

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.

Chairman: The Rev. D.T.W. Price, M.A., F.R.Hist.S., 65, Bridge Street, Lampeter,
Dyfed. SA48 7AB.

Hon. Treasurer: Harley Dance, 11, Green Lane Crescent, Yarpole, Leominster, Hfds.
Phone 056 885675. HR6 DBQ.

Subscriptions Treasurer: Hugh Dearlove, 1, Monkswell Road, Monmouth, Gwent.

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. HR9 5RP.

February 1987.

Dear Member,

"Ah, what is so rare as a day in June, Then if ever come perfect days",
note the poet. How wrong he was about the weather of 1986! For me the perfect day
was that of our Autumn Walk. Some forty members - including four new ones -
picnicked in glorious sunshine at the Graig (between Llanbedr and Llandeilo Graban)
and then, led by our Hon. Auditor, Mr. Gordon Rogers, made their way to Llewellyn's
Cave. Not all achieved the objective, but all expressed delight with the company,
the weather and the scenery. Our Builth member, Miss Pugh, had brought her Canadian
niece, and I was delighted that the young lady had enjoyed the Diary and wished to
become a member of the Society, our second from the province of Alberta. Nor must
I omit to record, once more, our gratitude to Mr. Rogers!

The Commemoration Service was held at Hay Parish Church the following day,
by kind permission of Canon I.Ll.Davies who conducted the service, attended by over
one hundred members. The readers of the lessons, Mr. P. Dawson and Mr. M. John between
them linked a hundred years of association with the church, since Mr. Dawson's great-
grandfather was Rev. W.L. Bevan (vicar in Kilvert's time) and Mr. John is the present
Treasurer. The preacher was the Ven. O.W. Jones, Archdeacon of Brecon and a Vice-
President of the Society. He began with reference to the connection of Kilvert with
Hay, quoting an article by our Chairman "Kilvert and Breconshire" published in
"Brycheiniog", the Journal of the Brecknock Society Vol. XIX. (A note of this
publication appears elsewhere in this newsletter, at the end of an article contributed
by the Archdeacon). He went on to discuss the connection of Kilvert with the Venables
family, referring to a letter he had discovered in the Llysddinam papers written by
Fanny, Kilvert's sister, to Agnes Minna Venables. The letter had raised some
questions about the identity of the Lady who had caused Kilvert no little distress
(It was published in the June newsletter of 1982). The preacher concluded with some
thoughts on the ways in which Kilvert and his friends had served the church in their
generation, so different from our own.

An excellent tea was provided by the ladies of the parish, friendships and
acquaintances renewed, and our Chairman expressed thanks to all who had made the
occasion so enjoyable.

PROGRAMME FOR 1987.

The A.G.M. and Social Evening will be held on Friday, May 1st. at 7.00 p.m.
in the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace, Hereford (by kind permission of Mrs.
Easthaugh). Our speaker will be Mr. A.L. le Quesne, author of "After Kilvert" and a
leading authority on Kilvert and the Diary. Members are reminded that parking is not
allowed in the grounds of the Palace.

Saturday, May 2nd. Walk, led by Mr. R.I. Morgan. Meet at the Baskerville
Arms, Clyto at 11.30 a.m. Picnic lunch. Be prepared for rough walking. Guided tour
of Glascwm, afterwards a walk in nearby hills.

The rest of the Year's Programme will include a Commemoration Service at
Malmesbury Abbey on July 5th. (by kind permission of Rev. J.C.P. Barton) when the
preacher will be the Right Rev. A. Hall-Matthews, Bishop of Carpentaria. Those who
attended the Centenary weekend at Bredwardine (1979) will doubtless recall him, his
wife and young family being present.

It is hoped that the Autumn Service will be held at Aberedw Church on 20th. September. Further information concerning these events will appear in the next newsletter.

Saturday, September 5th. Excursion to Brislington House, organised by our Subscriptions Treasurer, Mr. Hugh Dearlove, who writes more fully about it elsewhere in this newsletter.

Vice-Presidents - Miss Cicely Cholmeley and Mrs. S. Hooper have been pleased to accept the Committee's invitation to become Vice-Presidents. Both ladies have connections with the Kilvert family, Miss Cholmeley being the great-grand-daughter of Uncle Francis and Mrs. Hooper having a similar descent from the diarist's eldest sister, Thersie.

Publications Manager. Mr. R.I. Morgan has asked to be relieved of this post, which he has admirably carried out for the last 10 years. The Committee therefore appeals for a volunteer to fill the post. It would be desirable for the applicant to reside within travelling distance of Hereford, to be able to attend, as co-opted member, the Committee meetings.

The Journal of Agnes Minna Venables. This interesting discovery is referred to in the article by the Archdeacon of Brecon, mentioned above. It is hoped he will write an article on it in a future newsletter.

Langley Burrell. Our valued members and friends from this village, Mr. and Mrs. J. Payne, write to inform us that a Flower Festival will be held at St. Peter's Church on Saturday and Sunday, June 13th. and 14th. with a preview and short concert on Friday the 12th. On the 14th. the gardens of Langley House are open, under the National Gardens Scheme. Mrs. Payne tells me she still offers Bed and Breakfast - The Old Brewery, Langley Burrell, Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 4LQ. (Phone 0249652694). Mr. Payne's many friends will be saddened to learn that he has been in poor health lately.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

E.J.C. West

Hon. Secretary.

OBITUARY

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

Mr. N.C. Swift (Clearwell, Glos.) Life member since 1969.

Dr. J. Mathers (Hay-on-Wye). Member, with his late wife, since 1968. Reference was made in an earlier newsletter to the enthusiastic support Mrs. Mathers gave to the Society. Dr. Mathers fully shared his wife's enthusiasm.

Canon Bernard Humphreys (Lincoln). One of the few surviving Founder Members, he had, when younger, participated in many Society functions and was the preacher at the Commemoration Service at Bredwardine in 1964. He occasionally exchanged letters and often enclosed a donation. I am pleased to think that our Lincoln member, Mrs. A. Doggett, was present at the funeral service, which, she tells me was very well attended; and she added that he will be much missed in the diocese.

Mr. A.B. Millard (Langley Burrell). A member since 1978.

- - - - -

BOOK REVIEW

"Water Break Its Neck" by Frederick Grice (O.U.P £6. 95)

Our late Deputy President, Mr. Grice, was a noted writer of adventure stories for boys and the recipient of various awards for that branch of literature. "Water Break Its Neck" was his last book and posthumously published.

At the beginning of the tale, thirteen year old Gareth is living on a farm with his widowed great-aunt, and tending the large flock of sheep on the nearby hills. Before her death she makes a will, bequeathing to Gareth everything and cutting out her wastrel nephew Jago. After the funeral Jago pursues the terrified boy in order to

obtain the will and the great-aunt's money. The boy eludes him by descending to the dangerous waterfall that gives the book its title. He then becomes a wanderer, falls in with a gang of tramps and beggars, and eventually, thanks to the help of a country parson, regains his inheritance.

What gives the story its special flavour is the setting, which is obviously the area around Llandeilo Hill. The waterfall is Craig pwlldu ("Grappledee" locally), for the real "Water Break Its Neck" is in Radnor Forest. The old lady's money is hidden in Llewellyn's Cave, the place where the tramps and beggars congregate is Llanbedr church, and the country parson is Rev. John Price, Kilvert's "Solitary". The brief references in the Diary, the memoir by Rev. Edmond-Owen of the Solitary are shaped and expanded to give most vivid descriptions of the scenes in the church - with a vagabond leader as plausible and treacherous as Long John Silver. And yet the tale is told simply and directly. For this reader, the book would seem to be on two levels; a good adventure yarn, but also the author's final homage to one whom he termed "a neglected genius".

"Winter Wheat" by David Lockwood
(a Vice President of the Society)

A collection of new poems, twenty-seven in all, is now published by Gomer Press. The themes are of Pictures, Occurrences, Time, People and Dreams.

Copies can be obtained from: The S.P.C.K. Bookshop, Worcester. The Bookshop, Temple Street, Llandrindod Wells, Powys. LD1 5DL. Siop y Pethe, 24 Ffordd-y-Mor, Aberystwyth. The author, Church Row, Llowes, Hereford. HR3. 5JP.

Price £2. 00. plus 25p for postage and packing.

BOOK WANTED: Has any member a copy of Volume 3 of the Diary which they would be willing to exchange for a 1st. edition of Volume 1? If so, would they please contact Mr. B. Whitrow, 54, Southdean Gardens, London. SW19.

- - - - -
MORE ON REV. AND MRS. VENABLES, AND ON HER JOURNAL
by the Ven. Archdeacon of Brecon.

When I wrote my history on the Venables family and the parish of Newbridge (Brycheiniog Vol. XX) there were some questions which remained unanswered. Some recently discovered documents at Llysdinam supply the answers.

1. Why did Richard Venables, the father of Richard Lister Venables come to Clyro? In short, he exchanged his Yorkshire living with a certain Mr. Drew who was Vicar of Clyro. Richard Venables did not like Yorkshire and had many friends in the Clyro area.
2. How did Richard Lister Venables meet his first wife, Mrs. Adam, the daughter of the Russian General, Alexander Poltaratsky? The answer is rather more complicated. Her father had settled in Russia, becoming the manager of a foundry near St. Petersburg. His youngest daughter married Alexander Polteratsky. They had two sons and then a daughter. The mother died in childbirth and the infant daughter was adopted by her aunt, Lady Haddington, and was brought up as an Englishwoman, being baptized in the C. of E. by the name of Mary Augusta Dalrymple, the name of her aunt by her second marriage. Her first husband died on a voyage to the West Indies. Richard Lister Venables met Mrs. Adam at Newcastle Court, near Presteigne, the home of a certain Mr. Whittaker, a close friend of his father. They were all at a house party at the time. Mrs. Adam was an accomplished horse rider, and an expert linguist, being fluent in French and German. Mary Augusta was a good deal older than her second husband and she died at Clyro in 1865.
3. How did Richard Lister Venables meet Agnes Minna Pearson? In April 1867 he went to stay in Mitcham, Surrey, at the invitation of Mrs. Charles Evan Thomas, formerly Miss Caroline Pearson. Another visitor was Agnes Minna Pearson. They had met once before when Richard Lister Venables had escorted Agnes Minna and her sister to Westminster Abbey for the funeral of the Duke of Wellington in 1852. Within a fortnight he proposed marriage. Agnes Minna did not give an immediate answer, but she accepted him in time to marry on August 1st. 1867.

Being privileged to have the first sight of the recently discovered Journal of Agnes Minna Venables, one naturally looked for references to Kilvert. They were as expected. Newly arrived in Clyro after her marriage to Richard Lister Venables, she noted that "Mr. Kilvert our curate came to dinner". A hasty note on November 17th. 1868, reveals that "Llew Thomases, Kilvert and Monsells 14 at dinner" were present at the vicarage. In August 1869 the number of visitors at Clyro Vicarage were so many that two (Owen and Charlie) were "sent out to sleep at Mrs. Cheloner's under Mr. Kilvert's care".

The Journal confirms what I have written about Richard Lister Venables' diaries, with the brief entry: "Kilvert dined". If they had known the future fame of the curate, they may have written more. But the evidence of kindness of Lister and Agnes Venables to the curate is beyond dispute.

("Bryncheiniog" - referred to above and in the Secretary's letter. Copies of this journal can be obtained from The Museum, Brecon, Powys).

BRISLINGTON HOUSE by Hugh Dearlove (Monmouth)

Late in the 18th. century two doctors in Holland formed the opinion that 'mad' people were in fact mentally sick, and should, therefore, receive medical attention. This idea appealed to, and was taken up by, Dr. Edward Long Fox of Bristol. Brislington House, the first asylum in this country to be specifically built for the treatment of the mentally sick was opened by Dr. Fox in 1815. (Kilvert refers to it in Vol. 2. p.399 and Vol. 3. pp 103-5).

It boasts a chapel and ballroom in addition to its 132 bedrooms, numerous reception rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, etc. In 1947 the widow of the last of a succession of Drs. Fox sold the house and it became a home for nurses. However, it proved to be inconvenient, being far from the main hospitals, so in 1984 it was offered for tender and in no time at all it was opened as a private nursing home.

Because of our intense interest in this house, Mrs. E.L. Baker very kindly gave my brother Guy and me permission to see it while it was being prepared for its new role. Her last words on parting were, "When we are settled, why not bring the whole of the Kilvert Society?".

The Coach Trip - Saturday, September 5th. will give us the first chance to view this great and wonderful house. The coach will leave the Nell Gwynne Theatre, Hereford, at 9. 45 a.m. (There is a good car park adjacent).

Picking-up points - Town Hall, Hereford, approximately 10. 00 a.m.
Ross, "The Price of Wales" approximately 10. 20 a.m.
Monmouth Market Place approximately 10. 50 a.m.

Visit Bristol Cathedral, where Kilvert was ordained. Light lunch and tea will be provided. Inclusive cost £6. 00 per head.

Guided tour of the Cathedral 1. 00 p.m.
Arrive Brislington House 3. 00 p.m.

Members wishing to reach the coach or Brislington House but without transport, please contact me; and members with spare seats in cars who would assist, please let me know. Where possible I will introduce one to another.

Owing to limited catering facilities, lunch is for coach passengers only.

Tea for non coach passengers £1. 20 per head, by prior booking.

Friends are welcome.

Brislington House is on the Bristol-Bath road on the very edge of Bristol.

All bookings, at earliest possible please, to Hugh Dearlove, 1, Monkswell Road, Monmouth, Gwent.

RICHARD WILLIAMS 1824 - 1874 and ESTHER ROGERS 1800 - 1884

Looking back on his return visit of 11th. October 1874, (Vol. 3. p.91), Kilvert refers to the sad death of Richard Williams. This was but one page in the life of an old Clyro family, a study of which can add to our appreciation of the people Kilvert worked with.

Richard's father, John Williams, living at Cwm, Clyro, in Kilvert's time, where he visited him, 3rd. February 1872 (Vol. 2. p.130), and the 10th. March, 1873 (Vol. 2. p.334), was born in 1796 in Eaton Bishop, Herefordshire, his father being a

farm labourer. John himself moved to Clyro, married and had eleven children by his first wife. She died in 1835. In 1841 he married Gwen to look after his children, so Richard was brought up a member of a large family.

In the 1850's John seems to have graduated from farm labourer to gardener at the Vicarage, for it is in this capacity that Kilvert refers to him in his visits. It was probably because of this contact that his eldest son Richard got his post at the Vicarage, the loss of which in August, plus the death of his father in January that year, led to his death age fifty two, in September of 1874.

Richard had, however, married a Mary Rogers from Llowes in 1859, and had four children, all of whom, after starting at the Dame school in the village, went on to Clyro school. John, the eldest, is sent home for "the itch" and Kilvert acts as the medical visitor, 15th. June 1870, (Vol. 1. p.158). John again features when he almost drowns in a pit at the Vicarage, having been sent to collect pears by his father, the Vicarage gardener, 13th. October 1871, (Vol.1.p.244); while his sister Eleanor exasperates Kilvert with her reply on the events of Palm Sunday, "Jesus Christ went up to Heaven on an ass", 8th. March 1872, (Vol.2.p.146). After her husband's death in 1874, Mary first stayed on at Paradise Cottage, starting the youngest of her four children, Emily, at Clyro school, but when Emily died in 1877, Mary packed up, and with her family went off to London, where she ran a public house, the Prince of Wales, Lyham Road, Brixton, S.W.2. for several years, helped by her son John. Now, both Mary and Richard Williams, as well as his father John and his second wife Gwen are buried in Clyro Churchyard, marked by tombstones.

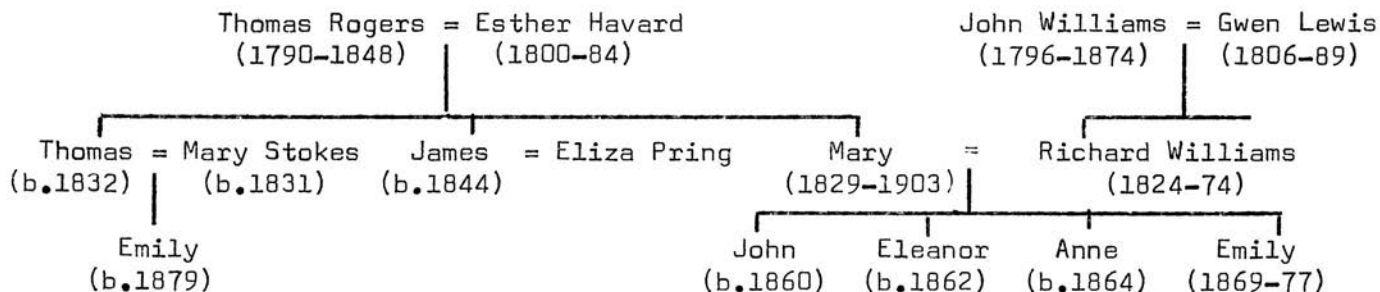
Another side of this family which features in the diaries, is the Rogers. Mary's father, Thomas Rogers, had married an Esther Havard in 1827. Though Mary herself was born at Maesyronen Chapel House in Glasbury, the family was soon settled at Church Row, Llowes, (now the home of the Rev. D. Lockwood, a Vice President of the Kilvert Society). Here they had eight children, three of whom died young. Thomas, the father, died in 1848.

The family enters into the diaries in three ways. First, as already mentioned, Mary the eldest daughter, in 1859 married John Williams and lived at Paradise Cottage in Clyro. Then in the 1860's, her mother Esther moved with her grown up sons into Sacred Cottage, which was near Paradise Cottage. It was here that Kilvert knew them. He records visits to Esther on 7th. October 1870, (Vol.1.p.238) when she told him of her brother, the dragoon, killed at Waterloo, and on the 12th. March 1872, (Vol.2. p.148) when she described Tom Williams, Vicar of Llowes, "as mild as a dove, and as humble as the brave". Coming as she did from Llowes, she was well qualified to know him! Her youngest son James, married the Vicarage cook, (Mrs. Pring), as recorded on the 6th. August 1873. She was a most reluctant bride, and the mother-in-law she did not invite to the wedding was, of course, Esther Rogers! After the days of the diary, there was to be another Vicarage wedding, when Esther's eldest son, Thomas, married a Mary Stokes, a domestic servant from the Vicarage in 1877. They were to complete the circle, when their only daughter, born in 1879, was named Emily, eighteen months after Mary Williams' (Mary Stokes' sister-in-law) youngest child Emily, died. Now Esther lies with her husband Thomas, in Llowes churchyard, when Tom Williams buried her in 1884, and we have another tombstone to mark her grave in the group laid flat near the church door.

I expect some who read this will know the details quoted here, but to me the fascination lies in discovering how interwoven a country village was then, (as indeed, it still is today) and how Kilvert on his round of visits, could call on the same family many times at different addresses and under different names.

A much fuller study of the two families has been deposited with the papers of the Kilvert Society.

THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE WILLIAMS - ROGERS CONNECTION



(Those present at the wonderful Commemoration Service at Llowes will recall Rev. Reed as the vicar - and the instigator of that unforgettable tea at Gogia. He has been appointed to Clyro, now having three parishes to minister to. He has asked that the following paragraph be inserted in the newsletter.

"The Vicar of the Parish Church, Clyro, is Rev. G.M. Reed, St. Peter's Vicarage, Glasbury (Tel: Glasbury 657). He is always willing to help parties of any size who wish to visit Clyro in Kilvert's footsteps. So if you are planning such a visit, please do contact him".

A message I am sure all members will much appreciate!

E.J.C.W.)

A Letter from ASHBROOK HOUSE, whose new Owners have become Members of the Society

November 26th, 1986.

Dear Mr. West,

It has occurred to us that any minute now you will be producing the February Newsletter and we thought that members might like to know what is happening at Ashbrook House.

We are in the process of restoring the interior and one of the ideas is to create something of the atmosphere of the period around 1865/72 in the two rooms which Kilvert is said to have used.

We also intend to convert the interior in such a way that we will be able to provide occasional accommodation and we shall be running painting courses periodically throughout the year with the theme of Kilvert Country.

Somebody mentioned the collection of Kilvert memorabilia now housed in Hay Library and talked of the possibility of putting some of the collection into Ashbrook House. Perhaps you would like to offer your views on the matter.

Obviously we are still feeling our way with regard to the exact form the finished enterprise will take but we would like to think that members know of our plans and we hope that they will be able to enjoy the results during 1987 and in the future.

We had a very warm letter from Mr. Dearlove and we have been very grateful to Mr. Rogers for his introduction to a solicitor in Hay. All in all we are really excited by the venture.

We still haven't managed to see the Laurence Le Quesne book, so if you can spare your copy sometime, we would very much like to see it.

What a wonderful day we had for the walk in September. We did tell Mr. Rogers now much we enjoyed it.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Organ.

THE REV. W.L. BEVAN AND HIS WRITING DESK by the Hon. Secretary.

A few years ago I received a letter from Miss Carey of Malvern who wanted to be put in touch with descendants of the Rev. W.L. Bevan (Archdeacon of Brecon) of Hay Castle. I gave her names and addresses of his great-grand-daughters, the Misses Mumford of Sugwas Court, Nr. Hereford, who are members of the Kilvert Society. Later Miss M.R. Mumford informed me that Miss Carey had presented to her and her sister a portable writing desk which had been a gift from the people of Hay to the Rev. W.L. Bevan to mark his 50 years of the Parish. Inside the desk was a memoir of the Rev. gentleman written shortly after his death in 1908 and also a picture post card of Llandrindod Wells.

It is thought that the desk was given by Fanny Bevan (later Mrs. Lewis Davies of Llandrindod Wells) to a Mrs. Davies the Mother of Miss Jean Davies who later left the desk to Miss Carey.

The memoir contains a chapter of biography together with samples of his sermons. He was a product of Dr. Thomas Arnold's regime at Rugby, and after graduating at Hertford College Oxford he became a curate in the East End of London. Mr. Grice's "Who's Who in Kilvert" records the manner of his removal to Hay and also the various

promotions gained during his long life. But the interesting fact is that he declined two deaneries and remained at Hay for the 56 years of his service to the church. "His literary life" records the memoir, "was spent in works of a heavy kind and in pamphleteering in defence of the Church in Wales". The works "of a heavy kind" included translations from the French, German and Dutch, a series of textbooks, a history of St. Davids and a scholarly study of the famous mediaeval Mappa Mundi in Hereford Cathedral.

The pamphleteering involved correspondence with Gladstone. With the rapid growth of Nonconformism in Wales during the latter half of the century, plus agricultural depression, the payment of tithes to what was regarded as the alien church of Canterbury became a major source of discontent. Protests rose to riots in some parts of Wales, and the Welsh Liberal M.P's took up the demand for disestablishment. Gladstone was leader of the Liberal party and eventually the cause for disestablishment featured high on the party's programme. It was then that Rev. Bevan took up the cudgels, to such effect that the Archbishop, Benson, of Canterbury, recorded "So long as there is a Bevan in Wales to defend the Church in Wales, then there is no need for me to be there". But five years after Rev. Bevan's death, the Measure for Disestablishment was passed, though not implemented until after the end of the War (1918). The newly established Church of Wales then divided the heavily populated diocese of Llandaff to create the See of Monmouth, and in 1923 did the same with the vast diocese of St. Davids, creating out of it the See of Swansea and Brecon; the first bishop being the then vicar of Brecon, Edward Bevan ("Teddy" in the Diary) the second son of the Rev. W.L. Bevan and his wife Louisa (nee Dew of Whitney).

But what of Rev. W.L. Bevan's ministry to his parish? The memoir records that although the church had recently been restored he carried out further improvements and presented an organ. He provided the money for a Parish Hall and wrote weekly articles for the "Western Mail", which, says the memoir, were eagerly read by the townsfolk of Hay. He was deeply involved in the Temperance cause (Hay possessed a large number of public houses for its size) and also in education. Mr. Fair's admirable "The History of the Hay" gives an account of the Hay National School in 1848 "The boys' school is among the best I have seen in Wales, and is certainly the most advanced and important of those belonging to the National Society. It owes this entirely to the efforts of its vicar, Rev. Wm. Bevan. He was of the opinion that education should be so designed as to instil in the young a love of reading which would keep them at their firesides in the evening rather than at the inn".

With the backing of Mr. Venables, he also ensured that the pauper children from the Poor Law Institution had exactly the same education as the more fortunate children, "a singularly liberal and generous view for those times" comments Mr. Fair. Later he founded an infants' school.

In 1877 a "British" school was started in the town. The British School movement in England and Wales was started to provide schools in which the religious instruction was undenominational, not tied to the tenets of the Anglican church as was the National School, over which the vicar kept a close supervision. It might be thought that rivalry would be aroused, but the vicar gave the new school his support.

What might be termed as Adult education also received his enthusiasm. He resurrected the defunct Mechanics' Institute, renaming it the "Hay Literary Institution". Kilvert records (5 Dec. 1871) a lecture by George Venables to the Institution, which lasted 2½ hours and aroused his admiration at its skill. Not so Dr. Clouston who had sat by the stove and got roasted! A similar length of time, records Mr. Fair, was taken by the Rev. R.L. Venables lecturing on "The Last Days of the Emperor Napoleon".

It would seem only natural that on the occasion of Rev. Bevan's 50 years as vicar of Hay (1895) the people of Hay would wish to acknowledge his care for their pastoral and educational well-being, as the writing desk would indicate ... "Presented to the Venerable Archdeacon Bevan by the Parishioners of Hay on the completion of his 50 years Ministry among them 1845-1895". Miss M.R. Mumford has kindly allowed me to see the desk. It is made of oak, with brass hinges throughout. The length is 17½" the height 12½" and the lid is 11" wide. The desk is in excellent condition, an admirable piece of Victorian craftsmanship and a fitting tribute to an admirable cleric.

- - - - -

MORE NEW ZEALAND LINKS by Miss L. Hancock (Dunedin N.Z.)

The Diary refers on November 6th, 1871 to "my old St. Leonard's pupil", de Bohun Devereux - a reference which incidentally established that Kilvert had done a brief spell of schoolmastering. He emigrated to New Zealand and has descendants living in the South Island.

Another emigrant was Algy Bates, son of the Bredwardine schoolmaster. He appears as a typical schoolboy in the Diary, on the one hand playing the organ and singing in company with Miss Newton and Mrs. W. Newton, and on the other the probable agent of the "swan shot" through the window of The Cottage. I have obtained a copy of his death certificate, which indicates that he was 13 years old when Kilvert knew him, that he emigrated to New Zealand in 1891 with his wife and 4 children, and that he was a railway employee. He died of pneumonia in 1923, aged 65, at Wellington.

- - - - -
THE FAMILY OF CHARLES BRADLEY by Rev. Dr. J.N. Rowe, Bradford.

I was interested to read Mr. Friar's article on the Rev. Charles Bradley of Glasbury in the last Newsletter, and have made further investigations into the careers of some of his sons.

It was stated in the article that when Charles Bradley installed Samuel Alford at Glasbury in 1848, it could be assumed that all or most of his copious offspring had already been born. In fact, Andrew Cecil Bradley was born in 1851, and he would no doubt be the one referred to as still being at Cheltenham College in 1869, playing cricket against Marlborough College, from which the Headmaster, one of his elder half-brothers was just retiring. The half-brother was George Granville Bradley who became Head of University College Oxford in 1870, and eleven years later Dean of Westminster. It was Andrew Cecil who later became Professor of Poetry at Oxford.

The renowned writer on philosophy was Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924), who is renowned amongst other things for his famous quip that "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct". This sentence is in the preface to his best known work "Appearance and Reality".

Incidentally, the Rev. Tom Williams' comment that "the Vicarage at Glasbury was inadequate in size for the reception of the incumbent and his family" seems irrelevant seeing that the incumbent did not live there, but put a curate-in-charge in the Vicarage.

The Rev. Charles Bradley, shortly after becoming Vicar of Glasbury, took up residence in the Tudor Manor House of Dderw, which is just outside the parish, in that of Llyswen.

- - - - -
A TRIP TO THE KILVERT COUNTRY by W.K. Griffiths, Wotton-under-Edge.

Sunday, Nov. 2nd, 1986. Philip drove up from Thornbury, and we set off at 8.15 a.m. A beautiful morning with a clear blue sky, temperature a little crisp and quite marvellous light, the landscape superb all the way, with the trees still holding their autumn colours. On the way to Bredwardine, Philip spent much of the time reading extracts from the Diary, particularly the visit to the Solitary, a walk we hoped to do later in the day.

Stopped at Bredwardine Bridge where Philip took a photograph looking towards the Vicarage and said he far preferred the architecture of Old Court to that of the Vicarage, which he described as "ugly Victorian". We discussed the kitchen garden, and decided that the vicarage folk must have crossed to it by boat. At the church the organist was practising probably for a service later in the day. Read the memorial tablets, being particularly struck by the wording on the Jarvis Charity one, and noticed the 'herring-bone' work at the base of the nave wall.

Then round the churchyards, visiting the graves of Kilvert, his wife and little Davie, and reading relevant entries from the Diary, the most poignant being the Christmas Day burial of little Davie. Looked at the interesting grave of the General, with his hat and sword embossed above him. We wondered at the fact that Mrs. Kilvert's body was brought all the way from Oxfordshire and buried in a distant corner of the churchyard, far from her husband and farther still from her own folk. And in a village which she had inhabited only very briefly!

At the crossroads I jotted down the names of the men of Bredwardine who had fallen in the First World War - the number was surprising for such a small community. I

intend to look up the population to see what percentage was lost, and to check the names against the Index to the Diary. Kilvert must surely have known some of the families; probably most of the names were of men born after 1879.

Past the Old Weston and Cusop to the bridge at Hay where we had our elevenses, the sky still gloriously blue. On to Clyro where we read the Easter Eve Idyll entry from the Diary before getting out to view the churchyard and church. Found the headstones of the Gore family - what a shame much of the lettering has become indecipherable! Wondered whether anybody had copied the inscriptions of the Clyro gravestones. A service was in progress, so I took down the names of the men who had fallen in the Great War, noting how many fewer than at Bredwardine. Was it because of a smaller population or fewer men enlisting? Then past the cottage to Ashbrook and "The Baskerville Arms". Imagined Kilvert, with the window open, listening to the noisy mirth from the hostelry opposite. Noticed a second tablet at Ashbrook, stating Kilvert had lived there. I wondered why the need for two.

On to Painscastle pointing out the Maesllwch Arms, the Baptist and Congregational chapels and the old village school, and then on to Llanbedr church. Parked the car, entered the building and read Mr. Ralph-Bowman's interesting collection of information regarding both the locality and Kilvert. We thought a service was needed, so took it in turns to read from the Bible and sing a hymn each. Read the inscription on the Solitary's grave and was interested to see he hailed from my home county of Carmarthen. Shall have to write to the present occupants of Llwynmendy Farm, Llandilo - wonder if they've heard of Rev. John Price! It was so warm on the south side of the church that we decided to eat our picnic lunch sitting on one of the horizontal slabs. The sun warm on our faces, views in all directions spectacular! The peace of the countryside is something to be cherished! Apart from birdsong the only sound came from a farm where a motor cyclist revved up his engine now and again. It didn't disturb the tranquillity, if anything it heightened it! I do love this spot, it's one of my very favourite Kilvert locations! I recalled I had lunched at the same spot some 5 years ago with our Society secretary.

Returned to the car refreshed in mind, body and soul, we proceeded north and got out at the T-junction between Pen-bedw and Penlan. Two o'clock, a perfect day for a walk, we donned our walking gear - rather, Philip his boots and I my "wellies". Philip really looked the part with his fell-walking breeches and bright red woolly stockings. (Kilvert would have noted that!) Armed with Mrs. Morgan's "24 Walks" and an O.S. map, we strode up towards Pen-bedw, then through the farmyard on towards Llanbedr Hill. Two men repairing fences in a field appeared to take no notice of us. Came to what seemed to be the site of the Solitary's first home in the area, Pen-y-cwm. Picked up a roofing slate as a reminder of the walk. There appeared to be an abandoned quarry behind the site, possibly the source of stone for local building. Carried on along the fence which more or less followed the contours of the hill. Saw a dead fox - had it been shot, died from injuries or just old age? Watched a buzzard with its majestic flight. It didn't seem long before we reached the steep downward slope to the "sunny green little cwm" which had contained Cwm Ceilo, the home of the Solitary. There were the raised platform, the little brook running alongside and the outline of the garden behind, and a herd of Charollais bullocks too! Our thoughts were of the Solitary's courage in living so remotely and simply far from civilisation.

Turning south and following the brook, we came to a sheep dip. I took a photo of Philip standing in it - he's the son of a Devon farmer! We tried now to find the site of Pencommon (another of the Solitary's "homes"). The map suggested that we turned aside from the brook. We did so, and to our astonishment came across a low board bearing the words "Solitary's Cabin". It was some 100 yards or so away from where Mr. West and I had thought to be the site. Here there was again the raised platform, also stinging nettles, a sure sign of previous habitation. But this didn't fit in with the site mentioned by Mrs. Morgan. Yet the first site had the features Kilvert mentions, and this second site was some distance from the brook. A mystery here! Failed to find Pencommon, forgetting to look for the tall tree Mrs. Morgan mentions, so proceeded back towards Pen-bedw. Saw farm buildings marked "Fron" on the map, and Philip pointed out how the track had been built up at the side of the building, allowing hay to be taken straight into the hayloft. The 2 men seen repairing fences were still busy and again appeared oblivious of us. It had taken us just under 2 hours to complete the most enjoyable and exhilarating walk.

About an hour of daylight was left to us. Bettws Chapel was the next stop. Again a little service, I playing a couple hymns on the harmonium. Noticed the Bible and Prayer Book given by Rev. R.L. Venables, which Kilvert must have used. On to Whitty's Mill, where we read Mr. le Quesne's account of his visit in 1970 - just picked out in the fading light the remains of the fireplace where Kilvert sat 116 years ago. A

call at Bredwardine churchyard to look for Philip's sunglasses left on a tomb when he had taken a photo that morning - but to no avail. Then the journey back to Wotton-under-Edge, a quick goodbye to Philip, as he had to get ready for a Geography field-week in Snowdonia, leaving early next morning. What a wonderful day we had had, another day to cherish in the Kilvert Country! I can't wait for the next time!

(Some 6 weeks after sending the above article, Mr. Griffiths wrote to tell me that en route from Carmarthen to Gloucestershire he had called at Brecon and inspected the O.S.1902 map of Radnorshire. Cwm Ceilo is clearly indicated at the second site. Some investigations are necessary!).

THE OLD SOLDIER by J. Hodkin, Cumbria.

If a poll were to be taken among Kilvert lovers as to the most attractive character in the diaries the Old Soldier, John Morgan, would surely come near or at the top of most lists.

His serenity, fortitude, piety and cheerfulness emerge most strongly in the many entries devoted to him, and the words from Wordsworth's poem "The Happy Warrior" are appropriate:-

"Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn".

The Peninsular War was the period of his military service he recalls most often, hardly surprising because after the Napoleonic wars, that is after 1815, Britain was not engaged in any major military activity until the Crimean War of the 1850's, by which time the Old Soldier would have been far too old to be involved. We do not know from the diaries how long he served in the army or what rank he attained, but the recollections of the Peninsular War are fascinating and valuable source material for any military historian writing of the period.

Morgan makes his first appearance in Kilvert in the entry for Tuesday, February 15th. 1870, when Kilvert writes that he called on the Lewises at the Bronith, Clyro, and the "old Peninsular veteran".

On Wednesday, March 23rd. Kilvert looked in on Morgan and stayed there reading and chatting to him for an hour-and-a-half. "He told me of a cottage called 'Hell Hole' that used to stand in the Cwm near Sunny Bank".

Morgan told Kilvert that when the English army was in Spain at Correa, every night soon after sunset he used to see the wolves come down to drink at the river. "Then they would walk up the hill again into the coverts and vineyards, sometimes there were four or five of them at once. They were like mastiffs and as big. The soldiers used to scare them by snapping the locks of their flint muskets and making a flash in the pan".

Morgan next appears in the diary on Saturday, April 9th. when Kilvert found him and Mary his wife "cosily at tea". "And after the veteran had done and pocketed his clasp knife he covered his face with his hand and whispered his long grace audibly".

Another reminiscence of the Peninsular War then followed, a rather grisly story of a soldier being killed, followed by Morgan recalling a Lieutenant Bowen, an Irishman, who was very vicious to his men and much hated. "Just before the battle of the Pyrenees (which John Morgan called the Battle of the Pioneers) this Lieutenant Bowen became very mild and humble to the men fearing he should be shot on purpose by his own soldiers in the battle from revenge. He was not shot".

The following Thursday, "Maunday Thursday", Kilvert went to the Bronith to administer the Sacrament to Morgan on a beautiful morning. "I found the old veteran sunning himself in the garden sitting upon some stones. He crawled in by dint of crutches very slowly and favouring the weak leg a good deal. The house was very still and quiet and the sunshine came in at the open door. The old soldier was very quiet, earnest and thankful".

On Tuesday, April 26th. Kilvert went to see Morgan and found him tottering about his garden with crutches, gathering stones off the beds and hoeing the earth between the potato rows. "I took the hoe from the old soldier and hoed three rows for him, finishing the patch. Then we went indoors and sat down by the fire. It was quite warm working".

On Friday, June 3rd. Kilvert read and talked to Morgan in the latter's garden.

On Thursday, June 16th. the old soldier showed Kilvert and his brother Perch his Peninsular medal with the Vittoria (June 1813) Pyrenees and Toulouse clasps. "After some talk about the army and the Peninsular we left".

Morgan next appears on Monday, August 15th. (Napoleon Fete Day) when Kilvert asked him which side he took, as an old enemy of the French, the French or Prussian. The old soldier replied that he knew nothing of the Germans, the French were more natural to him and he wished them well.

They were very kind to him, he said, when he was quartered in the Allied army at a small village near Arras. "He helped them to dig their fields, garden, cut wood or do anything that was wanted. In return they rewarded him by giving him their nice white bread, while the dark hard rations went to the pigs".

"Morgan said there was often a good and friendly feeling between English and French soldiers when they were in the field. He had often been on picquet duty less than 50 yards from the French sentries. He would call out 'Bon soir'. The Frenchmen would sing out in return 'Will you boire?'. Then they would lay down their arms, meet in the middle space and drink together. Morgan liked drinking with the French sentries because they mostly had something hot. He believes and believed then that if they had been caught fraternizing he would have been shot or hung".

This camaraderie between opposing forces reminds one forcibly of that which prevailed between British and German forces in the first world war from time to time.

On Wednesday, September 21st. Kilvert found the old soldier with his wife digging and gathering red potatoes. The potatoes turned up very large and sound - "no disease, and no second growth, an unusual thing this year".

Kilvert spoke with the old soldier while his wife went on picking up the potatoes, about the war and loss of the Captain. (Kilvert records this latter event on September 10th. saying that it went down with 500 men.) Kilvert, after digging up the half row of potatoes left unfinished, went indoors and read to the old man the story of Philip and the eunuch.

On Saturday, October 15th. Clyro Feast Eve, Kilvert found Morgan sitting by his black fireplace and the door open, but soon a spark of fire showed and the flame leapt up and they soon had a glowing fire.

Once again Morgan spoke of the wolves in Spain, how they were very large and fierce, much larger than any dog he had seen. "We frightened them by making a flash of powder in the pan of our muskets. When the wolves saw it they went away. They did not like to see that". Kilvert recorded: "It is nothing to write, but the old man said it so quaintly as if the wolves disapproved of the proceeding and did not wish to countenance it, so they walked away".

On Tuesday, November 8th. Kilvert was told by Morgan and his wife that he had had an epileptic fit on Sunday night. "He said rather mournfully and with evident disappointment in his voice that he had hoped he was not going to have any more fits as they had not troubled him for a whole year, and now they were come on again".

Morgan was alone when he had the fit and happily fell backwards, chair and all, and his wife found him on his back with his feet on the rung of the chair, still in his seat as it were, and with a broken head. "If he had fallen forward as he might easily have done he would probably have fallen into the fire".

The first mention of Morgan in 1871 comes on Thursday, March 2nd. or March Morrow as it is so quaintly put in the diary. "I went up the lane to see the old soldier and read him from the Times a notice of Lord Palmerston's tours in France in 1814 and 1818 mentioning the occupation of Paris by the Allies, and giving some anecdotes of the Duke and his opinion of the British soldiers, especially of the Peninsular regiments".

The Duke's kind words pleased the old veteran, said Kilvert as he remembered the time so well. He had seen them all in their pride, Emperors, King, Duke. Then Kilvert in the fast-fading light read to him Matthew ix, and after some talk Morgan asked to receive the sacrament.

On Wednesday, April 19th. Mr. Venables heard from Chelsea hospital that the authorities had granted a pension of ninepence a day to Morgan with arrears from February. "Mr. V. went to the old man's house to announce the good news".

On May 18th. Holy Thursday, Kilvert found Morgan hoeing potatoes. He was

expecting the payment of the first quarter's pension in the following week, "and rejoicing with honest pride and satisfaction that now he should be able to relieve the parish of the heavy burden he had been to it since his accident".

On Wednesday, June 21st. the longest day and one of the darkest, dreariest, wettest and coldest Junes Kilvert could remember, he saw Morgan thinning his onions and giving the thinnings to the keeper who lived just below.

On Thursday, July 27th. Kilvert took the old soldier the first instalment of his pension, £8. 0s. 4d. for half a year.

"Mr. Venables has got the pension for him at last after a long correspondence with the War Office. The old soldier told me some of his reminiscences.

"In the Battle of Vittoria as they were rushing into action his front rank man, a big burly fellow, was swearing that 'There wasn't a bloody Frenchman who had seen the bullet yet which should strike him'. A few minutes after he was shot dead. After the battle when old Morgan was shaking out his blanket to wrap himself up at night in the bivouac he shook three or four bullets out of it, and one ball had gone through his cap, so close, as almost to graze his head".

On Monday, "October Morrow", Kilvert went to see Morgan who amused Kilvert by repeating his wife's criticisms on the harvest thanksgiving service. "She said there were two maids who had 'alarmingly strong voices' and who sang 'alarmingly strong'. And she considered that Mr. Bevan 'finished up his sermon very genteel'."

On Friday, October 13th. we learn that Morgan had a daughter, a Mrs. Jones, who had recently been tossed by a heifer. Kilvert went to inquire after her.

On Wednesday, November 1st. Morgan sent Kilvert by his wife a basket of Quince apples, the only ones that grew on his tree this year.

On Thursday, November Morrow, Kilvert found Morgan again at work on his garden, covering up his potato grave with dried fern and potato haulms and setting a gin for a rat, which had found out the store and burrowed into it.

His wife had just come back from Hay where she had been marketing for Mrs. Dyke and butter she said was 1d. a pound cheaper - 15d. a pound.

"We were sitting cosily by the fire. Presently Mary got up and went down to Cabalva to settle with Mrs. Dyke market accounts. The old soldier asked me to pray. So we knelt together in the dusk and when I had finished praying he whispered aloud, 'O Lord, please to hear us this night'."

On Friday, December 15th. Kilvert called at Morgan's with a screw of "rag" tobacco and Morell's ticket for some Christmas beef.

The first mention of Morgan in 1872 comes on Monday, January 15th. when once again Kilvert finds him working in his garden. There follows a passage when they spoke of Maria Williams. "I said I thought the tree had better lie where it falls. 'Ah', said the old soldier, 'I've heard many old people talk about that. When death do call upon we it don't matter what becomes of our bodies'."

Also in the entry for January 15th. 1872, Morgan says that he first saw the moon that year, it was a very keen one. "Old fashioned folk used to take great notice of the first moon of the New Year", writes Kilvert.

The next entry referring to Morgan is on Wednesday, January 24th. when it is recorded that he had another epileptic fit the previous Sunday.

On Wednesday, May 8th. Kilvert read to Morgan the remainder "of that most touching story of Max Kromer and the Siege of Strasbourg".

By the time Kilvert had closed the book he was crying. "I thought", said the old soldier tenderly, "by the sound of your voice that something was pressing upon your mind".

There is no further record of Kilvert seeing Morgan again that year, and of course he moved to Langley Burrell in September. The only mention of him for 1873 comes on Saturday, March 15th. when he briefly records that he spent a quarter of an hour with Morgan and his wife.

The next visit to Morgan is in volume three, the entry for Wednesday, 16th. September, 1874.

The second last mention of Morgan is on Monday, May Day, 1876, when he found Morgan sitting in his chair, "nearly 90 years old" but not looking a day older than

when he saw him last. His stalwart wife, Mary, stood by him.

"The veteran was delighted to see his old friend again. 'I have clean lost my shepherd', he said".

Speaking of Kilvert's father taking the whole duty at Langley during his absence Morgan said: "You have left him a heavy legacy. 'I do try to oblige the Lord all as I can', he said with a touching earnestness and humility".

In the final entry two years later, Wednesday, September 11th. Morgan is again working on his potatoes, and we learn the staggering fact that he was 97, and he adds "The Lord has behaved very honourable to me".

The chances are that he had had his birthday that year, which would mean that he was born in 1781, and was in his late eighties when Kilvert first mentions him.

Therefore, at the time of the battle of Vittoria Morgan was either 31 or 32.

We learn from "Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary" that he served in the Dorset Regiment (39th Foot), but, as I said earlier, there are great gaps in our knowledge of him.

Kilvert, however, with his inimitable artistry draws a wonderful portrait of the old man, and what is so fascinating is that at the same time we learn a lot about Kilvert himself. What an assiduous visitor he was, what an attentive listener and how he used to remember what he was told!

The arts of listening and remembering are much in decline these days, as people are so drugged by TV and videos, and I fear that many clergy do not visit anything like as much as Kilvert did. No doubt the amalgamation of country parishes, and the increase of paperwork means that they have not got so much time for it as they used to.

There is more to it than that though. Reading the accounts of Kilvert's visits to John Morgan is a sad reminder that we have too little time just to listen to each other.

Postscript - In sending this article to me, Mr. Hodkin wondered whether the Old Soldier reached his century. I consulted Rev. M. Reed on this point and he very kindly wrote as follows:-

"The question gives rise to an interesting aside on his actual age. The Burial Register records "John Morgan, Waterloo Medal, aged 96, 25th. Sept. 1879". There is, however, a well discerned question mark by the age. If he was born in 1782 he would have been 33 yrs. old at Waterloo.

In 1876 (May Day) Kilvert records that he thought the Old Soldier was 90. This ties in with the census records for 1861 and 1871, and makes him 28 yrs. old at Waterloo. However, those for 1841 and 1851 give his date of birth as 1793, in which case he would have been only 22 yrs. old at Waterloo. I wonder whether we have a combination of uncertainty in his mind of his actual age together with a false age to enlist in the army; and also the prestige which a great age carries.

Unfortunately it is not possible to check any reference to his Baptism. For a start, the surname is by no means uncommon and there are conflicting references to his place of birth - variously Clyro and Michaelchurch (Herefordshire). Whether he died in his 90's or only in his 80's, I think the Old Soldier has a twinkle in his eye at our confusion!

It will be noticed that he died 2 days after Kilvert".

- - - - -

IS YOUR SUBSCRIPTION (£3) DUE ?

MR. WYNFORD VAUGHAN-THOMAS

Just as the material for this newsletter was "going to press", the death of our President was announced. He became our President following the death of Dr. William Plomer in 1973. He was present at the Llanigon service of that year, and performed the unveiling of the plaque at Ashbrook House following that service. Older members will recall with pleasure his leading a party around Gower, and a memorable talk on Broadcasting at an A.G.M. at the St. John's Ambulance Headquarters, Hereford. In his early years as President he frequently read a Lesson at Commemoration Services, but with his retirement to the west coast of Pembrokeshire and declining health, his appearances became fewer and fewer. Yet his love of Kilvert remained undiminished, as revealed in his radio talks and writings.

His book "Wales" has a chapter on the Kilvert Country, and its opening paragraphs tell how, as a B.B.C. reporter on the Partition of India, amid the communal massacres "despair and death were all around me. I came back to the hotel in Lahore, and on a table in the hall, among a pile of books left by an official who had flown home, I came across a small, blue-covered one, 'Kilvert's Diary' ... I took it to bed with me, started to read it. Suddenly I was carried away to another world ... The diarist had a brilliant pen, a novelist's gift of creating characters. I carried the book with me for the rest of my Indian journey, and it kept me sane amid the madness".

- - - - -