

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:

The Lady Delia Venables-Llewelyn

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 056-885 675. HR6 OBQ.

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

Publications Manager: C.J. Marshall, 169, Holly Walk, Leamington Spa, Warwicks.
Phone 0926 20437.

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.

Dear Member,

MAY 1990.

I have to report a very enjoyable A.G.M. attended by about 100 members. Apologies were received from Mr. & Mrs. F.W. Allen (Llandrindod), Mr. & Mrs. S. Ball (Swindon), Mrs. Barker (Dorset), Mr. & Mrs. J.R. Comyn (London), Mr. Guy Dearlove (Monmouth), Mr. & Mrs. J. Friar (Gloucestershire), Mr. H. Gregg (London), Mr. & Mrs. D. Howell (St. Albans), Canon S.G. Luff (Llandovery), Miss P. Leckhurst (London), Mr. E. Newell (Middlesex), Mr. W. Palmer (Kent), Mr. & Mrs. B. Price (Hereford), Rev. & Mrs. B. Richardson (Malvern), Mrs. J. Rogers (Yorks), Rev. & Mrs. G. Rooke (Hereford), Rev. J. Venns (Surrey), Mrs. N. Turner (Dyfed), Mrs. T. Williams (London).

Having welcomed the members and reviewed the year's events, the Chairman drew attention to the 1990 programme, and asked members to stand in memory of Mr. Tom Lloyd (Committee Member) and others who had died during the year. There followed the ratification of the Constitution which our Chairman had drawn up, and election of officers. Mr. Godfrey Davies was unanimously welcomed to the rank of an honorary Vice-President. He had held the post of Archivist for many years, and was warmly thanked. He would hand over the post to Rev. B. Price. The remainder of officers was re-elected, and the two nominations submitted prior to the meeting, Mrs. M. Stewart and Rev. D. Copeland, would be co-opted onto the Committee.

The Hon. Treasurer presented the financial statement for the year; the situation was healthy, he paid tribute to the Hon. Auditor, and displayed the Visitors' Book that was to be given to Monnington-on-Wye Church, a church with many Kilvert associations, but sadly too small to be used for a service. He and the Hon. Auditor, Mr. G. Rogers were warmly thanked for their work.

Our Senior Vice-President, Rev. E.F. Jelfs, showed his beautifully bound volumes of the Plomer selections. He explained the various skills which had gone to the making, and members were able to examine the excellent workmanship.

To conclude the business of the evening, Mr. Hugh Dearlove presented a "bottle" to the Chairman to commemorate his 21 years in the Society.

Refreshments, served by Ascari as has become the tradition, were excellent and enjoyed by all. Mr. Marshall (Publications Manager) and Mrs. Marshall did a brisk trade, as did our Subscriptions Treasurer.

Film, compiled by Mr. Godfrey Davies, was then shown by Mr. Godfrey Davies and his son Mr. Wreford Davies. Largely devoted to the commemoration services in the early years of the Society, the film was interesting for its glimpses of Dean Burrows and Mr. Sid Wright (the begetters of the Society), Mr. Oswin Prosser (Hon. Sec. for 25 years) as well as the fashions of the times. We are very grateful to the 2 gentlemen.

Hitherto the Saturday programme had been a Walk. This year the morning was devoted to 3 lectures. First, Mrs. Maber (Angela Tregoning of "The Cornish Holiday") spoke on Plomer's editing of the notebooks. There were three stages involved - the collection of passages, the transcriptions by typists and the editing of the transcripts. These could lead to various misreadings, some indeed minor, but others to alter the sense. Many examples were given. After coffee, Dr. Maber spoke on the evaluation of the text. There were various stages, starting with notes in his pocket book, followed by a rough draft, then the fair copy into the notebook, and sometimes filling spaces (e.g. names of persons and buildings) correcting, revising. Yet the whole effect was one of spontaneity. Again, many instances were offered. It was sincerely hoped that the transcripts of both Dr. and Mrs. Maber's lectures would be published in a booklet.

Rev. D. Lockwood then spoke of his forthcoming "Introduction to Kilvert". The

brief was a book intended to appeal to the general reader, and was the first in a series called "Borderline" by the publishers, Serer of Bridgend. Other titles would include Samuel Sebastian Wesley and Mary Webb. Kilvert was placed in the Victorian scene, against the background of the intense activities of the Church and Darwinism. It seemed to Mr. Lockwood that the influence of his uncle Francis at the Claverdon Lodge School was of supreme importance. The book would have 160 pages, and among the photographs would be the "terrifying" one of Uncle Francis's wife and an appealing one of Thersie Kilvert.

This meeting was very much enjoyed by the 60 or so members present, as evinced by the questions and discussions. But in view of the afternoon's events, the meeting had to be closed. (As it was, the writer of this letter and his 2 companions arrived late).

Bredwardine could not have looked more beautiful than on that afternoon. At Bredwardine Old Court the party of some 70 members was warmly welcomed by Mrs. Whittall who showed the great fireplace and the remains of the huge cruck beams which had formed the great 14th century hall - and the view from the garden of the Wye, the handsome brick bridge, Kilvert's Vicarage and an old orchard was admired and envied by all. The other visit was made to Crafta Webb, to the cottage referred to by me in the last newsletter. Again the party was very warmly received, by Mr. and Mrs. Middleton, and I suspect that the room had never been so crowded since Kilvert's Lent services there! Mr. Middleton spoke of the history of the cottage, and showed photographs of the work of restoration. Our Chairman read relevant passages from the Diary, regarding both houses. Some members viewed the remains of other cottages, including that of Priscilla Price.

As so often our day out finished at the Burnt House, where for the first time in my memory two sittings of tea were needed!

The Sunday Walk. In view of the heat, our Leader, Mr. R. I. Morgan decided to substitute the gentler slopes of the Green Lane, Fualt and Glasnant for the steeper gradients of Glaschw Hill. Some 30 members much enjoyed the walk, and once more we are very grateful to Mr. Morgan.

The Hay Festival of Literature. I would draw the attention of members to the following. At 6.30 p.m. on May 23rd and 24th at the Baskerville Arms, Clyro, free of charge, will be shown the 18 episodes of the BBC series on the Diary - 9 episodes per night. At a special lunch on May 31st. Rev. Lockwood's book on Kilvert will be launched, and Mr. Timothy Davies will be one of the after-lunch speakers. (Cost £13). The phone number of the Festival Box Office is 0497821299.

Summer Commemoration Service. At Newbridge-on-Wye, July 1st. at 3 p.m. The preacher will be Canon Owain Jones, a Vice-President of the Society. A coach will leave Hereford Town Hall at 1 p.m. and travel via King's Acre, Bredwardine, Cusop, Hay and Glasbury-on-Wye. Bookings to me, please.

The Walk on the preceding day, i.e. June 30th. will be led by Mr. Ron Watts, Meet at Clyro at midday. Picnic lunch. If satisfactory parking arrangements can be made, the Walk will attempt to imitate Kilvert's description of "villaging".

Autumn Service - Whitney-on-Wye on Sept. 9th. (by kind permission of Rev. K. Newbon). Details in next newsletter.

National Astronomy Week. I have received information from Dr. P. Williams and Mr. Statz that tribute will be paid to the memory of Rev. Webb of Hardwick, who was a populariser of the science, and who is frequently mentioned in the Diary, during the weekend (Nov. 23rd - 25th). Members will be kept informed.

Service Hardenhuish, Dec. 2nd. (Kilvert born there Dec. 3rd. 1840). Preliminary arrangements made. Further information in the next newsletter.

Yours sincerely,
E. J. C. West (Hon. Sec.).

OBITUARY

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

Miss M. Groom (Royston), a Life member since 1981.

Mr. L. Johnson (Farnham, Surrey), who joined the Society in 1963, and until stricken by illness, a most regular and popular member at Society events.

Rev. W. L. Paterson (Vicar of Madley and Blakemere, Herfs). A member since 1970, he preached at the Much Marcle service and was officiating clergyman at the Madley service. He had also given illustrated talks to not only the Society but also organisations within the county on the subject of "Kilvert Country".

THE REVEREND MONTAGUE EARLE WELBY
by Revd. D.T.W. Price (Lampeter).

One of the minor interesting characters in Kilvert's Diary is the Revd. M.E. Welby, who undertook a locum at Clyro for Mr. Venables in 1870.

Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1893 shows that in 1870 Mr. Welby was Incumbent of the very remote parish of Glyncollwng, near Talybont-on-Usk in Breconshire.

WELBY, Montague Earle, Cwmbach-Lechryd (sic) Vicarage, Builth - Late Fell. of Magd. Coll. Ox. B.A. 1851, Deacon Oxford, Priest St. Davids 1851. Perpetual Curate of St. Paul, Sketty, Swansea, 1851-65; Perpetual Curate of Oystermouth, Swansea, 1865-67; Perpetual Curate of Glynn-Collen (Glyncollwng), Breconshire, 1867-71; Vicar of Llanlleonfel, Breconshire, 1873-74; R.D. of Builth, 1879-88; Vicar of Eglwys Oen Duw, Breconshire, 1874-84; Rector of Gileston, Glamorgan, 1884-87; Vicar of Cwmbach Llechryd, Radnorshire, 1887.

His entry in Crockford's in 1903 adds the information that he was a Demy of Magdalen, took his M.A. in 1853 and was a Fellow of his College between 1851 and 1853, but it makes no mention whatever of his appointments in Glyncollwng and Llanlleonfel. We learn, however, that he had left Cwmbach Llechryd in 1892, was Vicar of Mansel Lacy and Yazor in Herefordshire in 1893, and then was Rector of Uffington in Lincolnshire between 1893 and 1898, when he retired.

Kilvert's account of his first meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Welby is one of the most delightful and amusing descriptions in all his work, with the suggestion that Mr. Welby was socially not quite of the status of Mr. Venables; 1 May 1870 (in this account quotations where appropriate are from the first National Library of Wales notebook): 'After School I went to the Vicarage and found Mrs. Welby in the drawing room and Mr. Welby came in from the dining room immediately afterwards. He is a pleasant-looking, pleasant-mannered man with good features but with a light lackadaisical inconsequent unstable air. Mrs. Welby is apparently older, also pleasant but a little prim, staid and stiff. Going out to Church we met the Crichtons at the door and they took Mrs. Welby to sit in their seat. Mr. Welby is rather given to light clerical slang and playfully alludes to his gown as his 'black' which he did not much approve of preaching in. He brought his own robes to Church in a bundle and wore a cassock in which I should think he must have been uncommonly cold sitting in the chancel. I read the prayers and those two splendid Balaam chapters. Mr. Welby preached on the character of Balaam - 'Let me die the death of the righteous &c.' - a short good striking sermon, but his voice has a peculiar faculty for stirring up every echo in the church to make it indistinct and defeat itself. I should think scarcely any one heard the Communion Service, and I fear very few heard all the sermon. After Church went to luncheon with the Welbys. The Crichtons were there. Mr. Welby thought Mr. Venables had left some wine out for him and solemnly decanted a bottle. It seemed a curious colour and he could not quite make it out, so he asked me what wine I thought it was. It was a curious red-coloured liquid when seen in the decanter and I said I thought it was cider, which proved to be the case. The cider was then helped round in wine glasses and altogether the scene was too rich. Mary the housemaid preserved her countenance admirably and looked as grave as a judge, but she must have been secretly and silently splitting. It is not quite the thing she has been used to'.

During the same month Kilvert often mentions the Welbys again - 7 May: 'Called on my firm friend Mrs. Brewer who is staunch to us and does not run after Mr. Welby like most people. Mr. Welby returned to Clyro Vicarage at 10 p.m. today without Mrs. Welby'; 8 May: 'Met Mr. Welby in the churchyard (at Hay) with the Crichtons. Went into the vestry with him and Pope. Pope read the prayers in a loud good voice, very powerful. Mr. Welby preached a very striking sermon from the Gospel for the day, "A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me". He said that during the forty days between the Resurrection and Ascension, our Lord was gradually teaching His disciples to do without Him and teaching them to walk by faith and not by sight. So for a while, every now and then, "the impalpable air" gave Him up and they saw Him suddenly standing at their side, that they might know that when the time came when they should no longer see Him at all, He was always by them just the same, but no longer choosing to reveal himself. There were many other striking thoughts in the sermon'; 10 May 1870: 'I went to luncheon at Clyro Court and there were present the Welbys, the Crichtons, Mr. Allen and Miss Marie Guise staying in the house... Mrs. Welby very kindly offered to teach in the Sunday School next Sunday, an offer which I gladly accepted'; 12 May

1870: 'As I came out of the school this morning Mr. and Mrs. Welby were just driving off to Stretton Sugwas in their nice carriage with a handsome bay horse, meaning to stop and bait at Bredwardine'; 15 May: 'Mrs. Welby and Morrell helped me in the Sunday School as Evans is away'.

Kilvert's reference to Mr. Welby in the following month is a splendid piece of professional understatement; 6 June 1870: 'Mrs. Baskerville said she had heard that a lady had been carried out of Hay Church fainting under the influence of a sermon from Mr. Welby. The story is probably untrue'. On 8 June Kilvert noted that 'Mr. Welby made three attempts to get to Wern Vawr to see Hannah Jones, but each time he was misdirected or anyhow failed to find the way', and on 10 June old Sarah Probert at White Ash told Kilvert that 'Mrs. Welby put her arms around her neck and kissed her'.

Clearly the locum was no holiday for either Mr. or Mrs. Welby, and obviously even Kilvert considered that Mr. Welby was a very effective preacher.

From time to time there are other brief words about Mr. Welby: 22 September 1871: (Before Cusop Harvest Festival) 'Welby carried me off through the vestry down the fields and asked why I had not got the living of Glasbury. He had hoped to hear of my being there'; 18 April 1872: 'As we went through lovely Sketty where Welby was Vicar for 14 years we stopped to look at the Church and Churchyard'; 6 August 1873: 'This afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Venables and Mary Bevan and I went by train from Builth road to Garth to attend the Garth Flower Show, Dog Show, Poultry Show, Bazaar and Athletic sports, all in one. Mrs. Welby was holding a bazaar in one of the tents for the benefit of poor old Llanlionfel Church now in ruins, but which they hope to get restored'. Mr. Welby had become Vicar of Llanlleonfel in 1873 and he quickly initiated fund-raising to rebuild the Church. It was rebuilt in 1874, by the architect R.J. Withers, and it is one of his more attractive buildings.

I have long been interested in Mr. Welby, and a few months ago I happened to come across an undated newspaper cutting about his will. I had been lent a book of cuttings which dealt mainly with the history of St. David's University College, Lampeter, and it was with tremendous excitement that I suddenly saw Mr. Welby's name. Thinking of the story about the cider I was amazed to discover that his relations were clearly people of rank, to say the least!

'A Clergyman's Will.

'Formerly of Glamorgan and Breconshire.

'The Rev. Montague Earle Welby, M.A., of Richmond, Surrey, and late of Arthog, Dolgelly, formerly incumbent of St. Paul's, Sketty, Swansea; Oystermouth, Swansea; Llanlleonfel (sic, for Llanlleonfell, Breconshire;) Gileston, Glamorgan; and Cwmbach, Radnor, who died on the 31st of December (1910), aged 83 years, left estate of the gross value of £67,851, of which the net personalty has been sworn at £67,524. Probate of his will, dated the 20th of August 1909, with a codicil of the 14th of September following, has been granted to his nephews, the Earl of Lindsey, of Uffington House, Stamford, and Sir George Earle Welby, C.M.G., of Queen Anne's Mansions, St. James's Park, S.W., and Mr. Richard Lake Harrison, solicitor, of 1, New Court, Carey Street, W.C. The testator left £500 to the Church Penitentiary Association, £5,000 to the Bishop of St. Albans Fund, £2,500 to the Middlesex Hospital, £2,500 to the Lock Hospital and Rescue Home, £1,000 to his old servant, George Hunt, whether still in his service at his decease or not, and if he shall have pre-deceased the testator, leaving a widow, then such legacy is to be paid to his widow; £10,000 to his sister, Felicia Elizabeth, Dowager Lady Lindsey; £1,000 to each of his nieces, Lady Mary Dundas and Louisa Felicia Welby; £1,100 to each of his nephews, the Right Hon. Montague Peregrine Albemarle, Earl of Lindsey, and Sir George Earle Welby; £900 to Sarah Dillwyn Moggridge, £500 to each of his nieces, Dame Felicia Mary Dallas, Lady Evelyn Lindsey, and Emily, wife of Major-general the Hon. Savage Lloyd-Mostyn; £500 to his great niece Lady Muriel Bertie; £250 each to Reginald Livesey and Geraldine Livesey, and £100 to Mr. Richard Lake Harrison. The residue of his property testator left to this sister, Felicia Elizabeth, Dowager Lady Lindsey, for life, with remainder to his niece, Lady Mary Dundas'.

The Revd. M.E. Welby (born 17 December 1827; died 31 December 1910) was the fourth son of the Revd. John Earle Welby, J.P., Rector of Harston, Leicestershire, and his wife, a granddaughter of a Bishop of Norwich. The Revd. John Earle Welby was himself the second son of Sir William Earle Welby, first Baronet, of Denton, Lincolnshire, where the Almshouse built by William Welby in 1653 may still be seen.

Denton is only about two miles from Harston. Montague's sister, Felicia Elizabeth, married in 1854 the future eleventh Earl of Lindsey. He succeeded to the title in 1877. The family name of the Earls of Lindsey was Bertie. The Right Hon. Montague Peregrine Albemarle Bertie was twelfth Earl of Lindsey. Montague's other sister, Sarah Maria, married Joseph Livesey of Stourton Hall, Lincolnshire, sometime High Sheriff of the county.

One of Montague's brothers, Canon George Earle Welby, J.P., had a son who became Sir George Earle Welby, C.M.G., a widely travelled diplomat and Mayor of Westminster and Grantham. Canon Welby had also two daughters. One, Felicia Mary, married Sir George E. Dallas, third Baronet, and the other, Emily, married Major-General the Hon. Sir Savage Lloyd-Mostyn, K.C.B., son of the second Baron Mostyn. Another of Montague's brothers, William Earle Welby, J.P., of Bainton House, Stamford, had a daughter, Louisa Felicia, who was to marry after Uncle Montague's death Robert Mowbray Howard, the son of Henry Howard, M.P. All these family names appear in Mr. Welby's will. Montague's eldest brother, John Earle Welby, J.P. of Allington Hall, Grantham, died without issue, as did his youngest brother, Reginald Earle Welby, G.C.B., P.C., created in 1894 Baron Welby of Allington, about five miles from Denton. Only one of the five sons of the Revd. George Earle Welby of Harston had a son.

On 12 August 1857 the Revd. Montague Earle Welby married Miss Mary Dillwyn, younger daughter of Lewis Weston Dillwyn, F.R.S., M.P., Mayor of Swansea in 1839, of Sketty Hall, Swansea, in the parish of which Mr. Welby was incumbent at the time. (Some sources say that she was L.W. Dillwyn's granddaughter, but that seems unlikely. I have followed Burke. L.W. Dillwyn's son, Lewis Llewelyn Dillwyn, sometimes called Mary's father in sources, did not marry until 1838 and his daughter would have been very young in 1857. Kilvert thought that Mrs. Welby was 'apparently older' than her husband, and he had been born in 1827). Mrs. Welby's sister, Fanny Llewelyn Dillwyn, married Matthew Moggridge of Woodfield, Monmouthshire, another surname which appears in the will. Mrs. Welby died on 29 November 1906. The Welbys had no children.

Mr. Welby's successor at Sketty was the Revd. E.W. Bolney, wrongly called Bonley by Kilvert on 16 April 1872. He had changed his name from Brown to benefit from a legacy from an aunt. Mr. Bolney was Vicar of Sketty from 1865 to 1903. He used to intone the notices and he wore a black stole with three embroidered golden crosses on it for all services. The Dillwyn family had given the fine 16-stop organ to the new church in Sketty in 1850.

Mr. Welby took part in the wedding on 23 August 1893 at Newbridge of Katherine Minna Venables, the daughter of the Revd. Richard Lister Venables, Kilvert's vicar at Clyro. The news of the Miss Venable's birth is noted by Kilvert on 1 June 1870, during Mr. Welby's locum at Clyro, which had been arranged so that Mr. and Mrs. Venables could be in London for the birth. Miss Venables's bridegroom was Mr. Charles Leyshon Dillwyn-Llewelyn, who assumed by Royal Licence the surname of Venables, so that the family has since been that of Dillwyn-Venables-Llewelyn. Charles's grandfather was John Dillwyn-Llewelyn, the brother of Mrs. Welby. He had taken the surname Dillwyn-Llewelyn in honour of his mother, Mary Llewelyn of Penllergaer, Swansea. Charles's father, Sir John Talbot Dillwyn-Llewelyn, first Baronet, died in 1927, when Sir Charles Dillwyn-Venables-Llewelyn succeeded to the baronetcy, following the death of his elder brother, William Dillwyn-Llewelyn, in 1893.

Mr. Welby probably owed many of his clerical appointments to the influence of his wife's family and his own family, although in his own right he was a former Fellow of an Oxford College. Doubtless Colonel Perrot, patron of Oystermouth, and Mr. Thomas and Miss Clara Thomas, patrons of Llanlleonfel, Eglwys Oen Duw, and Cwmbach Llechryd were friends of the Dillwyn-Llewelyn family. Miss Thomas had a house in each of the parishes of Cwmbach Llechryd and Eglwys Oen Duw. The patron of Uffington was Mr. Welby's nephew, the Earl of Lindsey. Had Mr. Welby felt the urge to flee the naughty world for a remote island - and he must have had some liking for solitude to have served in Glynollwng (although he may not have lived there) and Eglwys Oen Duw - he could probably have secured a parish from his father's brother's son, the Right Revd. Thomas Earle Welby, Bishop of St. Helena between 1861 and 1899 (and formerly an officer in the 13th Light Dragoons).

It may be that Mr. Welby was a high-churchman, for several of his parishes, especially Sketty (see Kilvert's comment on Mr. Bolney) and, I believe, Eglwys Oen Duw ('The Church of the Lamb of God') and Cwmbach Llechryd, had a Tractarian tradition. One wonders what he thought of his wife's brother, Lewis Llewelyn

Dillwyn, Liberal M.P. for Swansea and Mayor of Swansea in 1848, who believed passionately that the Church of England should be disestablished in Wales. Perhaps Mr. Welby was one of those few clergymen in Wales who agreed with him.

Mr. Welby was the first incumbent of the parish of Cwmbach Llechryd, where the church had been built by Miss Clara Thomas in memory of her mother. At Sketty he succeeded the first vicar, who remained in the office for only a short time in 1851. Mr. Welby may also have been the first incumbent of Glyncllwyn when it was separated from Llanfeugan, and even at Eglwys Oen Duw he became Vicar only seven years after the Church was built.

One of the daughters of John Dillwyn-Llewelyn, Mrs. Welby's brother, was Emma Charlotte (whom Kilvert called the 'Flower of Glamorgan'). She married Mr. H.B. Crichton of Wye Cliff in Clyro. Mrs. Crichton was thus Mrs. Welby's niece. Possibly it was through the Crichtons that the Welbys were asked to undertake the locum at Clyro in 1870, which, of course, through Kilvert preserved them from historical oblivion. It was wholly appropriate that Mrs. Crichton's aunt Mary should sit with the family when she went to Clyro Church on 1 May 1870 and that Mr. and Mrs. Crichton should be at luncheon at Clyro Vicarage when the cider was 'helped round in wine glasses'.

Whatever Mary the Vicarage housemaid thought of the performance, it cannot have been in any sense the result of Mr. Welby being socially unsure of himself. His Lincolnshire family, and the Glamorgan family of his 'prim, staid and stiff' wife, were, to put it mildly, socially on a par at least with that of Mr. Venables, and considerably superior socially to that of the curate of Clyro, who could scarcely conceal his amusement in the Vicarage on that day when 'the scene was too rich' for him.

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THE ATLAY OBITUARIES by John Hodkin, Cumbria.

Many present day readers would find Victorian obituaries much too rich and rotund, full of stately periods which give the impression that the recently departed must have been the best and noblest person ever to inhabit this world. Rotund they often may be, but there is an enormous amount of information to be derived from them, the gold greatly exceeding the ore.

I have recently been reading the obituaries of James Atlay, Bishop of Hereford from 1868 until his death on 24th December 1894, notorious to the Kilvertian for forcibly "confirming" the curate, Andrew Pope, in 1870. From these obituaries one learns a lot about Atlay, and also of the church of his time.

Let us look first at what the Church Times had to say about him. No one could accuse this obituary of being too cloying. It has a refreshingly astringent flavour, in fact. A brief resumé is given of Atlay's early career up to his appointment as Vicar of Leeds in 1859 on the promotion of Dr. Hook of the deanery of Chichester.

"That was the most successful portion of his ministerial career, for to succeed Dr. Hook was no easy task. Dr. Atlay, however, won the confidence of the businessmen of Leeds, and under him the many works started by his predecessor were maintained and developed".

In 1868 on the death of Bishop Hampden, Mr. Disraeli nominated Dr. Atlay to the see of Hereford "which he administered with fair ability, but refused persistently all attempts to add territory to the see when that of Lichfield was rearranged".

The Church Times states that the population of the diocese with its 373 benefices was not as numerous as that of Leeds.

"At least 110 parishes had a population of under 200, and of these 30 or more did not number 100 souls. There were only five parishes in the whole diocese where the whole population was over 5,000 persons".

The non-residence of the clergy was a considerable source of weakness, says the Church Times, and there were over 100 parishes without a parsonage house, or with at best, a cottage for the residence of the clergyman. The late Bishop set to work to make himself acquainted with the detailed deficiencies of his see, promoting to such extent as was possible the union of small benefices and personally instituting all new incumbents. His benign and judicious rule soon came to be felt, and Hereford may now be regarded as a diocese which fully meets the demands which the Church is entitled to make upon a scattered and thinly-populated agricultural community".

The Church Times says the Bishop was a kindly, hospitable man, greatly beloved by his clergy, but that he could not by any stretch of the imagination be called a strong Bishop.

"He was, in fact, one of that tiny band of moderate High Churchmen on the episcopal bench who, overawed by public opinion and the Archbishops, consented to the Public Worship Regulation Act, although secretly disliking the measure".

"It will be remembered by some of our readers how the late Dr. R.T. West, of St. Mary Magdalene's, Paddington, got into very hot water in the Times for stating at an E.C.U. (English Church Union) meeting at the time that one of the Bishops had refused to come up to town for an important division during the progress of the Bill through Parliament, because his wife was giving a garden party on that particular afternoon, and the prelate in question was none other than the Bishop of Hereford".

Let us now turn to what the Westminster Gazette had to say about Atlay.

"The Bishop was a stay-at-home prelate, and was only once known to go abroad, when he and Mrs. Atlay were so ill that on their return they resolved never again to venture on the sea".

Atlay was an old fashioned High Churchman, says the Gazette, and held some strong opinions, one being a horror of an exchange of livings, which he carried to such an extent that on the few occasions when he gave his consent he would never personally institute the incumbent.

"The present primate had a high opinion of the Bishop's character, and has visited him at Hereford, while he made him an assessor in the Bishop of Lincoln's case" (for alleged ritual offences).

"The late Earl of Powis induced Mr. Disraeli to appoint Dr. Atlay, saying that, as he had made one Johnian (his brother) the dean, he could not do better than nominate another to the bishopric. This was done to the no small disgust of Bishop Wilberforce, who was urging the claims of Dr. Leighton, the warden of All Souls".

The Birmingham Argus in a brief note said it was already prophesied that Leeds would again supply a bishop to Hereford.

"In most respects Dr. Talbot would be a striking contrast to Dr. Atlay, who though not what is called a Low Churchman, presided over a diocese which has the reputation of being the most evangelical in England.

"The name of Dr. Talbot has, however, been mentioned in connection with every vacant bishopric for the last five years" says the Argus, somewhat acidly.

(Dr. Talbot did not land the post, the successor to Atlay being John Percival who held office from 1895 to 1918. According to the man who in turn succeeded him, Herbert Hensley Henson, Percival was unpopular in the diocese because of his political and social opinions. ("Bishop Percival was a liberal who did not hide his political lamp under a bushel, but set it on the stand of a bold and even aggressive advocacy of his party's programme". "Retrospect of an Unimportant Life" by Hensley Henson, vol. 1. page 273). Ironically enough, Henson was also a controversial figure. He left Hereford after two years to be Bishop of Durham).

The Daily News reported that Atlay was with the one exception (the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol) the senior prelate in order of appointment still remaining on the bench.

"He was a courteous, scholarly clergyman, of a rather old fashioned type, a staunch Conservative, equally familiar with Terence and the Greek Testament..... The Diocese of Hereford is not a noisy one and Bishop Atlay was not the sort of man to create disturbance. He loved peace and he enjoyed it".

The Hereford Times, as expected gave an immense amount of space to the life of Atlay, most of it rather routine, but some details are of interest. It records that it was suggested that his consecration in 1868 should be at Hereford Cathedral, but the Archbishop of Canterbury could not find time for the journey, so it was at Westminster Abbey.

In 1893 on the 25th anniversary of his episcopate he was presented with a portrait of himself in oils painted by the Hon. John Collier. (Circulars were issued for subscriptions to pay for this, limited to three guineas. So generous was the response that there was a surplus which was handed over to Atlay to apply

to what diocesan purpose might seem best to him).

Speaking of Atlay's practical nature, it says that he pointed out that few of the clergy kept any record of their candidates for confirmation or of their communicants.

"He desired that all the churches in his diocese should be provided with all things necessary for the communion services".

He protested against the confirmation of young children, the desire for which he had detected in some parishes.

Finally, the Leeds Mercury obituary writer said Atlay's sympathies and services were always enlisted in every movement which had for its object the furtherance of a benevolent scheme or alleviation of distress in Leeds. He worked with unwearied activity for the Church Institute and it was mainly through his efforts that a new building was erected.

In 1891 when the restoration jubilee of Leeds parish church was celebrated Atlay was announced as one of the preachers, but was unable to fulfil the engagement.

"He was a courteous, kindly, hospitable prelate of a school which has almost entirely passed away, beloved not less by the laity than by the clergy of his quiet diocese", says the Leeds Mercury.

* * * * *

THE MISSING CAKE by John Dunabin (Cheshire)

"15th August 1874. There was a nice breakfast but one missed the wedding cake at the head of the table. Instead of it appeared some loose wedges of cake, in a dish. So many pounds of cake had been ordered from Chester". The occasion was the wedding in Bath of Frederick Kilvert, rather strangely organized, at which Francis Kilvert officiated. How many Diary readers have moved on without further thought, and how many have paused, wondering why Chester, so far away? Were there no good cake makers nearby in the city?

For me the passage brings vividly to mind an occasion over 30 years ago when, as a rest from sightseeing in Chester with my small son, I went looking for afternoon tea. The restaurant we entered was very elegant, high ceilinged and airy, decorated in pink and white, and at this time, shortly before 3 o'clock, empty of customers. It was not though empty of people. Around the edges of the large room stood waitresses in clusters of two or three, talking now and then, but in very subdued tones.

Then, on the hour more or less, one of them moved gently forward and our order was taken. What we ate I cannot remember, possibly thinly cut sandwiches or just plain bread and butter, certainly jam, buttered scones, one or two small cakes each, and of course a pot of tea with a jug of hot water; in other words it was a pretty ordinary tea. What I can well remember however is the overall atmosphere - ambience is the current word - fresh, cool, calm and unhurried. We were no longer quite alone at the tables, but there was no clatter of plates, no steaminess, and no edging up or squeezing past.

The pleasurable interlude had to end of course - life cannot remain always afternoon - but there is another memory. On the way out, mounted on the staircase wall and only glanced at hurriedly as we entered, could be seen several large photographs with titles added. These showed magnificent iced cakes, wedding cakes, cakes for the nuptials of crowned heads of Europe, other royal personages too, one being for the wedding of Princess Maud, youngest daughter of King Edward VII, later to become Queen of Norway. This was Bolland's, with the restaurant above, and below Bolland's Oyster Bar, famous for miles around, but also old established confectioners.

The business was in existence by 1840, the year of Kilvert's birth, when the name of Richard Bolland first appeared in local directories. In 1846 he was describing himself as 'confectioner by appointment to the Queen'; what occasioned the appointment is unknown.

The heyday of Bolland's was probably in the last quarter of the last century, with customers, it seems, coming from far beyond Chester and district. When cake making ceased is not known, but restaurant and oyster bar remained in existence

until the early nineteen sixties.

Kilvert makes no observation on its quality, a surprising omission in a way, but one hopes he enjoyed the flavour of a Bolland's cake on that summer day long ago.

* * * * *

A YEAR OF ANNIVERSARIES
by Mrs. Teresa Williams (N. Wembley)

As members know, the year of 1990 commemorates the 150th anniversary of Kilvert's birth at Hardenhuish Rectory in Wiltshire; and that this event is being celebrated with a special service at the parish church on Sunday, 2nd. December. 1990 is also a year when several other anniversaries connected with the life and writings of Kilvert, could be remembered.

It was 120 years ago this year that Kilvert started his Diary and 50 years ago in December 1940, the third and final volume of his manuscript, edited by William Plomer, was published by Jonathan Cape of London at a price of 12/6d. The publication of this book was reviewed quite extensively; the following comments appeared in The Times newspaper on 28th December 1940:-

"A COUNTRY PARSON: KILVERT'S DIARY, Volume 3

This is the last volume of Kilvert's Diary; and it leaves many questions unanswered. Who in particular was Elizabeth Roland (sic), (whom after losing his heart more than once), he married in 1879? Why does the Diary stop abruptly about four months before his death, which happened only a few weeks after the wedding? Kilvert's admirers would give much to have had the details of that courtship and short married life.

But, in most other things that matter we know the man through and through by the end of the third volume: a country parson of no distinction in the church; sentimental, yet in practical affairs entirely sensible; not afraid of loneliness - for none were country walks fuller of refreshment than for him - yet enjoying the company of his village friends; with a passionate love for the English country-side, and (save for a super-abundance of epithets) a simple and fluent style in which to tell of its beauty; a devoted son, and the faithful pastor of his rural flock. Few tales of the world outside the parish reach him, to be thought worthy of record; there is mention of Rorke's Drift; of the loss of the 'Princess Alice', of a sermon he heard Arthur Stanton (later of St. Alban's, Holborn), preach at St. Barnabas's, Oxford; and of the activities of a Liberation Society lecturer at Chippenham.

But it is not for these views and news that we go to Francis Kilvert now. We read him for the refreshment of looking back on the peace and beauty, the humour and tragedy of the English village as he saw it 60 years ago. None had told their tale with keener sympathy or deeper affection; and, even for those who know of the tradition only by hearsay, no recent book can be more cordially commended with which to 'prop the mind' in the confused terror of our day".

** * **

Another anniversary this year is the 120th of the birth of the first child (Katharine Minna) to the Vicar of Clyro, the Rev. R. Lister Venables and his wife, Agnes Minna (nee Pearson). News of the birth in London on Tuesday, 31st May 1870, was received in Clyro on the following day, when as Kilvert records, "the bells were soon in full peal", and "ringing at intervals all day". That night, a tar-barrel bonfire was built on "the Bron in honour of Miss Venables". (see Vol. 1/146-7). On 18th June 1870, The Hereford Times gave an account of the celebrations at Llysdinam Hall for the tenant farmers and their families to mark the event. Readers will note that the newspaper got the date of birth wrong: "the Saturday last" was probably the day of the 'Festivities'.

Extracted from: THE HEREFORD TIMES, Saturday, 18th June 1870

"NEWBRIDGE-ON-WYE
FESTIVITIES AT LLYSDINAM HALL

On Saturday last (sic) was born an heiress to the Rev. R. Lister Venables, the respected Chairman of Quarter Sessions for the county of Radnor - an heiress not only to the property of her family, but to the love and respect which has entwined itself around the family name throughout the whole estate. Naturally the occasion caused great rejoicing, but it was felt that it called for a manifest expression of that joy, and therefore it was that Mr. George Venables, Q.C. the uncle of the little stranger - who, by the way, bears the pretty name of Katharine Mina (sic) - thought there should be a celebration of the event among the tenants of the most picturesque part of the family estates. He therefore sent instructions and a carte blanche, as to expenditure, to the respected land agent of the estate, Mr. S. Williams, and the result of Mr. Williams' labours in obedience to those instructions was a most enjoyable day. A day among the beautiful scenery of Radnorshire is in itself a treat, but on this occasion there was the further treat to a stranger of seeing a great number of people enjoying themselves: happy in the event which had brought such happiness to those for whom they possessed such regard.

During the morning firing and other such signs of rejoicing were indulged in by the more immediate residents of the neighbourhood; but it was not until noon that many began to assemble. About that time, however, the tenants, young and old, strayed to the grounds and entered the meadow set apart for the occasion, wherein was erected a kind of tent, beneath which were exhibited the preparatory signs of a good substantial meal, such as was some hour or so later partaken of therein. Unfortunately the tent could not accommodate all, and therefore, two divisions were formed, and the party dined at two different times; the latter being equally as well attended to as the former by the reverend and esteemed chairman, the Rev. J.J. Evans, Llanyre and his indefatigable assistant, the Vice-chairman, Mr. S. Williams. Amongst those present were the Rev. J.H. Bevan, Mr. James (Rock House), Mr. Watkins (Brynderllwyn), Mr. John Price, (Vedw Llanyre), Mr. Williams (Bwlchydraith), Mr. Pritchard, Mr. Evans, Mr. Hamer (station-master), Mr. Evan Powell, Mr. Thomas Jones, Mr. Thomas (schoolmaster), Mr. Reed (Wernhir), Mr. Jones (Trawscoed), Mr. W. Davis, Mr. Samuel, Mr. John Hughes, Mr. Joe Morgan, Mr. William Weale, Mr. John Powell and Mr. Sylvanus Williams, etc., etc.

After partaking of an excellent dinner, for the catering of which and for the manner in which it was served, Mr. and Mrs. Evans, the butler and housekeeper, deserve the greatest credit, the tables were cleared and the post-prandial proceedings commenced by the Chairman"

(The Hereford Times then reported the speeches and toasts. These were, as usual, started by proposing a toast to 'The Queen and Royal family', and continued with 'The Bishop and the Clergy of the Diocese' by the Vice-chairman; response by Rev. H.J. Bevan, a toast to 'The Infant', 'Mr. George Venables' proposed by Mr. S. Williams. Two musical interludes followed with Mr. Joe Morgan singing, 'My Native Land' and 'The Two Barrels'. Further toasts to Mr. and Mrs. Venables, 'the Chairman', 'the Vice-chairman', 'The Village and Trade of Newbridge', responded to by Mr. Thomas the schoolmaster. "He referred to the question of education which was, he said, becoming the most important question of the day. He deprecated the introduction of dogmatic teaching, which had never been introduced into Newbridge schools, where it had always been his endeavour to bring his pupils up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. He hoped parents would take care to inculcate those good lessons which their children received at school".

A final toast was proposed to 'Mr. and Mrs. Evans' to whom they owed great thanks for the admirable manner in which they had catered for and attended to them that day).

"After the dinner the band, which was but a sorry specimen, proceeded to the school-house and returned, accompanied by the scholars, under Mr. Thomas to the number of 168, before whom a plentiful array of cake, etc. was spread under the tent, and who were waited on by a number of ladies, amongst whom were Miss Thomas (Glanhowey), Miss Mather (Lletty), Mrs. Stephen Williams, Miss Williams, Miss Powell (Gelligam), Mrs. Reed (Wernhir), Miss Davies (Dufnant), Miss Davies (Bailey), Miss Davies (Pistill), Mrs. Thomas, Miss Lloyd (Werngwlllwyd), Miss Lloyd (Glenfain), Miss Lloyd (Vroncayo), Miss Dyke (Calger), Mrs. Powell, Miss Powell, (Creigol), and Miss Dakins (Llether). Tea was also liberally provided for all who chose to partake thereof.

During the progress of the tea, foot races, jumping, throwing the hammer, etc. were indulged in, under the direction of Mr. S. Williams, the land agent, who was throughout the day most indefatigable in promoting the enjoyment of those present. Nor a little amusement, too, was afforded by the vain attempts to climb the greased pole, the top of which, as usual, was graced by a hat, the endeavours to reach which were rendered more abortive by the unpleasant drizzling rain which set in during the evening, and which drove the dancers under the trees and into the tent, where dancing was kept up till night.

It was intended that there should be an exhibition of fireworks at the close of the evening, and a supply had been despatched on Monday from London for that purpose, but unfortunately they did not arrive in time, and some little disappointment was caused thereby".

*** * ***

It may be of interest to readers to know that there is no trace of any account of 'Festivities' to mark the birth on Christmas Day 1872 of the second daughter, Caroline Emily, news of which reached Kilvert on 26th December 1872 at Langley Burrell (see Diary vol. 2/298-9). This birth occurred after Kilvert had left Clyro to become curate to his father in Wiltshire, but despite this, the Venables family kept in regular contact with the Diarist, with Mrs. Venables sending him "a nice letter written in pencil" a few days later, (vol. 2/305), which gave him news of the baby.

The birth of the son and heir to the Rev. R. Lister Venables and Mrs. Venables is recorded by Kilvert on 28th April 1874 (vol. 2/436). Subsequent to this birth, there were 'Rejoicings at Llysdimam', firstly a 'Reception' for the Venables when they returned from London to their home in late July 1874, and three weeks later a 'Fete' given by the Venables in appreciation. This event was duly reported in The Hereford Times of Saturday, 22nd August 1874. The child, who, Kilvert tells us was christened Henry George Lister Venables on Friday 22nd May 1874, tragically died on 11th January 1876 at Llysdimam Hall, aged one year and eight months of 'Infantile Debility, Bronchitis 24 hours'. The death occurred during one of the gaps in the Diary and the only reference to this in the published Diary is on page 294 of volume 3, when on Sunday, 7th May 1876, Kilvert preached twice. "In the morning, I preached upon the Mountain of Galilee and by Miss Higginson's request I put in a little bit specially for Mrs. Venables about the duty of not being discouraged at seeing no immediate result of our work. In the afternoon I preached upon 'Mizpah' with another little word for Mrs. Venables on the loss of her baby".

To return to the anniversary this year of the 1870 birth of the first Venables daughter, there is another interesting link with the Kilvert Society, when 40 years ago on 2nd July 1950, Lady Venables-Llewelyn, or, as the Hereford Times of 23rd June 1950 said, "the cause of all the rejoicings", was to unveil a Litany Desk at the church of St. Harmon in Radnorshire in memory of the Reverend Robert Francis Kilvert. This, she did, as the following report shows, thus remembering the clergyman who had written of her birth in his Diary, some 80 years previously.

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Extracted from: THE HEREFORD TIMES, Sat. 7th July 1950

"KILVERT THE DIARIST -

COMMEMORATION SERVICE

The fourth Kilvert commemoration service held on Sunday, 2nd July 1950 at St. Harmon's, near Rhayader, where the diarist was Vicar from 1876 till the following year, was, like all its predecessors, blessed with brilliant weather, and attended by more people than the church could hold: speakers in the churchyard aided those who could not obtain seats.

Evensong was conducted by the vicar, the Rev. D.A.E. Jones, assisted by Canon Thornley Jones of Cwmdaddwr, (sic), the Rev. Mr. Perrott of Rhayader, and the Rev. D.V. Evans of Abbeycwmhir, and the lessons were read by the Rev. D. McIntyre,

Baptist minster of Nantgwyn, and Mr. J. Pugh of Y Berth. The joint choirs of Rhayader Parish Church and Cwmdauddwr, some 30 voices, with Miss Worthing at the organ, gave a fine musical setting to the service.

Provided by the people of the district and supported by a donation from the Kilvert Society, a carved oak litany desk, standing at the chancel steps, was unveiled by Lady Venables-Llewelyn, and dedicated by the Dean of Hereford, the Very Rev. H.R. Burrows; a plate and the front page of an accompanying litany book bore the inscription "To the Memory of Rev. Francis Kilvert, M.A. the diarist, vicar of this parish 1876-77. A beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord. St. Harmon, 2nd July 1950".

The Dean, during the course of his address, paid tribute to the late Mr. Sid Wright, of Hereford, whose enthusiasm and flare (sic) for propaganda had brought about the society's existence, and the subsequent services at which this, the litany desk, was the third tribute to the diarist's memory.

In some interesting references to the diarist's life and character, the Dean asked what in the writings had stirred the hearts of men all over the world? He thought it was the power and magnetism of love: they brought the Bible to life and showed how deeply a parson could love his people and bring the love of God into their hearts and homes".

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