see Diary entries for March-May 1876) was baptised by Rev. Robert Kilvert. As usual, a gift will be made to the church, and tea will be provided afterwards. A coach will leave Hereford Town Hall at 11. 30 a.m. Approximate cost £1. 80. Please take picnic lunch. Bookings to be made to me.

Yours sincerely,

E.J.C. West.

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EXCURSION AND WALK, SATURDAY, 25TH. APRIL:

About twenty members set out in six cars from Clyro in extremely inauspicious weather for Capel-y-ffin Monastery in the Black Mountains. A few snow showers occurred while they were going up over the Gospel Pass, but fortunately these died out before the monastery was reached. Here, the Messrs. Dearlove, who had come up from the Abergavenny end of the valley, were already waiting.

At the monastery the party were kindly taken in charge by Mr. Wilfred Davies, the present occupant, whose wife is a grand-daughter of the late Eric Gill, the famous sculptor. Mr. Davies addressed the party on Father Ignatius (whom Kilvert met there in 1870), the building of the monastery and on something of its history after Ignatius' death, including the formation of the colony of artists and craftsmen set up there by Eric Gill in the 'twenties. He also conducted the party over the ruined abbey church, part of the residential buildings and the garth.

The party then motored on about a mile further up the beautiful Nant Bwch valley, at the foot of which the monastery is situated and lunched in their cars, sheltering from a biting north wind, while a business-like mist crept further and further down the mountainsides towards them. Despite this deterioration in the weather, however, it was decided to attempt at least part of the intended walk to Lord Hereford's Knob (2263 feet). By this time visibility was reduced to about fifty yards, obscuring most of the felicities of the surroundings, and after a climb of about two miles, where the track gave way to the open mountainside, it was deemed unwise to proceed further.

This proved to be a wise decision, for halfway back to the cars a blizzard set in and the only recourse was to get down off the mountains as quickly as possible. Driving back over the pass visibility gradually decreased and the snowfall increased, a state of affairs not improved, on the single-track roadway, by encountering vehicles travelling in the opposite direction.

Despite these unforeseen and unwelcome vicissitudes all the intrepid members arrived safely back at Clyro at about 3. 30, the consensus of opinion seeming to be that a good time had been had by all!

R.I.M.

ANOTHER KILVERT WALK IN THE BLACK MOUNTAINS:

Mr. Wilfred Davies of the Monastery, Capel-y-ffin, who is a Brecon Beacons National Park warden, has asked us to announce that as part of the Park's 1981 programme of walks he himself, on Wednesday, 2nd. September, will be giving a talk and leading a walk (about six miles) "to recall some aspects of the diary of the Revd. Francis Kilvert". Intending participants should be at the Monastery, suitably clad consistent with prevailing weather conditions and shod for rough hill walking, by 11 a.m. The walk is intended to end at about 4 p.m. so a packed luncheon and, if necessary, tea, should be brought. We are sure all K.S. members will be particularly welcome. A full programme of walks for 1981 in the Brecon Beacons National Park area can be obtained by writing to Mr. Davies at the Monastery.

It may also be of interest to some of our members that part of the Monastery has now been converted to holiday flats. All enquiries should be directed to Mr. W. Davies, The Monastery, Capel-y-ffin, Abergavenny, Gwent, mentioning that they are K.S. members.

Members may also like to know that the annual Father Ignatious memorial pilgrimage will be held at Capel-y-ffin on Saturday, August 22nd. commencing at about 2. 30 p.m.

R.I.M.

A typed copy of the following article was kindly sent by our Committee Member, Mrs. M. Mathers. It was taken from "Country Life" for December 30th. 1939, and we are grateful to the present Editor of that magazine for permission to reproduce it here.

THE KILVERT COUNTRY BY T.K.M. (THE REV. T.K. MORGAN)

The two volumes of the late Rev. Francis Kilvert's Diary, edited by William Plomer, and recently published by Jonathan Cape, make delightful reading. Many will remember the admirable excerpts from the Diary which were broadcast early this year.

To one of the Diarist's profession, born and brought up in 'Kilvert Country' the appearance of the Diary was much more than a delight. Though of a generation too young to have known Kilvert in the flesh, and born in the neighbouring parish of Whitney, the present writer frequently heard of "Dear Mr. Kilvert of Clyro", and of the existence of the Diary which has so fortunately been preserved, and has now appeared in print. Not a field, not a house, not a family mentioned in the Diary, but touches some chord of memory. Many of the youngsters of whom Kilvert wrote were known to one intimately as grown men and women; those in their twenties as older men and women, and very fine and charming men and women too. To twist about a Pauline expression, "a few remain unto this day, but the greater part are fallen asleep". When reading the Diary, ghosts step out from almost every page; but they are kindly ghosts, gracious, friendly spirits. It was a curious experience, on entering a room by chance some months ago, to hear over the radio a voice speaking of names and places dear and familiar in the past years. My mother, nearer eighty than seventy, sat as under a spell, and a strange hush akin to reverence fell upon the room --- to us it seemed a lesser resurrection. Returning to this year of questionable grace, a copy of the first volume was immediately ordered!

One loves that Welsh border land as Kilvert loved it; the natural beauty of the district; the stately homes, so many of which have suffered sad changes; farmhouses and cottages, hovels and huts; old fireside chairs, from which, with tired eyes fixed on glowing wood, those who were children of Kilvert's day looked fondly back over the years, and talked lovingly and wistfully, of "what used to be". We hear of "the Hardy country", "the Mary Webb country", and so on, and some of us shudder when we see a charabanc so labelled; we feel there is something of a desecration in a three-and-sixpenny tour of these districts. They are precious almost faery regions, steeped in mystery and rich with treasure, to which we rightly judge the "Open Sesame" costs rather more than three shillings and sixpence. That fate is not likely to befall "the Kilvert country", since Kilvert is not to be numbered among the novelists; we who love the district will be glad rather than sorry that this is so.

Some years ago an anonymous correspondent of "The Hereford Times" wrote this description of Kilvert's beloved borderland: "Away to the West, where broods, over glades of ancient oak, the twilight of forgotten things, the darkening chain of the Black Mountains looms, for the moment in consonance with my mood, under the purple of a cloud. The little world about this Celtic fringe teems with the haunting memories of two pagan civilizations which lie shattered beneath the shadow of the Cross". There in that enchanting borderland, where Radnorshire, Breconshire and Herefordshire meet, Kilvert lived, loved, (not once nor twice, if he wrote truly!) and died some sixty years ago. Today, out of "the twilight of forgotten things" of those years comes his amazing Diary, bringing the past to life in an entirely lovely way.

Could Kilvert have returned before the Great War he would have recognised his country folk, for up to 1914 the changes in their manners and methods were comparatively small. He would not have received the former deference, sometimes obsequious and unreal but generally sincere, paid to the "bettermost people" of his day; there would have been few if any curtsies, and no reverent standing aside as in the days when the chariot from Wyecliff or Whitney Court 'thundered' along the Clyro road but he would have found, and would find today, respect and a friendly welcome from the descendants of his borderfolk. In passing his accuracy was such that he would today see his silver birches in the lane near the Great Caesau, but sixty years of wind and weather have been too much for his "little lonely tree among the fern", the stormblown hawthorn on the crest of the Little Mountain.

He writes much of "pleasant kindly Whitney Rectory", and of the large and large hearted, and gracious Dew family. A signed photograph of old Rector Henry Dew stands before me as I write; a finely chiselled strikingly aristocratic face. What could Kilvert have written of John Turner, the old Whitney Parish clerk, whose remark on seeing the dead body of his Rector was, "What a beautiful corpse; as sweet as a nut!"? One of the old Rector's several daughters, Miss Jane who figures

in the Diary, was the essence of grace and charm, with a passionate love of wild flowers, coupled with encyclopaedic knowledge of their names and haunts. "Here comes Miss Jane with a handful of weeds", was the common announcement of her approach. "Dear Mr. Kilvert" she once said to me, "he wrote a wonderful Diary, and we hoped one day it might be published", then with a sigh, "goodness only knows what has happened to it by this time". I remember showing her a copy of the "Occult Review" for September 1921, which contained an article on "Radnorshire Legends and Superstitions", compiled from his writing by his niece Essex Smith, and how full of joy she was to find the manuscript still in existence. Dear Miss Jane, always late for everything, hurrying along "full o' blows an' far behind" with the tail of her skirt in one fist, and her handful of weeds in the other; how she would have loved every page in the Diary. Never embittered by the changes of time and fortune, she was a lady to the end. I owe much to Miss Jane.

Miss Elizabeth Snead, in turn nurse and housekeeper to the Dew family, who died only last year at the age of one hundred, spoke many times to me of "dear Mr. Kilvert - a very nice gentleman". What could Kilvert have written of Elizabeth Snead and her sister, Harriet - Betsy and Harriet as they were generally known? Betsy quiet and refined, first second and last the faithful servant who knew her place, and kept it with as much dignity as those she served; Harriet bustling and practical, fairly abreast of the times, and not afraid to say what she thought of old families! Living long years in quiet retirement, seeing the children she nursed so faithfully pass away one by one, Elizabeth Snead's calm dignity grew greater as time passed. "That 'un", as Harriet often disrespectfully termed her sister, "that 'un lived so long with 'em that she's grown like 'em". Harriet's high-pitched voice will never fade from memory. "Come in lad; I have eat summat; every particle and vestige of my bit o' bowels is aching". In fairness it must be said that Harriet knew two languages; being favoured I was privileged to hear much of her native tongue.

There is no reason to doubt Elizabeth Snead's assertion that she saw Wordsworth in her early years, when she visited Stow House, Whitney. What tales she could tell of the departed glories of Whitney Court, the old mansion of the Dews on the banks of the Wye; of the stately carriages rolling along the main road, followed by what Harriet would describe as "Two Damnation Dogs". The breed of a dog was never Harriet's strong point; in her last years she deplored in picturesque language, the modern liking for "then nasty wolfy Ulcerations". How Betsy and Harriet lived; what they could remember; what they said and what they did would require another lengthy Diary, and the pen of a Kilvert. God rest their two good souls.

Kilvert writes vividly of the felling of trees in Cwm Dingle. Once again what could he have written of the devastation of his beloved countryside in the years 1915-1918, when a large community of Finns, mainly the crews of vessels sunk in the North Sea, were encamped at Whitney, and laid waste the glorious woods of the district, including some of the timbered Clyro dingles? It is a strange memory, that Finnish camp in the Welsh borderland, complete with Finnish bath-hut, in which the men well steamed by means of water thrown on heated stones. The bath over, it was not unusual to see burly Finns restoring circulation by running round the meadow as God made them! He had made them very well, and one is sure the robust Kilvert who could sit in icy water for his morning bath, and once bathed in the raw at Weston-super-Mare, would have been delighted rather than shocked. In Whitney wood, and Rhydspence dingle, now green again with twenty years growth, a wanderer may perhaps find the runners of a sledge used by the Finns for dragging timber through mud and snow. Once again the musings of a Kilvert would be a joy.

"Pleasant, kindly Whitney Rectory" has for me another memory; that of watching a tall slim attractive youth, who played various gramophone records for my doubtful benefit. The youth was to be known in later years as "Peter Warlock", friend and disciple of Delius, and friend of D.H. Lawrence. The Dew family were no longer at the Rectory, but it retained the pleasant kindness of which Kilvert wrote, standing out in bitter contrast in one's mind against the tragic end of that delightful and brilliant boy. To bring Kilvert's Diary up to date lies outside my capability and purpose, but one whose love for the "Kilvert Country" is as great as that of the Diarist, would quite humbly say "Thank You" to his spirit, not forgetting the debt to Mr. William Plomer for his share in giving us such fascinating records of the days of old, and the years that are past.

(Mrs. Mathers tells me that she understands that Rev. T.K. Morgan was the son of the Whitney-on-Wye stationmaster in the early years of this century).

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CAPTAIN COWPER PHIPPS COLES AND THE 'CAPTAIN' TURRET SHIP:

Captain Cowper Phipps Coles was the third son of the Rev. J. Coles, of Silchester Rectory, Hants. He entered the Navy in December, 1831, and obtained his captain's commission in 1856. Having served through the Crimean War and received both his captain's and commander's commissions for war services, he was complimented in despatches of 17 October 1854, and 3 June 1855 for gallant conduct at the attacks on Sebastopol and Taganrog, and received the thanks of the Admiralty for designing and constructing a raft to carry a 32 pounder which was used with great effect in the Sea of Azoff. It was the steadiness of this raft as a gun platform that suggested to Captain Coles his invention of the turret and low freeboard, and after that he gave up his whole time and attention to elaborating what was known as the 'turret system', and its adaptation for coast defence and sea-going cruisers.

On 11 March 1856 he married Emily, daughter of the late Henry S. Pearson of Spinfield (Shinfield?). His wife was of course the sister of Agnes Minna Venables, the second wife of Richard Lister Venables, Vicar of Clyro. There were nine children to this marriage, six sons and three daughters.

A full technical description of the Captain, the turret-ship which was built to Captain Cowper Coles's specifications, may be found in the Graphic for 19 March 1879. The description is not altogether easy to follow, but it seems as if the guiding principle behind the invention was the manoeuvrability of the turrets which, with their 25 ton guns, could be raised, lowered and rotated at will. The ship was propelled by two screws, but in addition, as the illustration shows, it carried a great deal of canvas (33,000 square feet in all) mounted on special tripod masts.

But this famous ship was the victim of an un-expected disaster. On 6 September 1870 it was inspected by the Admiral of the Fleet and found to be in good order; but early next morning a severe gale sprang up, and it was seen to be heeling over. The Captain failed to keep its rendezvous with the other ships, and when daylight came it was seen that it had foundered.

The vessel, heeling over before the squall, was unable to right herself, the weight of iron masts and turrets making her topheavy, a heavy sea struck her, and she turned completely over, going down in three minutes with every soul on board, except the deck watch.... The vessel turned completely over, bottom up, and went down stern first with a report like a tremendous explosion.

Graphic. 17 Sept. 1870.

Both Captain Coles and Captain Burgoyne went down with the ship, and the Graphic, commenting on the disaster, said that 'the loss of Captain Cowper Coles must always be reckoned among the saddest features of the foundering' of the ship.

An investigation into the causes of the sinking was held and the following ambiguous report was issued:-

The court found that the sail carried by the Captain when lost was insufficient to have endangered a ship endowed with proper stability, and that the loss was sustained through pressure of sail combined with the heave of the sea. They recorded their opinion that the ship had been built through deference to public opinion, and against the wishes of the Controller and his department, and they expressed their deep regret that the want of stability, owing to departures from the original plans, was not, if known, communicated to the Officer in command.

It seems as if, in the last analysis, poor Captain Cowper Coles was the victim of some Victorian bureaucratic muddle.

Some time later the loss of the Captain became the subject of a poem by the Rev. R.S. Hawker, Vicar of Morwenstow, a country parish in North-east Cornwall.

(The poem has appeared before in a former Newsletter, but now members may like to see it).

THE FATAL SHIP

Down the deep sea, full fourscore fathoms down,
An iron vault hath clutched five hundred men!
They died not, like the nations, one by one:
A thrill! a bounding pulse! a shout! and then
Five hundred hearts stood still, at once, nor beat again!

That night the Angel of the Lord beheld
A vast battalion of the gliding dead:
Souls that came up where seething surges quelled
Their stately ship - their throne - and now the bed
Where they shall wait, in shrouded sleep, the Morn of Dread!
Fast slept the sailor boy! A silent dream
Softened his brow with smiles - his mother's face
Droops over him - and her soft kisses seem
Warm on his cheek : what severs that embrace?
Death! strangling death! - alive - a conscious burial-place!
And he, the kingly mind, whose skill had planned
That lordly bastion of the world of wave?
But yesterday he stood, in proud command,
And now a thing of nought, where ocean raves
Above his shuddering sepulchre in the weedy caves!
The monsters of the sea will glide and glare:
Baffled Leviathan shall roar in vain:
The Sea Kings of the Isles are castled there:
They man that silent fortress of the main:
Yea! in the realms of death their dust shall rule and reign!
Lord Yahvah of the Waters! Thou wert there!
Thy presence shone throughout that dark abode:
Thy mighty touch assuages the last despair:
Their pulses paused in the calm midst of God:
Their souls, amid surrounding Angels, went abroad.

The loss of the Captain was clearly looked upon as a national disaster, and Hawker reacts to it in a manner that reminds us of Hardy's reaction to the loss of the Titanic many years later; and the complimentary manner in which he refers to Captain Coles implies that he was an unusually gifted man, possessed of a 'kingly mind'. It was his son who came to Brodwardine as Kilvert's only pupil, but the son does not seem to have inherited his father's intellect.

F. Grice.

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At the Women's World Day of Prayer Service held at Carlow Roman Catholic Cathedral in March this year, our member, Mrs. C. Boake, was invited to give a Meditation on the World Theme - "The earth is the Lord's". Canon Boake, who his Kilvert Society friends will be glad to learn is in much better health, sent me a copy of the Meditation which I enjoyed so much that I asked permission to use it in our Newsletter. He and Mrs. Boake have kindly consented to its being printed.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE...1981

"The earth is the Lord's".

It may seem a bit "Irish" of me at this special women's service to want to bring before you tonight the thoughts and feelings of one of my favourite men! Immediately I read the service, on this lovely theme, "The earth is the Lord's" I thought of a young priest of the Church of England, the Reverend Francis Kilvert, who lived about one hundred years ago, and who would have delighted in every psalm, prayer, reading and hymn that we offer to our Father here tonight.

Francis Kilvert, son of a country vicar, himself served all his ministry in country places, chiefly in the border countryside of Wales, a lovely place where the mountains and the hilly roads sweep down into the cider-apple orchards of Herefordshire. He kept a diary of many of his years there, and that diary is alight with joy in the love of God, and of his creation.

Kilvert tramped the green laneways of his rural parishes in every weather, noting everything from summer's hawthorn bushes "loaded with sweet May snow" - to winter's "wastes of wan waters and dreary pools". Spring was a time of magic to him when "the pear trees (in blossom) stand like lights about the gardens and the orchards and the fields". Autumn brought mornings of misty sunshine, lighting the diamond dew-drops in the gossamer of spiders' webs.

His delight in Nature, as he writes, is always God-centred and Christ-centred. Like the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes he remembered his creator in the days of his youth. In the call of the cuckoo in springtime he hears the angel of spring reminding him of the resurrection; in the night-time whisper of July's ripening wheat he imagines the corn at evening prayer. Some of his own prayers he says one morning out-of-doors, "one fresh sweet morning of one of the perfect days in the summertide of sweet Saint Luke", and he goes on "I thanked God for making the world so beautiful".

His love of creation did not stop here, just with nature; love of people as well comes clearly through every page of his diary. He made friends in whatever circles he moved, both high and low. Children were perhaps his first love. He loved to play with them; to talk to them; to bring a poor child a present; but chiefly he loved to teach them daily in school about God their Saviour. His Bible went with him in his capacious pocket as he tramped the hills to visit the mountain farms - he was a big, bearded fellow in his early thirties as he wrote his diary. He read that Bible to the old, and to such young as were illiterate, and to the dying, and even to the mentally deranged. It would have again rejoiced his heart to know that some of the money we give tonight will go towards the distribution of the Bible throughout the world. One day, just over one hundred years ago, he was reading to three poor old women in a mountain hovel, the same psalm, part of which we have heard tonight, the 103rd. - "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy".

Francis Kilvert, like his namesake of Assisi, had that godly compassion for the less fortunate. Love for God's creation, as I have said, was not just that almost mystical delight in nature, it was also bringing the Bread of Life to the dying, sometimes in hovels where he was afraid to sit down because of the lice: it was the gentle rebuke to the villager staggering home badly the worse for drink, just the few words, "George, you have had too much"; it was finishing hoeing the potato patch for the old man of 90; it was waiting in the church porch after a child's funeral as "the father and grandfather came to me to be comforted". But through all the sadness of life, and the inequalities then as now, there shines in his writing the conviction that the world is a wonderful place, and life itself "a curious and wonderful thing". The diary entries often end with the words "So ends a very happy day".

Francis Kilvert was indeed lucky in that he lived in small rural communities, untouched by our necessity of advancing urbanisation and industrialisation. We are all going so far so fast that I think we are past the danger point of forgetting our roots, which lie in God's creation.

Here in Carlow we are lucky that we can still "lift up our eyes to the hills". But how many are there in the world today trapped like rats in cages of concrete. They are people who will never perhaps see a blade of grass grow let alone smell lilac after rain, or have the therapy, more down to earth in every sense, of having even an allotment on which to grow some of their own vegetables. Not have even a few square feet of ground to sow some flowers, where butterflies and bees might follow, or have the wonder of planting a tree, where a bird will eventually come to build a nest. All planners for the future would need to stop for a little while, and think.

Our service tonight is such a stopping place. A pause to think. As well as an opportunity to praise. We should, I think, be very grateful to the American Indian women who have given us the refreshment of this theme, and turned our thoughts to the creation. Just as I am always grateful whenever I open the pages of Kilvert's diary and read something that open my eyes to, in spite of everything, the wonders of the world. On the 6th. March, this very day one hundred and five years ago, I am sure that the young man, writing in that diary, knew of plenty of worries and troubles, personal, family, parochial and worldwide, but his "thought for the day" was this:

"a warm rain, and the birds in the garden and orchard singing like mad creatures, the whole air in a charm and tumult of joy and delight".

That entry makes me think of another verse of our one hundred and third psalm:-

"O speak good of the Lord all ye works of his, in all places of his dominion; praise thou the Lord, O my soul".

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MR. TIMOTHY DAVIES: "READINGS FROM KILVERT'S DIARY"

When Mr. Timothy Davies wrote to tell me of a repeat performance of his "Readings from Kilvert" at the National (Lyttleton) Theatre on March 17th. I was able to inform some members in London and Home Counties of the event. By good fortune I had arranged to visit London on that very day for the R.H.S. Spring Shows, and I obtained overnight accommodation in order to attend. In the foyer before the performance I was delighted to meet seven members - Mr. Davies's parents and sister, Mrs. Gostynski and Miss Gostynska, and Messrs. Clew and Palmer. (All seven of us had been present at the unforgettable evening at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, in 1979). There may well have been other K.S. members among the audience of about 200. If so, I regret that I was not able to meet them.

Mr. Davies's readings featured such old favourites as the episodes of Irish Mary, Pope's discomfiture, the interview with Daisy's father, Florence Hill. New to us were extracts featuring the Isle of Wight holiday - the sea-bathing and that passionately expressed yearning for a daughter. Humour too had its place, and it was delightful to observe the reactions of a little girl of about ten sitting in front of me; Kilvert's words and Mr. Davies's rendering of them moved her to peals of laughter. If some of us felt a twinge of regret that Mr. Davies did not conclude with the extract for March 9th. 1878 (so movingly the conclusion at Hereford), nevertheless the passage he chose provided a fitting end to his performance. It had indeed been a selection of episodes from the diary of one for whom "life appears to be such a curious and wonderful thing" - and a selection interpreted by one whose love for the diary and whose supreme skill shone in every sentence.

E.J.C.W.

(Members may like to know that Mr. Davies is currently appearing in the National Theatre's production of G.B. Shaw's "Man and Superman", and also rehearsing for the "Oresteia" scheduled there for the autumn).

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NOTES ON SOME PERSONALITIES IN THE DIARY:

ANDREW POPE:

Mr. Dearlove has shown me a photograph of a portrait of one of Andrew Pope's forbears, another Andrew Pope, who was a partner in the famous Bristol Tolzey Bank in the early nineteenth century. This Andrew Pope was in his turn descended from a wealthy family of sugar-refiners who were frequently represented in the Bristol Corporation during the 18th. century.

MISS KILVERT OF WORCESTER:

In an old Worcester minute book I came across a letter of thanks from the Worcester Arts Association to Miss Kilvert for her generous subscription of five guineas and her gift of the beautiful engraving of Christ Blessing the Children, clearly one of the famous collection of engravings mentioned in the Diary.

REV. R.L. VENABLES:

Mrs. Williams has discovered that before coming to Clyro Mr. Venables was the Rector of Whitney-on-Wye. His first wife, who is generally known as Mary Augusta Dalrymple, and whom he married at Richmond in Surrey in February 1834, was the widow of Francis Adams Esq.

LILY CRICHTON:

When I was working the other day through an account book kept by a Worcester monumental mason, W. Forsyth, I noticed that in 1773 he had made a headstone for H.B. Crichton of Wye Cliff. This must have been for his daughter, Lily, whose death is mentioned by both Kilvert and Mary Bevan in their journals. A second client of W. Forsyth's was the Rev. R. Mence of Bockleton Rectory with whom Kilvert once stayed.

F. Grice.

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NOTES FROM CORRESPONDENCE:

Mr. K. Clew continues his tireless work with regard to Kilvert churches. His mini-guide to Kington St. Michael will be ready for Sept. 27th., the patronal festival. One week earlier, at the Autumn service at Llanbedr, he intends to have ready his mini-guide to the Painscastle group, (i.e. Llanbedr, Bryngwyn, Newchurch and Llandewi Fach). During the A.G.M. weekend he accompanied Mr. & Mrs. R.I. Morgan on a tour of Clyro. A mini-guide for this village is his next intended production.

Rev. D.R. King of Elizabeth, N.J., U.S.A. has sent me a copy of the "Historical Magazine of the Episcopal Church" in which appears an article on Kilvert written by him. It seems to me a most able, wonderfully well researched piece of work. I shall hope it may be possible to publish extracts in a later newsletter.

A gentleman doing research on Stonehenge, Mr. Chris Chippingdale, wrote to tell me that he had come across a poem on the subject in an obscure Victorian magazine. In both English and later versions it bore the signature of Francis Kilvert of Bath. Knowing that the diarist had recorded a visit to Stonehenge, Mr. Chippingdale wondered whether he was the writer. However, it seemed obvious that it was his uncle and namesake, Francis Kilvert, the Antiquary.

A letter arrived last month from a lady who has been commissioned to write a book on the lost houses of Britain, and wanted information about Llanthomas. As I knew the house well in its last years, I was delighted to help. It is the Daisy Thomas affair, of course, which has urged the inclusion of Llanthomas in the projected book.

Our Bristol member, Mr. J.F. Burrell, often sends in fascinating footnotes to the articles in the newsletters. The mention of the Davenports in "Herefordshire Squarsons" prompted him to send a photograph of the West Moors Flag Station, on the Davenport estate. (He tells me that there was in the 1940's a directive that all drivers must be prepared to stop there when required.) Kilvert refers to "Davenport of Foxley", but we have no reference of his being inconvenienced by this extra stop on his journeys from Hay to Hereford or vice-versa.

Madley Festival runs this year from 10th. July to 19th. July (except for 12-14). For the Kilvertian who is also a music lover there are the de Saram Trio, the Violinist, Nigel Kennedy and Clarinetist, Angela Malsbury. Among other attractions, there is an exhibition of old prints and water-colours (by the Brobury House Gallery) and of course within a radius of six miles Bredwardine, Blakemere, Moccas, Preston-on-Wye and Peterchurch. The Festival Secretary is Tom Lloyd, The Forge, Tyberton, Madley, Hereford. HR2 9PT.

Those who were at Aberedw last September will be pleased to learn that Canon Boake has made steady recovery after his collapse. Mrs. Boake tells me he is now able to take occasional services.

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BOOK REVIEW - TWELVE GOOD MEN AND TRUE - H. COLIN DAVIS, BBC.

Mr. Colin Davis, whose contribution to the Kilvert Centenary Celebrations will be remembered with pleasure by those who were fortunate enough to hear him, has followed up his The Busy World is Hushed with Twelve Good Men and True, also based on his BBC broadcasts. In this modest book he chooses an imaginary celestial jury who, he hopes, will look favourably on him if ever he has to face a Day of Judgement (a jury which includes such intriguing characters as Thomas Traherne, the Herefordshire divine and mystic, and A.S.J. Tessimond, of whom he spoke at Hereford); and among the twelve is Francis Kilvert. The account of Kilvert's life and the critique of his Diary are necessarily slight (and it is a pity that the book as a whole suffers from faulty proof-reading); but Colin Davis is one of the most perceptive of Kilvert students, and whatever he has to say is always worth reading. The book is published by the BBC and costs £2. 25.

F. Grice.

SID WRIGHT - AN APPRECIATION:

Sid Wright was born in Hereford about 1888 but had a very particular association with Radnorshire and Kington. His family had always been connected with the fruit and vegetable trade and had shops in various areas. With his brother, William, Sid founded the Hereford Preserving Company in Widemarsh Street, Hereford, and after greatly increasing the turnover, sold out to British Cannors Limited in 1932.

He then turned his attention to the wholesale trade in fruit and vegetables and also opened a Fruit Bazaar in Eign Street. This was a sort of arcade where people were invited to walk through as a short cut. In the "Hereford Times" every week he advertised with a series of "Sid's Shop Talks" which were often of a humorous character, with news of items that he was interested in, followed by prices of the various items now on offer in the bazaar. In 1939 he was interested in the growing of potatoes on Brilley Mountain where nothing of the kind had ever been done. Some critics said it would be a failure but Sid knew better, and not only did they have very large crops but the potatoes were free from insect pests and disease. The smaller potatoes were sold as seed to the Pembrokeshire growers who had had previously to import them from Scotland. Cost of transport was thus saved and the Welsh Potato Seed Company was formed.

Mainly because of its local interest, Sid immediately became a keen Kilvert enthusiast, and when Dr. Hedley Burrows came to Hereford, a public lecture was held and a good deal of interest shown. Following the success of the lecture, Sid made up his mind that a Society should be formed, but at the time there were few people in the district likely to be interested. Sid was not to be outdone and he persuaded the Dean and also the Mayor of Hereford, to arrange an inaugural meeting in the Town Hall - (1948). William Plomer came and a number of people from other towns. Rev. H.T. Watts, Vicar of Bredwardine, was an active supporter and it was agreed to hold the first service at Bredwardine. The attendance was so large that P.A. equipment had to be used for the overflow. Arrangements were put in hand for a much bigger meeting at Clyro the following year. Sid recorded a talk and the BBC sent a special representative. The Bishop of Swansea and Brecon preached, and there was a very large attendance which included Wm. Plomer and the Rev. (later Canon) R.W. Kilvert. Sid's great enthusiasm infected everyone and he was busy making plans for the next year's service at St. Harmon when after a short illness he died. The Dean conducted the funeral service assisted by the minister of Eignbrook Church which the Wright family regularly attended, and there was a very large attendance. Mrs. Wright was appointed President at the next A.G.M. and she held the office until 1967, only retiring because of ill health.

Sid's only son, Capt. S.G.K. Wright served with the Royal Engineers during the war, and his daughter, Muriel, was a librarian until her marriage. Archaeology was another of Sid's interests and he also wrote a book, "Up the Clacrwen" dealing with the new dam which was being built as an extension to the Birmingham Elan Valley scheme.

Sid's younger brother, George, was also a writer and on the staff of one of the Oxford colleges. He also had two sisters.

He could well be called an enthusiast and if he wanted to get something done he would not rest until it was accomplished. If it had not been for the enthusiasm and work which he put into its formation, it might have been many years before the Kilvert Society would have been formed.

In his younger days Sid had been apprenticed to a stone-mason and the seat in Bredwardine was made and lettered entirely by him.

A man with enormous energy and determination, he was of the type who would succeed when so many others would have failed. It was his determination to go mountaineering that hastened his end and one of his greatest desires was to find the actual source of his beloved River Wye.

Godfrey Davies.

LIST OF OFFICERS FOR YEAR 1981-2

Vice Presidents (in order of appointment)

The Very Rev. Hedley Burrows
Rev. H.T. Watts
Lord Watkins of Glyntawe
Lord Gibson-Watt, M.C.
Mrs. E.M. Victor
Rev. T.J. Lewis
Mr. E.F. Jelfs
Mrs. J. Feisenberger
Canon J.S. Leatherbarrow

The Very Rev. N.S. Rathbone
Rev. D.N. Lockwood
Mr. Robin Tanner
Canon R.W. Kilvert
Miss M.L. Kilvert
Rev. E.H. Waddleton
Rev. D.T.W. Price
Sir John Betjeman
Mr. A. Scott-Ashe

Committee - Chairman : Mr. F. Grice

Mrs. D.M. Davies
Mrs. M. Mathers
Mrs. M. Morgan
Mrs. E.G. Peters
Miss I. Rees
Mrs. N. Turner
Mrs. L. West

Mr. B. Butcher
Mr. G.C. Davies
Mr. H.T. Lloyd
Mr. R.I. Morgan
Rev. D.T.W. Price
Rev. G.W.E. Rooke
Mr. M. West

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OBITUARY:

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

Mrs. Cottle of Hereford who had joined the Society in 1971.

Mr. G.V.M. Heap of Bury St. Edmunds, a member since 1966.

Mr. A. White of Hassocks, Sussex, a member since 1979. Mrs. White's gesture in sending a donation in memory of her husband's enjoyment as a member is most gratefully acknowledged.

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OUTING:

It is hoped to arrange an outing to the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth on either August 29th. or September 5th. to see the Kilvert notebook and other items. I shall have fuller particulars about it to announce at the Langley Burrell service.

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BOOK REVIEW: - Kilvert's Langley Burrell by Kenneth R. Clew.

Mr. Clew whose handbook on Kilvert's Bredwardine proved so popular has now produced a successor on St. Peter's, Langley Burrell, the total proceeds of which are to go to the upkeep of St. Peter's and the other churches associated with it, St. Nicholas at Hardenhuish, and St. Michael and All Angels at Kington St. Michael. The booklet would be de rigueur for all Kilvert Society members if only for the two exceptionally valuable illustrations it contains - the photograph of the wedding group at Dora Pitcairn's wedding at Langley Burrell - the only full face photograph of Kilvert we have, and one that reveals very clearly what a tall commanding figure he had; and a rare print showing the old Rectory at Langley Burrell which Squire Ashe demolished when he succeeded his father at Langley House. But K.S. members will also find the text of the booklet of great interest, and since permission to reproduce the photograph for general sale has not yet been given, this is the only publication in which it appears. Copies (price £1 post free) may be obtained from Mr. J. Payne, Old Brewery House, Langley Burrell, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 4LQ.

F. Grice

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