

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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

President:

Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, M.A., O.B.E.

Deputy President: Frederick Grice, B.A., 91, Hallow Road, Worcester.

Hon. Treasurer: Harley Dance, 11, Green Lane Crescent, Yarpole, Leominster, Hfds.
Phone 056 885 675

Subscriptions Treasurer: Hugh Dearlove, Oak House, St. Briavels, Lydney, Glos.

Publications Manager: R.I. Morgan, Heulwen, Castle Gardens, Hay-on-Wye, via Hereford.

Hon. Archivist: G.C. Davies, Flat 1, 16, Aylestone Hill, Hereford.

Hon. Secretary: E.J.C. West, 27, Baker's Oak, Lincoln Hill, Ross-on-Wye, Hfds.
Phone 62994

MAY 1982

Dear Member,

After a winter which caused local weather experts to quote the Diary entries for 1878 as the last spell comparable for its severity, our programme opened with our A.G.M. at Hereford on April 30th. About 100 members were present, among whom were recognised those who had travelled from Lancs. and Yorks., Kent and Surrey, as well as the Midlands and Wales.

The resignation of Rev. T.J. Lewis, a Vice-President, was accepted with regret, for as Vicar of Clyro and Rural Dean of Hay in the sixties he had been a keen and valuable servant of the Society. Equally regretted was the resignation of Mrs. M. Mathers, for many years a member of the Committee and the custodian of the showcases at Hay library. Honorary Life Membership was bestowed on Mrs. Peters, Mr. Godfrey Davies and Mr. Harold Butcher.

Rev. D.N. Lockwood spoke of the provenance of Maria Kilvert's engravings, five of which have for some years been hung in the vestry of Clyro Church. He had now added the remaining four to the collection, and it was understood that they would be on permanent loan from the Bishop of Worcester.

Mr. Grice spoke of two discoveries made during the year. One is reproduced in this newsletter, under the title of "A Letter" and the other, under the title of "In Memoriam" will appear in our next newsletter. Both raise interesting questions.

After the usual break for refreshments, Mr. Grice introduced the guest speaker, Mr. Dafydd Ifans, Assistant Keeper, Department of Manuscripts and Records, the National Library of Wales.

Having confessed he knew nothing of Kilvert until three years ago, Mr. Ifans felt his audience would envy him, for since then he had devoted himself to Kilvert studies and been paid for it; and, further, that in his desk drawer had been the Sandford notebook! His lecture "Kilvert and Wales" entertained those present with touches of humour and it impressed by reason of its research, embracing both folklore and Kilvert's great interest in the language. Most helpfully, he spoke of the National Library's documents and how they could be used in conjunction with the Diary. The vote of thanks, proposed by Rev. D.T.W. Price, was warmly echoed by the audience. The Society is most grateful to Mr. Ifans for his lecture - and those who take part in the coach trip to the National Library will have the pleasure of Mr. Ifans as their guide.

The day after the A.G.M. twenty-two members participated in a Walk. Lunch was taken on the western slopes of Bryngwyn Hill, near the mawn pool known as Llyn y March. Though it was a day of sunshine, a very strong north-westerly wind was blowing, but it did not deter twenty of the party from walking over the site of the Solitary's hut and on to the Rocks of Percwm, the "very beautiful rocks where the fairies were last seen". Save for grazing sheep the hillsides were bare, but presenting a subtle shade of yellow and of brown, and in a valley clumps of globe-flowers were noticed. The party then moved on along the metalled road towards Rhulen, whose little white-washed church, surrounded by dark yews presented a most attractive picture. Cars were parked on a bank above the river Edw and the party walked to inspect the strange, remote little church. (It was remarkable that the visitors' book showed that on that very day the church had been visited by Americans and South Africans). After tea, above the Edw, the members went their several ways. Mr. & Mrs. R.I. Morgan had once more been the day's leaders, and once more we are very grateful to them.

OUTING - 26TH. JUNE:

Mr. Morgan tells me that it will take the form of a motorcade. The rendezvous for members with their cars will be the Baskerville Arms, Clyro, and the departure will be at 11. 15 a.m. sharp. The places of Kilvertian interest to be visited will include Ysfa Mission Chapel, Llwynbarried Hall (grounds only), St. Harmon and Abbey Cwmhir. Return to Clyro at approximately 5. 15 p.m. but members may of course leave the motorcade at a convenient point, for returning home, on the return journey. The mileage for the round trip (Clyro-Clyro) is about 80 miles. Picnic lunch and tea. Assembly time 11. 00 a.m.

COMMEMORATION SERVICE AT NEWBRIDGE-ON-WYE.

This will take place at All Saints' Church on Sunday, June 27th. at 3. 00 p.m. by kind permission of the Archdeacon of Brecon, the Ven. O.W. Jones. Parking at the church is very limited, but there is a large car-park opposite the nearby New Inn. Mrs. Jones and her band of helpers are laying on tea in the Village Hall, and members will be allowed, through the kind permission of Lady Delia Venables-Llewelyn, to visit the gardens of Llysdyham. (Those who visited the gardens at one 1968 Newbridge-on-Wye service will have unforgettable memories of the fine terraces and of the superb views of the Wye and mountains). Lady Delia will put out in the garden collecting boxes in aid of the N.S.P.C.C.

As for the service, it will not take place in the "pretty, little iron church" where Kilvert preached twice on 4 May 1876, but in the new church, consecrated on July 12th. 1883. Articles in this newsletter by Mr. Ball and myself will indicate that its furnishings and indeed its endowment came from people whom Kilvert knew, wrote about and cherished. No other church associated with Kilvert can boast such links with the Diary.

For the form of service we are again indebted to our Vice-President, Rev. D.T.W. Price. The preacher will be Rev. J.E. James, sometime vicar of Woodstock, who, it will be recalled, performed the Act of Remembrance at Aberedw. Rev. D.N. Lockwood will perform the Act of Remembrance on this occasion. I hope that our President will read one of the lessons, and Mr. Sherard Cowper-Coles the other. The latter gentleman is a great grand son of Capt. and Emily Cowper-Coles, and with his brother became a member of the Society last year. He is employed abroad, but hopes to be in this country in June. It would be very fitting to have a member of the Pearson family present, for Mrs. Venables was Emily's sister!

AUTUMN SERVICE:

It will be recalled that this was to have been held at Glascwm but the priest-in-charge, member of the Society, Rev. D.J.H. Lewis, died in the early days of this year. At the time of writing I have no news as to the situation. However; the September newsletter will appear early in the month, and I shall hope that there will be definite information to give to members then, as well as time for them to make arrangements, both for the walk scheduled for September 26th. and the service the following day.

Already this year two overseas members have visited the Kilvert Country - Miss E. Osborne from Massachusetts and Mr. Whitney Wood from Western Australia. I regretted that I was unable to meet Miss Osborne, but it was a great pleasure to accompany Mr. Wood in search of his ancestors in the Brynwyn and Painscastle areas and to introduce him to some of the Whitney family still living on the Welsh Border. I shall hope to meet more members during the year, and would assure them that the members of the Committee and I would be very willing to help them in what ways we can.

Yours sincerely,

E.J.C. West

Hon. Secretary.

OBITUARY:

We regret to record the death of the following members:-

Father Peek, O.F.M. of Woodford, who had been a life member since 1972.

Canon P. Binnell of Hemswall, Lincs., a member since 1967. He was Sub-Dean of Lincoln Cathedral, and with Mrs. Binnell frequently visited Herefordshire. Mrs. Binnell is a native of the county, and her brother, Rev. A.J. Goss, has preached at our Commemoration services on at least two occasions.

THE PENNY READINGS:

(The following extracts have been researched by our member, Mrs. Teresa Williams. The Diary contains only the vaguest reference to the Penny Reading for January 23rd. 1872, and Kilvert's choice of poem is interesting. "The Battle of the Baltic" is one of three poems by Thomas Campbell often featured in anthologies, "Ye Mariners of England" and "Hohenlinden" being the others). Mrs. Williams had found in W.H. House's "Radnorshire", among various references to Kilvert, that he had recited "The Battle of the Baltic" at a Penny Reading in 1872; she found that the only date this could refer to was that stated above. Search in "The Hereford Times" for that week elicited the second of these extracts. It is interesting to note the participation of Mr. Crichton, the Dyke family, Miss Gibbins (Mrs. Venable's maid) and Captain Adam (stepson of Rev. Venables) in these programmes.

Extracted from the HEREFORD TIMES, Saturday, February 11th. 1871.

"POPULAR READINGS - CLYRO - The 4th. of these Readings were held yesterday (Friday) sen'night, (3rd. February 1871) in the National School Room, Clyro, the Reverend R. Lister Venables kindly presiding. The Room which will hold 250-300 people was literally crammed. The readings throughout were listened to with marked attention and were frequently applauded. The music was very efficient. Mrs. Partridge's and Miss Haines' rendering of "The Barbier de Seveille" was everything that could be desired, and elicited loud applause. The Church choir sang the several Glees with capital precision; the "Carnovale" being strongly encored but the rule of 'No Encores' was strictly adhered to throughout. We understand that it is intended to hold one more Reading sometime in March. We copy the programme.

Mrs. Partridge & Miss Haines	- Duet Piano, 'Barbier de Seveille'
Mr. J. Williams	- Reading, 'Tall Talk'
Mr. Evans	- Song, 'Jones' Sister'.
Reverend R.F. Kilvert	- Recitation, 'Reflections' by Miss Jean Ingelow.
Choir	- Glee, 'Sign no more, Ladies'
Mr. Evans	- Reading, Jonathen Muggs' Letter
Mr. Lacey	- Song, 'That's the Style for Me'
Mr. L. Williams	- Reading, Selection from 'Childe Harold'
Miss Gibbins & Mr. Evans	- Duet, 'The Gentle Stranger'
Mr. O. Meara	- Reading, 'Nothing to Waar'
Miss Williams	- Song, 'The Wishing Cap'
Choir	- Glee, 'Hail, Smiling Morn'
Mr. Partridge	- Song, 'My Old Friend John'
Rev. R.L. Venables	- Reading, Selections from Macauley.
Mrs. Partridge	- Piano Solo, 'German Air'
Mr. L. Williams	- Reading, 'The Misadventure at Margate'
Mr. H. Anthony	- Song, 'Little Daisy'
Mr. Harris and Party	- Trio, Song, 'The Lordly Gallants'
Reverend R.F. Kilvert	- Recitation, 'The Fairy Ride'
Choir	- Glee, 'The Carnovale'
Mr. Liggins	- Reading, 'The Knight's Lady'
Mr. Williams and Party	- Trio, 'The Travellers' Song'
Mr. Dallman	- Recitation, 'Sign Boards'
Mr. Vaughan	- Song.

F I N A L E ... GOD SAVE THE QUEEN - The End "

Extracted from The HEREFORD JOURNAL, Saturday, January 27th. 1872.

"CLYRO - PENNY READINGS - The third of this season's entertainments took place at the National School Room, on Tuesday night last, (23rd. January 1872), the Rev. R. Lister Venables in the Chair. As usual on these occasions, there was a large attendance, the room being quite full. The programme which was tastefully selected, was executed in excellent style. Mr. Hodgson, who was arrayed in a counsellor's garb, recited the address of Serjeant Buzfuz, in the trial of Bardell v. Pickwick, and amused the audience very much. The trio, "A Happy New Year to Thee", was rendered very nicely, and Miss Gibbins, in her song, "Take me back to Switzerland", displayed a sweet clear voice. "Would you be surprised to hear", was sung very well by Mr. Vaughan, as was also "Captain Jinks", and both were encored. The audience, by their attention, showed their appreciation of the performances, and thus a pleasant evening was spent. The following is the programme:-

Piano solo	- "Home, sweet home", Miss Dyke.
Reading	- Mr. T. Lloyd
Trio	- "A Happy New Year to Thee" - Mr. Williams and party.

<u>Recitation</u>	- <u>"The Battle of the Baltic"</u> - Reverend F. Kilvert
Song	- "Take me back to Switzerland" - Miss Gibbins
Recitation	- "Modern Logic" - Mr. Dyke
Glee	- "Forest Echoes" - Choir
Reading & Recitation from	- "Pickwick Papers" - J. Grant Hodgson, Esq.
Song	- "God Bless the little Church around the corner" - Miss Powell
Reading	- "The Three Sons" - Mr. Crichton
Song	- "Be kind to the loved ones" - Mr. T. Lloyd
Piano solo	- Mrs. Partridge
Glee	- "The Bay of Biscay" - Choir
Song	- "Why are you wandering here, I pray?" - Mr. Crichton
Reading	- "The babes in the wood" - Mr. Liggins
Song	- "Would you be surprised to hear?" - Mr. Vaughan
Reading	- From "Scottish Life" - Captain Adams (sic)
Song	- "Captain Jinks" - Mr. Vaughan
Glee	- "Hark, the lark" - Choir

"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN" "

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A LETTER TO MRS. VENABLES:

(The Society is most grateful to Lady Delia Venables-Llewelyn for giving permission to reproduce the following letter written by Fanny Kilvert from G. Beaufort East, Bath, on 7th. October, 1879. Will readers please note that Lady Delia retains the copyright?).

My dear Mrs. Venables,

This is the very first letter I have written since we came here (our new home) and I am writing to you just because I feel you can feel with us better than almost any one in our great sorrow. I think sometimes can it be only 15 days since our darling left us - it seems many many years ago. I have been longing to tell you some few little things which I think perhaps no one else may have told you. I went into his room on the Saturday morning early to lay my last offering on his heart, they were some of the lovely anemone japonicas and ferns and a Passion flower in the centre from our dear old home. I knew he would have liked them to be there, he so loved flowers. Before I went away and said goodbye to my darling I kissed him for all who could not be there - he looked so happy, so calm but very weary - with just a dawning of the eternal happiness on his dear dear face. Perhaps it was wrong of me not to have realised it but somehow or other I never dreamt he would or could die before me. I am glad for him that he is safe at Home with 'Our Father' but I can't be glad for myself - he was so very very much to me. Especially the last two years his tenderness and love seemed such a rock to rest upon. On his wedding day his last look and word was for me as he got into the carriage to go away 'Goodbye Fanny' they seem to echo and re-echo through my heart and to think that I shall never never hear him speak to me again on earth seems impossible to believe. The week at Langley is a very precious memory of him - all his loving words and looks and his last words in Church, he preached twice on the Sunday and his text in the afternoon was from St. John's 1st. Epistle 2. 18. 'Little children, it is the last time' - no words could be sweeter or more precious as he talked to us about the great love of God and what our love to Him and to each other should be like. He christened two babies to both of which I stood Godmother, and I still seem to feel myself placing the little child in his arms.

One of the very first thoughts which comforted me and seemed to make me realise that his work of love on Earth was by no means over was the certainty that all the little children whom he knew and loved on earth and who had passed on before him to our Home were surely clinging round him - he would never be happy anywhere without the children, I think. I am quite sure that any good and happy or beautiful or tender ways or gifts which God gives us here will be only intensified in the Hereafter. I feel more and more sure now that he had been passing away from us ever since his terrible sorrow, it just crushed him. I did so hope that this marriage would have cheered him and broken off all those sad remembrances and I believe he would have been very different - but his health was quite broken up - it is very terrible to me to think of the sad cause of it all. I hope she will

never know what she did (humanly speaking). My Father is still away staying with Dora now - she poor child is nearly heart-broken - it was the saddest thing to see her going about touching everything that belonged to him and looking Oh! so unutterably full of woe, yet never shedding a tear. She was very unwell after leaving Bredwardine but is better now, her husband is everything that is nice. My Mother bears up most wonderfully. I have been very much afraid of a reaction after all the fatigue and sorrow, but she is far more calm than I could have hoped. I can't help feeling she seems to feel that it may not be very long before she will see him again. Does that seem heartless to you. I did not mean it. I was thinking for her how joyful it would be. I saw Miss Dew on Monday - a talk with her is a great comfort there are so few people like her.

I wish there were a hope of your coming to Bath. I should so like to be able to talk to you about him.

This is a very hurried letter but I do not seem to be able to write very connectedly. My head is so tired. I have not sat down quietly for an hour for many months now. Poor Lizzie's letters are so sad and heartbreaking every day seems to make her feel her great loss. I like her and love her more than I can say, she is so truly unselfish and his very last letter was full of the deepest thankfulness for the comfort and joy of having such a wife. I am so glad that she had the great comfort and blessing of being with him, that is her one consolation now.

With much love
Ever your very affectionately,
Frances Kilvert

I feel sure that Frank felt in some way or other when he was at Langley that he should not live long - he said in his last sermon, 'I shall never preach to you again, it is the last time'. I am so glad to think the thought was given to me to line our dear one's last resting-place with moss and flowers. We laid the moss all over the bottom of the grave and put our dear Langley people's offerings of white flowers as a pillow for his head and a border all round. Poor Dora could not get over in time to do it and I was glad to have done what she liked without knowing.

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BREDWARDINE - FORTY YEARS ON:

My father became Vicar of Bredwardine in 1922 - 43 years after Francis Kilvert's death. If we had only known about him and the Diaries we could have learnt so many interesting little things about him as so many people still living there had known him in their youth. I do remember Granny Davies telling me in her shaky old voice that "Mr. Kilvert was a very nice gentleman" and we were told the village version of his death. Peritonitis was not mentioned. The story was that when he returned from his honeymoon the villagers met the carriage at the bridge, took the horses out of the shafts and dragged it back to the Vicarage. Kilvert stood outside thanking the people in a cold wind, caught a cold which turned to pneumonia from which he died.

My father had been Chaplain to the British Community in Valparaiso, Chile, and when he wanted to return to England he wrote to the Bishop of Hereford, Martin Linton Smith, who was an old friend, asking how he should set about finding a living. A letter came back saying the Bishop wanted a complete outsider for Bredwardine as there was a row in the parish between High and Low Church factions! Father wrote back quoting the saying, "High and crazy, Low and lazy, Broad and hazy" and adding, "I'm nearest to the last so maybe I can heal the breach and will accept if you think I can be useful". He succeeded admirably, greatly helped by the fact that he came very ill while we were staying at an hotel in Hereford prior to moving in. Both sides of the row were most kind. The High Church brought him black grapes and the Low Church white grapes. So when we arrived in Bredwardine everyone was feeling kindly towards him, which gave him a wonderful start!

In 1922 there was no electricity in the village, the nearest telephone was at Letton, two miles away and there was only one bus a week to Hereford. There were about 200 inhabitants, and, as in Kilvert's day, and indeed to this day, they were not collected in a cosy village but scattered over the hills. A reason for this is largely the Jarvis Charity to which Kilvert only refers briefly, although it is of great importance to the place. Jarvis was born early in the 18th. century at Little

Bodcot still standing on the side of Merbach. He became an orphan and wandered round begging in the three parishes of Bredwardine, Letton and Staunton-on-Wye. Someone realised that he had brains and apprenticed him to a London merchant. In due course he became a very rich man. His ambition was to get into "Society" and when his only child married a Lord he was full of joy, but, alas, his son-in-law was a snob and refused to invite him to his parties. Jarvis cut his daughter out of his will and left his huge fortune to the three parishes where he had received kind treatment:- Bredwardine, his birth place had 13 parts of the income, Staunton 11 and Letton 9. The people received free coal. Bread and meat were distributed in Lion Square every Friday, the children all had boots and clothes yearly. I remember my mother helping to choose material for the girls' dresses. Schools and alms-houses were built and a doctor appointed to look after the people with a special commission to care for women in childbirth. One wonders if the last was because his wife died when their daughter was born. The "Mr. Giles" often referred to in the Diaries was the Jarvis doctor in Kilvert's time.

The people of Bredwardine wanted to keep the population low, so that their slice of the cake would be as large as possible. Other people wanted to get in. The story is that strangers were met by men with guns when they tried to cross the bridge, so they crept in just over the borders up in the hills and built huts in the woods. If they could remain undiscovered for a year and a day they acquired squatter's rights and could stay. The result is that the Vicars of Bredwardine have to walk miles over muddy hill paths to visit many of their parishioners.

We found Bredwardine full of "Characters". There was Gammon, the Sexton, whose sayings gave us great entertainment. When my father remarked one day "Tugwood is pretty old isn't he?" Gammon answered, "Oh, 'im. 'e' no more right to be above ground than what a mole 'ave". When I admired the view from his cottage he grunted and said "I've looked at it all my life but it's never filled my belly yet". He came to see my father one day when he was putting lime on a bed in the garden.

"You don't want to be doing that. You should dig it in. That won't kill the slugs and snails" Gammon stated.

"I don't want it to kill the slugs and snails I want to get a better tilth on the top ground".

The argument went on hot and strong till Gammon brought it to an end saying, "Now look you 'ere, Sir, you take a pint of beer and wash your face with it. What good will that do your belly?".

Then there was Evan Phillips. He bought up all the rabbits, garden produce and poached pheasants taking them to Merthyr Tydfil to sell to the miners. His local reputation was definitely shaky. I cannot mention some of the rumours because of libel laws. He took a fancy to the new Vicar and started coming to church. "The Vicar and me is just like brothers", he told everyone. My father got him elected to the Eleemosynary Committee of the Jarvis Charity which Evan called the "Animosity Committee", and a very good and capable member he proved. When mice got into the organ and gnawed the bellows and the wooden pipes, something had to be done about it. Evan raised over £30 raffling bottles of whisky in Merthyr Tydfil for the fund.

Old Jim Arrowsmith from Crafta Webb was our gardener. He was looked after by his niece Miriam. They were both skilful poachers as were a large number of the parishioners. Miriam always wore a hat of rabbit fur. My mother looked on her with great suspicion and almost locked up the silver spoons when she saw her in the garden talking to Uncle Jim! However, the day came when we wanted a new cook, Miriam applied and said she would like the job on one condition - when Hounds met within five miles would we have a cold lunch so that she could have the day off? This went straight to my mother's Irish heart and she was engaged right away. For the rest of her life she was our very dear friend.

There was nothing she did not know about cooking rabbits and her stuffed baked pike was a dream. She had two illegitimate children, by then grown up, and while she was with us her illegitimate daughter had illegitimate twins. Miriam was very shocked. My mother remarked she didn't like to point out that two at one go was really not so reprehensible as having two on separate occasions.

Our chauffeur, Frank Evans from Moccas, had been a crack shot when he was in the army, but one day when he was shooting pigeons, he shot a pheasant - by mistake! My parents decided the least said soonest mended so it was just hung up in the larder. Later that day my mother went into the larder and there was a

second pheasant hanging beside it.

"Oh", said Miriam, "Ellen (the second maid) went down to the bottom of the garden to get some greens and it got up and ran into some wire so she caught it and brought it up and I gave it a wee tap on the head".

That night mother again visited the larder. This time there was a rabbit hanging beside the birds.

"I heard squealing and guessed a stoat had got a rabbit in the Church yard, so I went out and got it off the stoat. I thought we could make better use of it", said Miriam.

At Glebe Cottage, next to Jim Arrowsmith at Crafta Webb lived Miss Williams. I think she may have been the daughter of "Jack my Lord" often referred to by Kilvert. Miss Williams' financial arrangements fascinated me. Her garden and hens supplied a great deal of her food and some eggs for sale, but her main capital was a cow. It had a calf every year. This was sold and the money bought a pig. Potatoes and surplus milk were its main food. In due course it was killed. One half supplied Miss Williams with ham and bacon for the year and the other half was sold to provide money for things that had to be bought, such as tea and sugar. Jarvis coal and wood-gathering kept her warm. Then one year the cow failed to produce a calf. Poor Miss Williams was faced with disaster. She came to the vicarage in great distress. The Jarvis "Animosity Committee" produced money for that year's pig and the situation was saved.

Brobury Court was empty after the death of the leader of the Low Church Faction, and the gardener, Mr. Musto, was in charge of the place. He put a trail of raisins from one of Sir John Cotterall's coverts to the wire fruit cage. When enough birds had gone in he shut the door and did a little slaughtering. Everyone knew this was happening but went blind and deaf. One evening we were sitting by the fire when the maid came in with a parcel saying, "Musto brought this, Sir. It's them boots he was telling you about".

"Boots?", said the Vicar, "I don't remember anything about boots. Put them down, I'll see to them later".

When he opened the parcel he found two brace of partridge. Musto was thanked but told he really must not send such gifts to the Vicarage in future. Later Mr. Musto succeeded Gammon as Sexton. Anyone visiting Bredwardine Church will see on the wall opposite the door a plaque in memory of Standley Musto, his son killed in the last war. He was a nice little boy when we were there, as his father must have been when Francis Kilvert was Vicar!

(Miss) C. Hodgson (Malvern).

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WILLIAM PLOMER:

(An exhibition was held last summer at Durham University Library commemorating William Plomer. Following is a copy of the hand-out).

"William Charles Franklyn Plomer was born in 1903 at Pietersburg in the northern Transvaal and his early life was spent in both South Africa and England. He was educated in Johannesburg and at Beechmont and Rugby. In 1922 the family settled at Entumeni in Zululand to run a trading station, but in 1926 Plomer moved to Umdoni Park south of Durban to live with Roy and Mary Campbell. Later in that year he sailed with Laurens van der Post for Japan. In 1929, after teaching for over two years he left for England via Korea and Siberia, and in 1930 made a tour of Europe with Anthony Butts. During the 1930's he lived for some time at Dover and Brighton and before, during and after the war in London. From 1939-1945 he served in the Admiralty, but during the thirties and subsequently he made his living as a writer and reviewer and in part as a publisher's adviser. In 1973, after having retired to Sussex, he died unmarried.

His literary work is remarkable for its extent, diversity and quality. His first novel, "Turbot Wolfe" was begun at nineteen and is a very powerful and prescient treatment of the problems resulting from white oppression and exploitation in South Africa, as also of miscegenation. It was followed in later years by four other novels - "Sado" (set in Japan), "The Case is Altered", "The Invaders" and "Museum Pieces", generally considered his best. He was also the author of a large number of short stories, many of which were collected in "Four

Countries", and which relate to England, Greece, Japan and South Africa. In addition he wrote two biographies, one of Cecil Rhodes and another of Ali Pasha; and two volumes of autobiography, which were subsequently revised and issued in one volume. He edited the diary of Richard Rumbold (issued as "A Message in Code"), the family reminiscences and anecdotes of Anthony Butts (entitled "Curious Relations") and the diary of a Japanese visitor to Europe, Haruko Ichikawa. His most notable achievement in this field was his selection and editing of three large volumes drawn from the diary of Francis Kilvert, a diary which is one of the best in English and also furnishes an important historical record of English rural life and experience in the 1870's. Throughout his life Plomer also wrote and published many volumes of poetry, and in his later years collaborated with Benjamin Britten by writing the libretto for "Gloriana" and subsequently those for the three church operas based on the mediaeval Japanese No drama. One should, further, add his verse contribution to the colourfully illustrated children's work "The Butterfly Ball" as well as his translation with Jack Cope of the poems of Ingrid Jonker. Finally, his collaboration with Roy Campbell and Laurens van der Post in the seminal and necessarily controversial journal "Voorslag", a selection of poems by Melville, a large and shrewd body of literary reviewing, and introduction to books by various authors such as Conrad, Gissing and Rose Macaulay should be noted. Plomer was not only widely travelled, he had a travelled mind, and his work witnesses in its diversity of topic and meticulous precision of statement to an abiding and sympathetic, albeit often ironic, as well as penetrating contemplation of life, and embodies a lucid and memorable shaping of human experience, coupled with a whole and healing insight into the human condition.

The major collection of material by and relating to Plomer is now held at the University Library. It consists largely of Plomer's manuscript drafts and private papers, his extensive literary correspondence and his library. Among the correspondence survives a long series of letters from writers such as John Betjeman, Edmund Blunder, Roy Campbell, E.M. Forster, Nadine Gardiner, Christopher Isherwood, Laurens van der Post, Edith and Osbert Sitwell, Stephen Spender, Leonard Woolf as well as many letters from Benjamin Britten."

(Plomer was honoured with a Doctorate from Durham University, and bequeathed all his papers and the notebook which bears his name to the Library there).

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DR. ATLAY - THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE:

One of the most startling and vivid episodes in Kilvert's diary comes in the entry for Thursday, April Eve, 1870, when he tells of the forcible "confirming" of his friend Andrew Pope, curate of Cusop, at Whitney.

Although Kilvert was not present at this extraordinary happening, hearing about it from Mr. Dewing in a shop, such is his narrative gift that we almost feel as though we had witnessed the event ourselves.

The bishop who conducted the confirmation was Dr. James Atlay, bishop of Hereford, who at the time was aged 52 and had been appointed to the post by Disraeli, the then prime minister, two years earlier. His behaviour at the confirmation was appalling. He was "overbearing and imperious" when Pope tried to explain that he was a clergyman and not a candidate, and although he later apologised to Pope he did so "rather shortly and cavalierly".

Another long reference to Dr. Atlay comes a few months later, on Monday, August 29th. on the occasion of the Hardwick bazaar for the Home Missions.

Kilvert records that at 5. 30 Dr. Atlay began to speak from the edge of the lawn as from a platform across the ha-ha to the audience in the open field, the ladies seated in rows on chairs and benches lugged out of the tea tent.

"The Bishop spoke readily but not eloquently for an hour. He is not a born orator and does not excite enthusiasm. But he was so engrossed in his subject that he forgot all about time and Mrs. Webb had to give him a hint that the carriage was waiting to take him to Hay station and that if he stayed a few more minutes he would lose the last train".

Kilvert adds that the air got very chill towards the end of his speech and that when he left people began to move about and go away, which was rather discouraging to the following speakers.

Readers of the diary will have formed a very unfavourable impression of Dr.

Atlay from these two pieces, of a man who was overbearing, rude and lacking in consideration for others. But is this all there is to be said about him? A very different picture emerges in the Dictionary of National Biography.

Allowance must be made for the fact that articles in the Dictionary tend to be eulogistic in tone, but even so, it makes one realise that Dr. Atlay's behaviour in Kilvert may well have been completely out of character.

The author of the Dictionary article is one "J.B.A" and one can only surmise as to whom he was. Before getting on to what he says about Dr. Atlay as a man, let us briefly summarise his life.

James Atlay was born on July 3rd. 1817, at Wakerly in Northamptonshire, the second son of the Rev. Henry Atlay by his wife Elizabeth Rayner Hovell. He was educated at Grantham and Oakham schools and then studied at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he had a distinguished academic career. He was ordained deacon in 1842 and priest in the following year. From 1843 to 1846 he was curate at Warsop in Nottinghamshire, and from 1847 to 1852 vicar of Madingley near Cambridge. From 1846 to 1859 he was tutor of his old college.

In the year 1859 three notable things happened to James Atlay. He was made vicar of Leeds, he gained a doctorate of divinity and he married Frances Turner daughter of Major William Martin of the East India Company. They had several children. It will be noted that he was 42 in 1859, so following the example of many Victorian professional men by marrying comparatively late in life.

According to J.B.A. Dr. Atlay was a conspicuous success at Leeds, initiating a great scheme of church extension. "His organising capacity made Leeds the best-worked parish in the kingdom". He was appointed canon-residentiary at Ripon in 1861; in 1867 he refused the bishopric of Calcutta, but the following year accepted the bishopric of Hereford.

He was a conservative in politics and a high churchman of the old school and exercised a strong influence in convocation. In 1889 Archbishop Benson selected him as an assessor in the trial of Bishop King of Lincoln for alleged ritual offences. In his classic work "England 1870 - 1914" Sir Robert Ensor refers to Atlay in this connection, saying he was one of "five notable bishops" to hear the case.

Dr Atlay died on Christmas Eve, 1894, at the age of 77 - twice the age of Kilvert when he died. He was buried under the walls of his cathedral.

So much for the facts about Dr. Atlay. Now for the assessments in the article of him as a man. J.B.A. says: "He made a point of officiating in every church of a wide though sparsely populated diocese; his great parochial experience rendered him the trusted counsellor and guide of his clergy; his geniality and frankness, united to a fine presence, endeared him to all who were brought near him".

Archbishop Benson is quoted as describing Dr. Atlay as "the most beautiful combination of enthusiasm, manliness and modesty".

"He enjoyed", says J.B.A. "the respect of all parties in the church, and the peace of his diocese was unbroken during the stormiest ecclesiastical controversies".

When at Leeds Dr. Atlay's "sincerity and earnestness of character proved irresistible to churchmen and nonconformists alike".

Having read this panegyric it is indeed hard to reconcile this Dr. Atlay with the Kilvert Dr. Atlay! Perhaps the best thing is to accept the views of J.B.A. and Archbishop Benson and to assume that he was just having two of his off days in the Kilvert incidents. All of us get out of the wrong side of the bed occasionally!

One thing is certain, however. If any present-day bishop forcibly "confirmed" a curate he would find himself reported in the national press and on television within a couple of days. In the 1870s such was the awe inspired by bishops and authority in general that I doubt if the episode even made the local press!

John Hodkin (Cumbria)

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EDWARD KILVERT AND L'HERMITAGE:

In 1841, when he was on holiday in France, Edward Kilvert, Francis Kilvert's uncle, went out of his way to visit and sketch a building called L'Hermitage, the residence, he adds, of the Duc de Croy.

Why was it that he was drawn to this little-known place and made a sketch of it? The answer lies with his sister-in-law, the Miss de Chievre who came from France in 1793 and subsequently married his brother Francis, who kept the school at Claverton. Mrs. Kilvert's father was Count Leopold von Berchtold of Buchlau, and her mother was Maria Catherine Josephine de Croy; and the de Croys were one of the oldest and most illustrious families of Europe, descended from the Kings of Hungary, and closely involved with the history of France for over five hundred years. It numbered among its most distinguished members a 16th C Duke; a Marshal of France who fought against the Duke of Marlborough and died in Paris in 1784, possibly a victim of the Terror; and a cardinal of the Church of Rome who ultimately became Archbishop of Rouen.

One of the buildings that Edward Kilvert sketched, L'Hermitage, was the work of the 18th. C. marechal-duc, a building that greatly intrigued Louis XV. The other, the Chateau, may be the work of the Marechal's son.

Why was it that Kilvert never mentioned these illustrious families with which his family, through his uncle's wife, was connected? Probably we shall never know, but it is surprising that, although he made so much of his supposed connections with Moccas, he never mentioned his real links with the great European families of the Buchlaus and de Croys.

F. Grice.

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THE FAMILY CIRCLE OF MR. AND MRS. VENABLES:

Kilvert wrote about Llysdim and Newbridge-on-Wye, but he did not know the present, fine church of All Saints. It was built after his death. But the church is of immense interest to members of the Kilvert Society, for in the church are several memorials to members of the families of Kilvert's Mr. and Mrs. Venables. Most of the folk thus commemorated are found in the pages of Kilvert's Diary. Elsewhere in this Newsletter are our Secretary's interesting notes on the church furnishings at Newbridge-on-Wye - my following notes complement Mr. West's essay.

Our diarist was fortunate to serve as Curate to the Rev. R.L. Venables; the Vicar of Clyro was like a second father to him, the vicarage a second home. Mr. and Mrs. Venables introduced Kilvert to a host of their friends and relatives. How Kilvert enjoyed meeting these people - and liked writing of happy holidays spent at some of their homes! It is not surprising that, next to Kilvert's own kin, the names most often found in the diary are those of the family circle of Mr. and Mrs. Venables.

The Rev. R.L. Venables had much Welsh blood in his ancestry; a great grandmother was a Lloyd, a great grandfather was Richard Jones from an old Welsh family. Way back, the Venables' main stem was Norman, the surname Venables having originated from the place of that name in the department of Eure in Normandy. The Venables family was prominent in England mostly in Cheshire; I have traced ancestors of Mr. Venables back to Stuart times among the Cheshire hills near Macclesfield. In the second half of the eighteenth century, Mr. Venables's grandparents, Lazarus and Elizabeth, moved into Shropshire. (A tantalizing thought - did Lazarus and Elizabeth Venables know Kilvert's forbears in Shropshire before the Kilverts moved to Bath in 1782? I find that the Venables's estate was about twenty miles from the Kilvert home).

Mr. Venables of Clyro had numerous first cousins, but only one is in the published part of the diary - the Rev. Henry Venables (Vol.2. p.305). Another ordained cousin, the Rev. Joseph, had died in 1847 - it was his son Rowland whom Kilvert met at Clyro vicarage (Vol. 2. p.22). Kilvert spelt the name in the usual way, Roland, but it was really a surname used as a Christian name - with the "w". Young Rowland's grandfather had done what Kilvert did later - he married a Miss Rowland! Although he is not in the diary, I would mention a cousin of Mr. Venables - Edward Frederick Venables. He was a hero of the Indian Mutiny and died from his wounds in 1858.

Mr. Venables's father is known in the diary as "Archdeacon Venables". Born in 1774, he lived a full life to a good age, and died in 1858. He was variously

Vicar of Nantmel, Vicar of Clyro, Doctor of Divinity and Archdeacon of Carmarthen. Kilvert heard how the Archdeacon, a prominent Magistrate, had a drunkard put in the stocks at Clyro (Vol. 2. p. 339). Archdeacon Venables and his son, between them, served as Chairmen of the Radnorshire Quarter Sessions for over 60 years. The Archdeacon bought the Lysdinam estate in 1824, the estate that was inherited by his eldest son, the Rev. R.L. Venables - Kilvert's "Mr. Venables".

Members know that Mr. Venables's first wife was the widow, Mary Adam (nee Poltaratzky). Most think that Mr. Venables was a widower when Kilvert first went to Clyro; I think that Mrs. Mary Venables was still living, and that Kilvert knew her for several months.

From Kilvert we know much about Mr. Venables's second wife, Agnes Minna; she emerges from the diary as one of its most delightful ladies. Much younger than her husband, and only slightly older than Kilvert, Mrs. Venables was the diarist's true friend, adviser and confidante.

Mrs. Venables was the youngest child of Henry Sheppard Pearson, who in "Kilvert's Who's Who" is called Colonel Pearson. Father and Son have been confused. Colonel Pearson of the diary was H.S. Pearson's son and brother to Mrs. Venables. H.S. Pearson had died long before Kilvert knew the family. Kilvert tells us that Mr. Pearson built "Farringford" in the I.O.W., where Tennyson lived (Vol. 3. p. 41). In the index, Mr. Pearson is dubbed "architect", but he was not an architect. It would be more correct to say that Mr. Pearson "had the house built", and more correct still to say that he had it remodelled, for parts of "Farringford" are older than Mr. Pearson's time.

Mrs. H.S. Pearson (Mrs. Venables's mother) long outlived her husband. She was born Caroline Lyons, and was the great aunt of Lady Mary and Lady Phillipa Howard, whom the sisters visited at Eaton Square (Vol. 2. p. 328). A brother of Mrs. Pearson was Admiral Lord Lyons, whose younger daughter was the Duchess of Norfolk who, Kilvert tells us, gave Mrs. Cowper Coles a wheelchair (Vol. 3. p. 35).

The elder son of Admiral Lord Lyons was the Lord Lyons of the diary. Listed incorrectly in the index as "Earl Lyons", he was a Baron in Kilvert's time, and made a Viscount in 1881. He was to have become an Earl, but died before the patent could be made out. A fine ambassador, but eccentric, Lord Lyons was very short and fat. After meeting him in Europe, Augustus Hare wrote "Lord Lyons most amiable, but like a pumpkin with an apple on top! ".

Members know three Pearson sisters, Mrs. Cowper Coles, Mrs. Westthorp and Mrs. Venables. We can add two more - Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Howman. At the start of the diary, Kilvert is on holiday with the Thomas family at Mitcham. Mr. West has proved that Mrs. Thomas is the eldest Pearson sister, Caroline, who married Charles Evan Thomas in 1849. They had a large family. Kilvert's favourite was perhaps "little Hughie", who sent the diarist a Valentine (Vol. 1, p. 35). I have discovered that Hugh grew up to become Vice-Admiral Sir Hugh. He served with distinction in the 1914 - 18 war. Kilvert would have been proud of his little friend!

In a roundabout way I found the next Pearson sister, Augusta. She is not in the diary, and her husband has but a line, with no clue to his actual identity (Vol. 1. p. 254). He was George Arthur Knightley Howman - he died the same year as Kilvert.

So there were five Pearson sisters, with one brother, Colonel Pearson. He was born in 1831, his full name Richard Lyons Otway Pearson. Educated at Eton and the R.M.C., Sandhurst, he joined the Grenadier Guards and fought in major battles in the Crimean War. He was a J.P. for Middlesex, and from 1881 Asst. Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. He was created C.B. in 1887. Colonel Pearson must have been popular with his nieces and nephews, for when he died in 1890 they put a Memorial to his memory in Newbridge-on-Wye church.

Admiral Lord Lyons is not in the diary, but Mrs. Venables would have told Kilvert about her Uncle Edmund. Born in 1790, Edmund Lyons started his career at sea at the age of eight! He died, full of glory and honours, in 1858. When members see his memorial in Newbridge church, they may like to ponder what pleased this famous sailor most. It was being told that he had a striking likeness, in looks and in his naval character, to Admiral Lord Nelson!

Although Kilvert died before the building of the present church at Newbridge-on-Wye, he would have seen the Communion Vessels mentioned by Mr. West. The vessels were given for, and used in, the older church known to Kilvert. The vessels were later removed for use in the new church. As our Secretary has stated, the Communion Vessels were given in memory of Catherine Lyons, who died in Malta? My thoughts are that after Admiral Lyons's wife, Augusta, died in 1852, the admiral's unmarried sister, Catherine Lyons, became his hostess in the Mediterranean

Mr. and Mrs. Venables dispensed hospitality at their homes; not only relatives, but friends, and "in-laws" shared this hospitality. Mr. Venables's stepson, Capt. Adam, was welcomed at Clyro, also Mr. Venables's sister-in-law, Susan. This Susan was the widow of J.H. Venables. She was the lady who gave Kilvert the travelling clock, (Vol.1. p. 254). In the diary the inscription on the clock is written "R.F. Kilvert from J.C. Venables" - it should be "from S.C. Venables" (Susan Catherine). In the church at Newbridge can be seen the "Arms" of Susan's family, the Ridleys, alongside the arms of Venables.

Sidney Ball (Swindon).

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"The Church Plate of Radnorshire" by Rev. J.T. Evans (published in 1910) contains a full account of the furnishings of All Saints' Church, Newbridge-on-Wye, the church built and generously endowed by George Stovin Venables Esq., Q.C. of Llysdyman Hall, and consecrated on July 12th. 1883. The list of the donors of the furnishings contains many names familiar to readers of the Diary, and in view of the forthcoming visit to the church I felt that some account might be of interest.

Here I must state that at the time of consulting Rev. J.T. Evans's book I was corresponding with our Swindon member, Mr. Sidney Ball, on the identity of Mr. & Mrs. Charles Evan Thomas, who with their sons feature at the beginning of Volume I of the Diary. I sent him a copy of the extract in Rev. Evans's book, and drew his attention to the names of Mr. & Mrs. Charles Evan Thomas which appeared in the list of donors. I had already known of Mr. Ball's great interest in genealogy - and members will have seen it displayed in his article in the February newsletter - but I was not prepared for the wonderful piece of research that he sent me some time later. Tabulated on the next page is the list of donors towards the Communion vessels, with Mr. Ball's findings.

<u>DONOR</u>	<u>NOTES</u>	Relation To Catherine Lyons	Relation To Mrs. Venables
A. Caroline Pearson	Widow of Henry Sheppard Pearson, daughter of John Lyons. Mother of F.H.I.J.K.L.	Sister	Mother
B. Admiral John Lyons	1787-1872. Midshipman on Nelson's "Victory" at Battle of Trafalgar.	Brother	Uncle
C. General Humphrey Lyons.	8th. son of John Lyons and his wife Catherine (née Walrond) 1802-75. Twice married.	Brother	Uncle
D. Colonel Athill Lyons	Son of John Lyons and Elizabeth (née Robbins) his second wife.	Half-Brother	Uncle
E. Frances Walrond Lyons	Sister of D.	Half-Sister	Aunt
F. Lt.Col. Richard Lyons Otway Pearson	Son of A. Brother of H.I.J.K.L. Born 1831. Wife a Markham (of Yorkshire)	Nephew	Brother
G. Bickerton, Lord Lyons	The 2nd. Lord Lyons, son of Admiral Lord Lyons, brother of B.C. and A. He is the Lord Lyons of the Diary.	Nephew	Cousin
H. Caroline Thomas and Charles Evan Thomas	Née Pearson, daughter of A. Her husband of the Thomas family of Llwyn, Madoc. Among their children Llewellyn, Hugh and Owen.	Niece and Nephew in law	Sister and Brother in law
I. Augusta Howman and G.A.Knightley Howman	Née Pearson, daughter of A. Her husband, Knightley, is recorded in the Diary as the chooser of the clock (24th.Oct.1870).	Niece and Nephew in law	Sister and Brother in law
J. Emily Coles and Capt. Cowper Coles	Née Pearson, daughter of A. Died 1876. Capt. Cowper Coles died 1870.	Niece and Nephew in law	Sister and Brother in law
K. Henrietta Westhorp	Née Pearson, daughter of A. Wife of Rev. S.B. Westhorp	Niece	Sister
L. Agnes Minna Venables	Née Pearson, wife of Rev. R.L. Venables.	Niece	Herself
M. Capt.Algernon MacLennan Lyons,R.N.	Son of C. Became Admiral Sir Algernon Lyons, G.C.B.	Nephew	Cousin
N. Augusta Dixon	Daughter of C or D. Wife Of ? Dixon.	Niece or Great Niece	Cousin
O. J.Alex Hankey	I cannot trace a relationship between the families of Lyons and Hankey. The families may well have been friends.J. Alex.H. was born 1804, son of John Peter Hankey and Isabella (Alexander). His wife Ellen Blake. Lived in Sussex.		
Matilda Hankey	Daughter of O. Unmarried, died 1872.		

P. Mrs. Ellen Puller	Née Emily Blake and widow of Christopher W. Giles-Puller (Herts). Presumably Daughter.
Q. Ann and Julia Erskine	
R. Charlotte, Duchess of Norfolk.	Widow of 13th. Duke of Norfolk, and so Dowager c. 1790-1870. Her son, who became 14th. Duke, married Augusta Mary Minna Catherine, daughter of Adam, Lord Lyons, and sister of G. Although a niece of Catherine Lyons Augusta did not contribute, as she was R.C.
S. Lady Adeliza Manners	Daughter of R. Wife of Lord George Manners of family of Duke of Rutland.
T. Hon. Mrs. Seymour Bathurst Mary Selina Bathurst	Was born Julia Hankey and sister of O. Widow of Hon. Thos. Seymour Bathurst. Mary Selina her unmarried daughter.
U. Mrs. & Mrs. Thomson Hankey	He was born 1805, cousin of O. Mrs. Hankey née Alexander. They lived in Kent.
V. Admiral Sir Thos. Pasley, Bart.	Commanded flagship of Admiral Lord Lyons.
W. Mary Caroline Walrond	A first cousin once removed of A.B. and C.

(Mentioned in the Diary are A, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, R).

"The Communion vessels consist of a silver Chalice, Pateu and ewer-shaped Flagon, all bearing the hall marks of 1869. The initials 'A.M.V' appear beneath each of the three pieces" - for the subscriptions were collected in 1869 by Mrs. Venables.

The Altar Cross was given by C.B. and Catherine Penrice. Mr. Ball records that the Penrice family lived at Kilvrough, Glamorgan. Capt. A. McL. Lyons (M in the table) married Louisa Jane Penrice in 1879. The donors of the Cross must have been closely related to Louisa Jane. Kilvert mentioned passing by Kilvrough (16th April 1872).

The Font was given by John Ridley Esq. the brother of Mrs. Henry Venables. (See Mr. Ball's article in the February newsletter).

The Pulpit was given by Rev. R.L. Venables, and his wife donated the Alms-dish, which has the initials "A.M.V" inscribed underneath. She carved the Stall Panels, and Mr. Grice reminds me that Kilvert records "One of the drainers had found some bog oak in cutting the drains and had taken it down to the house for Mrs. V. to carve".

The West window of the church was the gift of many personal friends of G.S. Venables Esq. in 1887. Three of the East windows were given by Mrs. Henry Venables in memory of her husband; the other two being in memory of Adm. Lord Lyons, Miss Lyons and Mrs. Pearson - the uncle, aunt and mother of Mrs. Lister Venables; one South window is in memory of Henry George Lister Venables, an only son who died in infancy; two others are commemorative of the confirmation of Katherine Minna and Caroline Emily Venables (the daughters of Rev. & Mrs. Venables)

Of other furnishings the Eagle lectern (by Meyer of Munich) was the gift of Mrs. Henry Venables, the Corona the gift of Miss Ridley, and a small window in the Organ Chamber the gift of the pupils and friends of Sarah Williams of Berthllwydd, a teacher in Newbridge School, who died in 1882.

The architect was Stephen W. Williams, according to the Powys Penguin Volume "a prolific-antiquary of Rhayader, the builder of six churches, of some public buildings in Llandrindod Wells, and restorer of not only 11 other churches but also of Llysdyman". His gift to Newbridge was the font-cover. The builders were the Hereford firm of Bowers and Mansfield.

E.J.C. West.