

*all good wishes!*  
*Edw*

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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FEBRUARY 1986.

Dear Member,

The second half of 1985 was remarkable for the wretched summer and beautiful autumn. It so happened that our final weekend of events saw the end of the summer and the beginning of the autumn. Hence it was that our Walk was not favoured by the best of weather, but 34 members turned up to be guided by Mr. Bentley-Taylor round the site of Bredwardine Castle and Moccas Church and deer park. The majority of visitors to Bredwardine will concentrate on the church, the graves and the view of the bridge, and so ignore the extensive site of the castle. Mr. Bentley-Taylor showed the steep escarpment on the east above the Wye, the remains of the ditch which protected the west side and the track which connected with Moccas, used by Kilvert. Moccas church was the next stop and was duly inspected. At the entrance to the park our Scottish members, Mr. and Mrs. Manson, joined us. Soon the weather began to deteriorate, conditions under foot became unpleasant and the majority of the party adjourned to the Burnt House Restaurant to be warmly welcomed by our members, Mr. and Mrs. Stutz. Once more our very grateful thanks to Mr. Bentley-Taylor.

By contrast, the village street at Kington St. Michael the following day glowed in the sun. 85 members of the Society attended the service, which was conducted by Rev. D.N. Copeland (priest in charge, and member of the Society), assisted by Rev. D. Scase. The readers were our members, Mr. Sidney Ball (Swindon) and Mr. Joe Payne (Langley Burrell), the Remembrancer our Chairman and the Preacher our Committee Member, Rev. B.F. Price. His sermon drew a well-researched parallel between King David and the diarist - both were shepherds of their people and both experienced the joys and sorrows of the human condition. An excellent tea was provided by Mrs. Elms and her lady helpers. To all the Society is most grateful. Now to 1986!

A.G.M. and Social Evening, Friday, May 2nd. at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, (by kind permission of Mrs. Easthaugh). This will start at 7 p.m. and follow our customary pattern. The business of the evening will be concluded, it is hoped, before 8 p.m. Refreshments will follow and a talk will be given by our member, Rev. D. Tipper (of Linton-by-Ross) on "Railways in the Diary". Members are reminded that parking is forbidden within the Palace precinct.

Walk - Saturday, May 3rd. led by Mr. R.I. Morgan. Meet at the large car park in Oxford Road, Hay-on-Wye, at 11.30 a.m. A perambulation of the town followed by picnic lunch. In the afternoon a Walk in the Cusop area.

The 1986 Services. July 6th. at Clifford Church (by kind permission of Rev. M. King) and September 21st. at Hay (by kind permission of Canon I Davies). Further details will appear in the June and August newsletters. A Walk will take place on the day preceding these events.

The Third Notebook. Reference was made to this in our last newsletter. A press release was featured in many of the daily newspapers last month, confirming that the notebook was the one presented by Mrs. Hope to Mr. Charles Harvey of Birmingham, and that in due course it would be published by the National Library of Wales.

Yours sincerely,

E.J.C. West

Hon. Secretary.

### OBITUARY

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

Mr. A.C. Renner (London), a member since 1981

Mr. C.K. Hughes (Whitney-on-Wye), a member since 1975.

Mr. F. Bromley (Stratford-upon-Avon), a member since 1976. Though I never met Mr. Bromley, we had a fairly frequent exchange of correspondence. He knew the Kilvert Country intimately, and I recall in particular his account of a visit to the high inaccessible falls of Craig Pwlllddu.

I am pleased that Mrs. Renner and Mrs. Bromley, her son and daughter-in-law have continued as members of the Society.

\* Mrs. E.M. Victor (Hereford), our longest serving Vice President, died just before Xmas. She and her late husband, Rev. J. Victor, retired from the living of Ringwell (Sussex) to reside in Hereford in 1960. She was the great great granddaughter of Uncle Francis Kilvert ("The Antiquary") and it was her grandparents who were married at Findon in 1874, where the diarist met Katherine Heanley. In her quiet way she was the most loyal of members, until her illness, attending every function with her sister, Miss Cicely Cholmeley. She became a Vice-President in 1964. I remember that at one A.G.M. it was pointed out to the company that she was wearing a brooch which had belonged to the Antiquary's wife. A member who approached her admired the brooch and had some conversation with her told me afterwards that she would carry with her the memory of a most gracious and old-world charm. A memory shared by all who met Mrs. Victor. Miss Cholmeley has told me that her sister's interest in the Society continued to the end. There were friends who read the newsletters to her, and she derived great pleasure from listening to the tapes of the commemorative services, kindly loaned by our Archivist, Mr. Godfrey Davies.

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### BOOK REVIEWS

#### Kilvert's Diary (Isis Publications)

This is yet another reprint of Plomer's one volume selections originally published by Cape in 1944, and more recently published by Penguin in paperback. It has, however, one great difference, for Isis Publications deal exclusively in Large Print Editions. Hence for those whose sight is weak this edition should be invaluable. It has 480 pages of 6" x 9" compared with the others which have 340 pages of 5" x 7". A hardback, it is bound in an eye-catching lilac-purple colour with a picture of the diarist on the front. In the original edition the maps were the least satisfactory part; here they are larger, hence appearing much less "cluttered". Mercifully so far spared failing sight, I rely on the testimony of a less fortunate friend and member who says that this volume is a wonderful acquisition.

Isis Publications, incidentally, cover a wide range of authors and subjects, from Winston Churchill, Grahame Green and Nancy Mitford to "The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole" !

The Kilvert volume is obtainable only from Isis Large Print, Clio Press Ltd., 55, St. Thomas Street, Oxford, OX1 1SG at £9. 85. post free.

#### Childhood Recollections of Frances Theodora

Who was Frances Theodora? None other than Mrs. Essex Hope, the younger daughter of Kilvert's sister, Thersie, and the recollections are of Monnington-on-Wye! In 1952 (she was then 72 years old) she gave a talk on the BBC, and a tape of that recording has come into the hands of Lt. Col. and Mrs. E.C. Phillips who live at what was the Rectory of that village. They have published these recollections in a booklet, profits from the sale of which are for the church there, surely one of the most exquisite of all those mentioned in the Diary, and in a setting very little altered since Frances Theodora's childhood.

Affectionate, observant, humorous, illustrated with photographs, these recollections show that she possessed the family gift for words - indeed, she was a successful novelist. (Two of her novels "The Wye Valley Mystery" and "I have come home" are set in the Monnington area, and if any member comes across a copy of these, I'd be grateful to hear!) The reminiscences of life a hundred years ago give a delightful picture of a vicarage childhood.

The booklet is priced at £2. 00. I have acquired a small stock and would be happy to dispatch copies if in addition to the amount an S.A.E. of 9" x 6" is included.

Keep on Growing : a Herefordshire guide for disabled and elderly gardeners  
(by Susan Hale)

Mrs. Hale has been a member of the Society for many years, and a gardener too, qualifying on her own admission for the descriptive words in the title of this book! It has been written for DIAL (Disablement Information Advice Line), and contains advice on all aspects of gardening - such as simplicity of design, useful implements for the elderly. For members in the Welsh Border area Mrs. Hale has listed more than 50 nurseries, garden centres and gardens in Herefordshire. Mrs. Hale brings numerous touches to her advice, and the book is illustrated.

The generous sponsorship of DIAL enables the book to be priced cheaply at £1. 25. post free - obtainable from DIAL, 15, St. Owen Street, Hereford. HR1 2JB.

E.J.C.W.

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FROM SOCIETY CORRESPONDENCE

Miss M. Lowder (Camberley) writes that it was her grandfather, Edward Gordon Lowder, to whom the Diary refers on 25 January 1871. She regrets that the name is wrong; it should be 'Ted Lowder' not 'Fred Lowden'. Her grandfather rose to be British Minister Plenipotentiary at Tokio. One of his brothers, John, was a godson of Kilvert's parents.

Radnor Travel of 5, High Street, New Radnor, Powys, LD8 2SL offers a very attractive minibus tour in conjunction with the Midland Express X91 Birmingham-Aberystwyth (Saturdays only). "There is time" says the brochure, "after descending from the bus at the Radnor Arms Hotel to have a coffee, after which board the minibus, the only vehicle able to travel the byways on the tour. A lunch stop is made at Builth, but the main part of the tour is small hamlets such as Colva, Glascwm, Rhulen, Llanbedr and Llandeilo Graban. Stops are frequent and the driver/guide will be pleased to pull up anywhere you wish for photographs and sight-seeing. The tour finishes at New Radnor in the early evening, allowing time for a bite to eat before returning home by the Midland Express. The price for the tour is £8. 00. for adults and £4. 50. for children. The tour only operates if there is sufficient demand and intending passengers must telephone 054 421616 before departure date".

The Association for Cultural Exchange (Babraham, Cambridge, CB2 4AP) offers a Kilvert Study Tour, July 14 - 18. Two nights will be spent in the Wiltshire area and two nights at Hereford. The course assembles at Bath Railway Station at 2. 00 p.m. on the first day, returning there at about 5. 00 p.m. on the last day. The cost £120, includes accommodation, dinner and breakfast, all excursions and admissions. The accommodation is mainly in single rooms but some double rooms are also available.

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WORDSWORTH IN KILVERT

by

David Bentley-Taylor

Stimulated by Mr. R.I. Morgan's booklet "Kilvert and the Wordsworth Circle", I have for some years been studying the visits of William Wordsworth and his family to places in and around Herefordshire. The poet came to the county eleven times, staying after his marriage with his wife's brother, Tom Hutchinson, who farmed at Hindwell west of Kington from 1809 to 1825 and then at Brinsop Court near Hereford till 1846. Tom's wife's brother, John Monkhouse, farmed at the Stow, Whitney-on-Wye close of the Herefordshire-Radnorshire border from 1813 to 1866. The three families - Wordsworths, Hutchinsons, Monkhouses - kept in close touch throughout life.

John Monkhouse had married in 1806 but his wife died soon afterwards and he remained a widower for 59 years, greatly admired by the others for his alert mind, his ability in farming, and his unfailing cheerfulness in spite of the blindness which overtook him in middle life. Wordsworth said John was "a man of ten thousand"



and it was his long tenure of the Stow which helped to draw the poet into what was to become "Kilvert country". Furthermore, John's niece Mary married Rev. Henry Dew, for 58 years Rector of Whitney-on-Wye (1843-1901), both of them figuring often in Kilvert's Diary. Kilvert wrote without prolonged research and was thus prone to minor inaccuracies, but he had the advantage of living in the area when there were still people about who remembered Wordsworth.

In the three volumes of his Diary edited by Dr. Plomer there are sixteen passages which mention the poet or his sister Dorothy. Seven of these are passing allusions (i 133, 174, 264, 313, 377, ii 246, iii 116) but nine are of great interest,

(1): i 81. On April 5, 1870, after crossing the Gospel Pass on his way back to Clyro from Llanthony Abbey, Kilvert said, "It always interests me to think that probably in their walks from Llyswn to Llanthony William and Dora Wordsworth crossed the mountain by this pass". Llyswn lies on the south bank of the Wye in what was then Breconshire. "Dora", the poet's daughter, is a mistake for "Dorothy", his sister, but in the voluminous Wordsworth records I can find no evidence that either of them ever saw Llanthony. And they were at Llyswn only once, in August 1798 with Coleridge before William's marriage, staying for one night. It is possible that Kilvert has preserved a correct account of their route eastwards down the Vale of Ewyas towards Chepstow, but there are no grounds for thinking they went that way again.

(2): i 119. Visiting the Stow on April 27, 1870 Kilvert thought of Wordsworth "who often used to come and stay at this house with blind Mr. Monkhouse, who had nearly all his poems off by heart". The house is still there, unchanged, where William was John's guest in September 1824, in December 1827, and on his final visit to Herefordshire in June 1849, when he was 79.

(3): i 234-235. On September 28, 1870 Kilvert recorded Mr. G. Venables' delightful memories of Wordsworth - "He looked like an old shepherd...He was a grand man" - when he met the poet at home in the Lake District and called on him at the Stow, probably in June 1849. Once again there is an allusion to William and Dorothy walking from Llyswn to Llanthony.

(4): i 317. On March 31, 1871 Kilvert recalled seeing "Miss Hutchinson at Whitney Rectory with her sister years ago, but then they were very shy and hid behind a hedge". These girls were Wordsworth's nieces, Elizabeth and Sarah Hutchinson, Tom's daughters, whom Kilvert must have met after he moved to Clyro in 1865. But they were not children, as the reader might think. In 1865 Elizabeth was 45 and Sarah 39.

(5): i 317-319. Next day he had a good talk with Elizabeth, always known as Ebba, who had long been living at West Malvern, where she died in 1905. She too had priceless details to tell him about Wordsworth. She mentioned that Dorothy had stayed at Brinsop Court, at Hindwell Farm near Kington, and "at Mrs. Monkhouse's at the Stow farm, Whitney". I find that Dorothy only went once to Brinsop, in February 1826, though she was so "charmed with everything and everybody in Herefordshire" that she prolonged her visit to seven months. She had been at Hindwell for two months in 1814, never again, and in both years she was at the Stow too, though not along with William. Mention of "Mrs" Monkhouse must be a typing error or a misreading of Kilvert's handwriting, for there never was a Mrs. Monkhouse at the Stow. She died in 1807, six years before John moved there.

(6): ii 75. While visiting Leysters near Leominster on October 25, 1871 Kilvert was taken to see "The Poet's Stone" on which William and Mary Wordsworth's host at Bockleton Vicarage had carved their initials after they sat on it. It is there today above the Wylden Dingle, cut in half now and no longer quite "on the edge of the bank", but the letters "W.W. M.W" and the date "October 22, 1845" can still be made out.

(7): ii 248. On August 14, 1872 Mrs. Henry Dew, the daughter of John Monkhouse's brother, who had married the Rector of Whitney, gave Kilvert two of Dorothy Wordsworth's letters to "Miss Horrocks", her mother's maiden name. One of these mentioned Wordsworth's poem about herself, written when he met her as a three-year-old in the autumn of 1824. It begins, "Unquiet childhood here by special grace". Too flattering to ring true, it is not among the greater products of his genius.

(8): ii 430. While staying with Rev. and Mrs. Henry Dew at Whitney on March 27, 1874 Kilvert wrote down what they told him about the Sunday Wordsworth

spent with them twenty-five years before, when he was a guest at the Stow in 1849. It seems, however, that the walk called "Wordsworth Terrace" is no longer known at Whitney.

(9): iii 456-457. It is remarkable that the very last entry in Kilvert's Diary (March 13, 1879), concerns Brinsop and the Wordsworths. Kilvert had lunch and tea at Brinsop Vicarage, beautified today as Brinsop House. The Rector, Rev. William Fowle, walked with him first to Brinsop Church, then on to Brinsop Court. In 1873 the Church had been turned into something like a Wordsworth shrine by "admirers of his genius and character" with windows dedicated to the poet, his sister, his wife, and his daughter, stating that William was "a frequent sojourner in this parish". It is strange that Kilvert - if one may trust Dr. Plomer - fails to mention this. But when they got to the Court he noticed that "on the lawn grew the cedar planted by William Wordsworth the poet". Tom Hutchinson had moved to the Court in 1825 and Wordsworth first saw it when he stayed there over Christmas 1827 and New Year 1828. It was then that he planted the cedar, which grew to be higher than the chimneys and extended out over the moat. Unhappily it was blown down in the great storm of December 27, 1915 and not a trace of it remains today. Kilvert was shown around the house, reflecting that "here dear Dorothy Wordsworth spent much of her time". This might give the impression that she was at Brinsop during the last twenty years of her life when she was a helpless invalid. But in truth she paid only the one visit, when fit and well in 1826, arriving on February 17th via Worcester and "the delightful hills of Malvern" for a three month stay which she prolonged till September 9th, so thrilled was she with "the rich fields and woods and scattered hills and orchards of Herefordshire".

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WILTSHIRE WORTHIES

by Sidney Ball (Swindon)

We have a galaxy of folk in the Wiltshire section of the Diary. But, the Kilvert family excepted, people in Wiltshire are not very well known. Less has been written about them than of folk elsewhere. In "Kilvert's Who's Who" there are only 9 Wiltshire surname headings against over 50 from other places. Yet Francis Kilvert spent much of the diary period in his native Wiltshire, so we must make its people better known.

What a fine old countryman was Joseph Duckett of Kington St. Michael! He used to go about preaching in a smock frock (Vol. 3, page 30). Joseph's wife was Diana Strange, whom he married in 1818. But we do not hear of her, for "Master" Joseph Duckett was a widower when Kilvert wrote. One of Joseph's daughters was Mrs. John Bryant of the Barrow Farm; a grand-daughter was "sweet Cissy Bryant" who was in Kilvert's Bible Class (Vol. 3, page 33). Kilvert's description of Joseph Duckett (Vol. 2, page 116), and of William Barnes (Vol. 2, page 439) have similarities. Our diarist knew of "gentry" Ducketts in Wilts. (some are mentioned in Langley Burrell church) and thought that something undefinable about Joseph Duckett marked his good blood.

I do like Rebecca William's name for Mrs. De Quetteville - "Mrs. Forgetful". Rebecca could not master the French name (Vol. 2, page 113). The De Quettevilles came from Jersey in the Channel Islands. The Revd. William De Quetteville (1828-1909) took "Orders" in 1853 and came to North Wilts. in 1861. He had the valuable living of Brinkworth from his college, Pembroke, Oxford, where he had been a Fellow. It is amusing to read of a large evet (a newt) staring out of the pond at Brinkworth Rectory at Francis and Teddy Kilvert. This pond was the sole source of drinking water, but Mrs. De Quetteville thought the water pure and delicious (Vol. 2, page 240).

The fine old Brinkworth Rectory where Francis stayed (Vol. 2, page 344) is now a home for old folk. Kilvert thought Brinkworth parish church "barberous, but might be made a fine building". He did not live to know that the Revd. William De Quetteville did much to improve the church, including having the chancel rebuilt in 1889. De Quetteville resigned his living in 1895; he lived in retirement at Noirmont Manor, St. Aubyn, Jersey. There is a window and tablet to his memory in Brinkworth Church. By the way, Brinkworth village "street" is the longest in England - over 4 miles.

Members who have been to Balmoral in Scotland will have seen the fine bridge

over the River Dee. The Prince Consort had this bridge built in the 1850's as an entrance to the Castle grounds. The bridge was built by Messrs. Brotherhood, Engineers of Chippenham! Their name is still on the bridge. The cricketer, Brotherhood, in the Langley Burrell team in August 1872, must have been of this famous engineering family (Vol. 2, page 242).

Members are unlikely to connect Bishop, the curate of Moccas, with Wiltshire. But, before going to Moccas in 1870, the Revd. Rhys Bishop's first curacy was for three years in the north Wilts parish of Ashton Keynes. I think that the Master family of Cirencester introduced Mr. Bishop to the Rev. Sir George Cornwall of Moccas.

Kilvert's Who's Who cites J.J. Daniell as Vicar of Kington Langley. As such he is mentioned only once in the Diary, when Kilvert was on holiday in Wiltshire in January, 1871, (Vol. 1, page 299). The Diary does not tell us, but soon after this Daniell left the district, "Charlie" Clarke became Vicar of Kington Langley, and comes into the diary several times. The Revd. Charles Clarke was an Oxford graduate, took "Orders" in 1868 and was for a while Curate of Calne, Wilts. He became Vicar of Kington Langley in 1871 and remained there for well over half a century. What changes Charlie Clarke saw during his long incumbency!

Charlie Clarke's father, the Rector of Kellaways, is not in the Index under his name, but he is mentioned by Kilvert in Vol. 2, page 282 and in Vol. 3, page 331. He was the Revd. Thomas Ambrose Clarke, M.A. of Lincoln College, Oxford. Chaplain of the Chippenham Union, he was also Rector of Kellaways from 1857. This was a tiny parish, with a population of about 30. When Kilvert was going to St. Harmon, Mr. Clarke signed the Letters Testimonial (Vol. 3, page 331).

Now, back to the Revd. J.J. Daniell. He had been ordained in 1848, and held curacies at Gerrans and then Menheniot, in Cornwall, before coming to Kington Langley in 1853, first as curate, then - from 1865 - as vicar. Early in 1871 Mr. and Mrs. Daniell went to Warminster, where Daniell was curate for some months. Thus it was, when the Hockins had to leave Tullimaar, Daniell wrote to them about a house in Warminster (Vol. 1, page 395). Daniell held other appointments in South Wilts until he succeeded Kilvert's father as Rector of Langley Burrell in 1879.

Members may be surprised to learn that Kilvert's Squire Baskerville of Clyro had a line of Wiltshire Baskerville ancestors stretching back to the Tudor period. And Baskerville's father was very much a Wiltshire man. He was a J.P. and D.L. for Wilts, and Sheriff of Wiltshire in 1827. Born in 1790 as Thomas Baskerville Mynors, he took the surname of his Baskerville forbears on inheriting the extensive Wiltshire lands of his relative, Col. Thomas Baskerville, who died without issue in 1817. There is a memorial to Colonel Baskerville in the church of Mildenhall, near Marlborough.

In my boyhood a popular outing for my family was by horse and carriage to picnic under the downs at Rockley, near Marlborough. Opposite our picnic place, sheltered by trees, was Rockley Manor House. It is still there, and was there in the early 19th century when Baskerville's father played bowls there. For, although the diary says only "in Wiltshire", Rockley it must be. In May, 1870 Kilvert wrote that at Clyro Court he played bowls with Baskerville with an old set ".....not having been used for years. His father used to play with them in Wiltshire and at Clyro Court and they are a fine old set". (Vol. 1, page 129). I have found that Baskerville senior lived at Rockley with his first wife, Anne Hancock, of Marlborough, whom he married in 1818. They had no children, and Anne died in 1835. Two years later Thomas Baskerville married Elizabeth Guise, the mother of Walter Baskerville and his brothers and sisters whom we meet in Kilvert's Diary. Walter Baskerville of Clyro had a great interest in Wiltshire, where he owned 2,337 acres.

Three of the Ashe family in the Diary have not previously been defined - Emily, Edward and the Revd. Samuel Ashe.

Emily Ashe is the lady who demanded of Fanny Kilvert her spiritual experiences (Vol. 2, page 239) and tormented Aunt Sarah at Brighton (Vol. 3, page 100). In the Index as "relative of F.K" Emily Ashe was Kilvert's mother's cousin, only surviving sister of the Rev. R.M. Ashe. She has a memorial in Langley Burrell Church. She died in 1887 aged 81.

Edward Ashe is not in the Index, but is mentioned once, in Volume 3, page 96. Here Squire R.M. Ashe remembered when he and Edward Ashe led patrols against the machine breaking rioters of 1830. Robert and Edward were brothers and both became



Clergymen. As a young man of 25, the Revd. Edward Ashe became Rector of Harnhill, Glos. I don't think it has previously been disclosed that the Revd. Robert Ashe (1781 - 1855) had the patronage of Harnhill through his first wife, Mary Jane Jenner Watts of Harnhill. He was not only Squire and Rector of Langley Burrell, but from 1825 to 1833 also Rector of Harnhill. He was holding the living there until his son Edward was old enough! But the Revd. Edward Ashe died when he was only 31, after only six years at Harnhill.

The Revd. Samuel Ashe, when Rector of Langley Burrell, must have done much more than trying to stop Sunday football on Langley Common. But the three mentions of him in the diary all refer to Samuel Ashe's dislike of Sunday football (Vol. 2, pages 320 and 417 and Vol. 3, page 96). Samuel Ashe was a son of the Revd. Robert Ashe who had Langley House built, and a younger brother of Robert Ashe (1747 - 1829) whom Kilvert calls "The Old Squire". The Revd. Samuel was Rector of Langley Burrell from 1777 to 1807. The old men of Langley were telling Kilvert of times seventy years before!

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THE REV. ALFORD'S WYE VICARAGE

by Rev. M. Reed (Glasbury)

In the diary for Thursday, 14th. December, 1871, we read, "I walked to Glasbury this afternoon to wish the Alford's Goodbye". Although Samuel Alford was much Kilvert's senior, being 67, he was a firm friend of Kilvert. From the diary for 3rd. November we know Rev. Alford had just been granted the living of Helmsley, Diocese of York. By using Diocesan Records in the National Library of Wales, Census Returns and Parochial Records, it is possible to fill out Kilvert's account of this farewell visit.

"At Glasbury I had to ask the way to the Vicarage twice, never having been there before". In fact Kilvert was a rare visitor to Glasbury, never assisting at the church, although the Rev. Thomas Williams from Llowes often did so.

"The road led me across the village green and along the low river wall. The broad, noble reach of the Wye shimmered quivering under the last cold gleam of the setting sun. The old vicarage, the Wye vicarage, stands close to the river wall upon the river bank". The vicarage Kilvert saw had been built about 1380 as a 'hall house' for the monks from Gloucester Abbey who held Glasbury. Originally just a parlour and hall separated by a passage, it was 'modernised' in 1611 with the insertion of the upper floor, stone stairs, 'modern' windows, and a chimney, to produce the 19th century "Wye Vicarage".

"It is a poor tumbled-down, ramshackled old place, and unhealthy I should think, damp and infested by rats which once gnawed a living baby". As Kilvert walked up, he saw three buildings, the mediaeval tithe barn, alongside it the stable block containing Alford's study at its rear over a wash-house, (access to the study being up worn stone steps with a broken hand rail), and the house itself.

All three buildings were roofed with local stone tiles, nearly two inches thick, now many were missing, and all three roofs badly sagged due to rotten beams. The general air of "tumbled-down" appearance was added to by windows with broken panes of glass, rotten frames, and wooden shutters sadly leaning off, all in acute need of painting.

Kilvert would be invited into the best sitting room, while he waited for Sarah, the house-maid, age 16, to fetch Samuel Alford. Kilvert would see how the edges of the floor next to the walls had been eaten away by rats. Samuel Alford would soon call down from the upstairs sitting room (not for guests, due to its dangerously sagging floor), his wife Henrietta, 13 years younger than him, and his three oldest daughters, (the only children still at home). I wonder how much the presence of three girls, all single and in their early 20's, encouraged the visit from Kilvert.

Soon tea would be requested from the cook, at work behind the door with its peeling green baize. The servants' quarters were in much the same run-down state with uneven flag stone floors, and several large rat holes in the store room walls.

"But the good little parson and his family cling to it and the memories of 24 years which are not to be lightly broken". On this farewell visit the conversation

would range over the memories of the 24 years spent here.

The Alford's arrived in the spring of 1848, moving in with two little children far from their homes in Devon and Cornwall - an arrival soon to be marked by tragedy when within four months, little Catherine, only 11 months old, was buried by her father in the churchyard just across the river.

There were happier memories of the birth of nine more children over the next twelve years. To help out a nurse-maid soon joined the household, and although Samuel Alford was a regular visitor to Glasbury National School, a governess followed to teach the older children. In December 1871 with the boys away at school, and only two servants, it must have seemed much quieter.

Memories of friends - in 1861 of Rev. Thomas Williams from Llowes coming to lay to rest another child, little Frederick, only two, beside his sister under the Yew Tree near the school yard. Of Mary Lewis their housemaid, who six years before Samuel Alford had married to the local butcher and now living at his father's pub at Glanelly, near Crickhowell.

Some memories would be visible, like the marks the Alford's could point to, 2½ feet above the floor which showed the level the River Wye, in one of its all too frequent floods, had reached.

As later that night Kilvert wrote his diary, he could recall the official documents his friend Rev. Thomas Williams of Llowes had signed, describing the 'Wye Vicarage' as "in a most unsatisfactory state for the residence of an incumbent" due to "the closeness to the river Wye and the dampness of the walls and atmosphere"; also it was "inadequate in size for the reception of the incumbent and his family". Nothing had been said about its suitability or otherwise for the Curate and his household of 14 who lived there while the incumbent, Charles Bradley, had lived in Cheltenham.

Today it is still possible to retrace Kilvert's route, to walk across the green, pausing as you go down the lane on the far side, to look, as Kilvert did, out across the Wye. At the end of the lane is the 'Wye Vicarage', although now a private house, better protected today by the strong flood defences. Across the river at St. Peter's Church you can see the stone, on the grave of the Alford's children still under the Yew Tree, now just below the old railway line.

Inside St. Peter's the glass in the circular window over the chancel arch was given by Henrietta Alford in the 1880's, perhaps for "the memories of 24 years", spent in "a poor, tumbled-down, ramshackled old place", yet memories "which are not to be lightly broken".

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THE MEMOIRS OF THE REVEREND ROBERT KILVERT - FATHER OF THE DIARIST

by Teresa Williams. (North Wembley).

The Memoirs are published in the Society's publication, 'More Chapters from The Kilvert Saga', and reports of many of the incidents, which he mentions as happening during his childhood and early manhood, can be found in contemporary newspapers. It should be remembered that the Memoirs were not written until the years 1866 - 1879 when Robert Kilvert was Rector of Langley Burrell. The following three selected newspaper extracts will clearly show the accuracy of the Memoirs, despite the long interval of years. (Readers should refer to pages 27/30 inclusive in the Memoirs).

1. FROM - THE WORCESTER HERALD, Saturday, 28th. January, 1809 - "Home News -  
A letter from Bath says, 'The sudden thaw has produced a greater flood than has been experienced here for the last 40 years; the lower streets are filling with torrents of water, and many houses are in the greatest danger, one has already been washed away and seven lives lost; timber, horses, cattle, hayricks, waggons and carts, etc., are all carried away. The Mail and other coaches have been prevented reaching this city from London, Exeter, etc., all is confusion and distress' ".

The next week the WORCESTER HERALD of Saturday, 4th. February 1809 carried another account of the aftermath of the thaw in Bath, saying:- "The flood has been of a greater depth than is known within the memory of man. Eight persons have lost their lives, and some others have been much hurt. The Mails did not reach the City on Wednesday, 25th. January, and the bags had to be conveyed on foot by the guide,



who took a circuitous route. The volunteer coach in attempting to pass through the water, lost two horees, and a chaise in the lower Bristol Road was drifted between the Turnpike and the Angel Inn, and one horse was drowned. The spectators from the South Parade were agonized to behold a cradle floating down the surge and now and then an infant endeavouring to raise itself in it. Fortunately, the child was preserved by some barge men near the Old Bridge, and restored to its distracted mother, who lived in one of the little garden cottages near Dolemead.

On Monday, 30th. January, this City experienced a second calamitous visitation, the hurricane of that day having blown down several stacks of chimnies, and wrenched off the roofs of many houses but we do not hear of any lives being lost in this latest extreme weather".

2. FROM:- THE TIMES, Monday, 20th. December 1813.

"The Bath Herald relates the following melancholy catastrophe:-

'Wednesday, 15th. December 1813 proved one of the most suddenly severe frosts we ever remember; the mercury in Fahrenheit's thermometer having sunk so low as 16 degrees. The Kennet and Avon Canal, near this city, soon became frozen over, and on that day several skaters ventured on the surface of the basin; and we are sorry to state THREE LIVES were unhappily sacrificed to this temerity : - a son of General Sir William Cunningham, a young gentleman who had just finished his education, and was on the point of accepting a desirable situation in the East India Service; a son of Dr. Briggs of Worcester who was on a visit at Sir. William's; and Felix Mogg, an apprentice to Mr. Harrison of Union Passage, and son of Jacob Mogg, Esq., of Wincanton.

The youngest of the three, Master Briggs, fell in first; his companion in endeavouring to rescue him, shared the same fate. Anxious to render assistance to the unfortunate young gentleman, the third youth hastened to the fatal spot; the surface gave way, and he also sank, never again to rise alive' ".

The Morning Post of the same date added the following sentence to the end of the account - "Thus have three families been plunged into the deepest affliction by this deplorable incident".

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3. THE TIMES, Saturday, 19th. May 1817.

AWFUL CALAMITY

The following article is extracted from a Bath paper on 16th. instant.

"Yesterday being Ascension Day, the parishes of St. Peter and Paul, and St. James, perambulated in the forenoon their respective boundaries, agreeably to a custom periodically observed, and wisely established by our ancestors, as a means of preventing disputes and litigation.

In the afternoon the Mayor, attended by some members of the corporation and numerous inhabitants of the City, went on board a vessel at the bottom of South-parade, accompanied by a barge belonging to St. James' parish, and went down the river to the extent of the City boundaries beyond Norfolk Crescent.

It was about a quarter past 7 o'clock when the Mayor and some of his friends re-crossed the ferry in safety and the boat returned for another party; 20 was the prescribed number but before the boatman could push off, several additional persons got on board; and as it was feared, proved too heavy a freightage. When some yards from the shore, and where the river is particularly deep, the boat upset and engulfed the whole party in the water!

The disaster spread like lightening through the City and from every quarter affrighted friends and parents were soon hurrying to the fatal spot. Several they found had saved themselves by swimming, a few by clinging to the upset boat, while some of their unfortunate companions were frantically snatching at their legs; some individuals were rescued from their impending fate apparently lifeless, by the attending bodies, and afterwards restored by the humanity and skill of several medical gentlemen who promptly attended on the occasion; but the following is the mournful list of those who were not extricated until the vital spark was wholly extinct:

Mr. George Hawkins, aged 40, writing-master and accomptant, of Oxford-row:

G. Lockyer, aged 30, stone-mason, Orange Court:

Charles, aged 16, son of Mr. Vincent, one of the City Sergeants at Mace:

Richard Chippett, aged 18, son of a journey-man carpenter, apprenticed to Mr. Watkins, in Cheap-street:

a son, aged about 13, of Mr. Dyer, master of the Princes-head, Bridewell Lane:

a son, aged 13, of Mr. Cuff, keeper of the City Prison. "

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DISCOVERING THERMUTHIS by Sidney Ball (Swindon)

What an interesting Christian Name is Thermuthis! Familiar to readers of Kilvert's Diary, it is scarcely known otherwise. It has even been suggested Thermuthis was used only by Kilvert's Kin. Although this is not so, it is rare to find the name in other families. Among memorials of the Mayo family in Avebury church, it is recorded that Thermuthis Mayo died in 1797.

The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, who lived in the first century AD, tells us that a King of Egypt's daughter, Thermuthis, saved and adopted the infant Moses. She gave Moses his name, and saw him grow to manhood. In his detailed story of Moses, Josephus used the name of the lady Thermuthis seven times.

Francis Kilvert's niece - his sister Emily's daughter - was christened Thermuthis Mary on 25th. June 1871. Our diarist wrote that the baby was "the fourth of the name" (Vol. 1, page 371). Francis must have been referring to the name Thermuthis, but actually the baby was seventh of the name among his kin. So he must have meant that the baby was the fourth Thermuthis in four generations. But Francis was wrong. The baby was the fifth Thermuthis in five generations!

Kilvert had in mind, I think, in ascending order of generations:-

1. The new baby, Thermuthis Wyndowe
2. His sister, Thermuthis Kilvert (Mrs. Smith)
3. His mother, Thermuthis Coleman (Mrs. Kilvert)
4. His grandmother, Thermuthis Ashe (Mrs. Coleman)

If we go back another generation, we have the mother of 4 above - "Madame Ashe". This formidable lady is prominent in the diary, but Kilvert does not tell us her Christian name. It was Thermuthis. Born in 1747, she was Thermuthis Martyn of Kennet until her marriage to Robert Ashe (the "Old Squire" of the diary).

We have now enumerated five of the name Thermuthis among Kilvert's Kin. But I have said that there were seven altogether. Another was, of course, Francis Kilvert's second cousin, Thermuthis Mary Ashe (1856 - 1935). She was fifteen when we first meet her in 1871, but, said Francis "almost a grown-up young lady and looking exceedingly nice ..." (Vol. 1, page 300).

Elsewhere in this Newsletter I have described three hitherto undefined Ashe folk of the diary. Another awaits description. She will fit in here, for she is our other Thermuthis. She has but one entry - Vol. 11, page 398 - where Kilvert's mother told of a vivid dream she had as a girl "about her first cousin Thersie Ashe". This lady was the first child of the Rev. Robert Ashe (1781 - 1855). Born in 1805, she was called Thermuthis Mary - Thermuthis after her grandmother (Madame Ashe) and Mary after her mother, (Mary Watts). Her mother died when Thermuthis Mary was only six. She herself died in 1836, aged 31. It must have been to perpetuate her memory that her brother, Robert Martyn Ashe (Kilvert's "Squire") called his first born daughter Thermuthis Mary. This latter Thermuthis lived to a good age. When her father died in 1885, she became Lady of the Manor of Langley Burrell, and remained so for fifty years.

After the diary period, the name Thermuthis continued in Kilvert's family. His brother Teddy named a daughter Thermuthis. Old Madame Ashe would have been pleased to see her name borne by so many of her descendants!

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