

all good wishes

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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

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Dear Member

For many years there has been the wish to link up with the William Barnes Society, and this was finally achieved on June 26th when the Summer Commemoration service was held at Fordington, the church associated with William Barnes's ministry. Twenty-two members made the coach journey from Hereford - probably the furthest distance undertaken on such an occasion, though I was told that the 1974 service at Ilston was a venue as far afield as this one. (Since I did not attend that service, I was not in a position to argue!) I was pleased to see and meet members from Dorset, from Truro and Wells; with members of both the William Barnes and the Hardy Societies, there were about 80 in the congregation.

Prior to the service Canon Letcher gave some account of the church, how in the early 19th century it was a small church, and how in the latter half of that century and in this century it had been enlarged to the present handsome building, all of one style. He went on to conduct the service, our Chairman led the prayers, and the Lessons were read by Pauline, Lady Rumbold (a Vice-President of the William Barnes Society) and myself. The sermon was preached by our committee member, Rev. J.C. Day (vicar of Sturminster Newton), and Miss E. Kingman was the organist. An excellent tea was laid on by the ladies of the parish, following the service. Our chairman voiced the thoughts of all present when he warmly thanked Canon Letcher and all those others who had been so hospitable and so generous in giving time and energy to make a most memorable occasion for the Society. (Rev. Day's sermon appears elsewhere in this newsletter.) Many members then proceeded to the County Museum, for the "secondary" aim of the visit to Dorset our Chairman's wish to hand over a tea set he had been given which had been in the possession of Thomas and Florence Hardy. In welcoming the party, the curator spoke of the unrivalled education of Hardy material owned by the museum, thanked our chairman for his gift and invited members to look at the exhibits. (The museum has, on two occasions, won the National Award for best-kept museum). I am sorry to say that I was too exhausted to take in much, but I do recollect Hardy's music manuscript books and my thoughts of "Under the Greenwood Tree" and Kilvert's walk to Colva to obtain the words of a carol.

I regret that news of a Flower Festival at Bredwardine on 9th and 10th July came too late for me to mention it in the last newsletter. Public transport in Herefordshire is such that I had given up all hope of being able to visit, but thanks to my friends and fellow members, Mr and Mrs Middleton of Glebe Cottage, Crafta Webb, I attended on the Saturday, a warm sunny afternoon, a steady procession of people entering and leaving the church. My impressions are featured elsewhere in this newsletter. The autumn service will take place at Staunton on Wye Church (by kind permission of the Revd. R Birt) on Sunday September 25th at 3.00 pm. The address will be given by the Revd. Clive Edmonds, vicar of Haslemere and member of the Kilvert Society. Since the venue lies within the county of Hereford no coach will be laid on. The church lies on the north side of of the A438 Hereford to Brecon road, a conspicuous building on a knoll, about about eight miles west of Hereford. There will be a walk the previous day (September 24th). Full details at the end of this newsletter.

Yours sincerely,

E J C West

OBITUARY

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

Mr Michael Field (Sheffield). The Hallam Diocesan Press Officer and editor of the "Hallam News", he had been a member since 1992.

Revd. G.C. Challenger (Weston Super Mare), a member since 1978.

THE FORDINGTON SERMON

In one sense I guess I am in a unique position addressing you this afternoon at this service which embraces the names of Kilvert, Hardy and Barnes. I was born less than half a mile from Harnish where Kilvert was born, as a child I played where he had once played. A great aunt of mine was baptised by his father and my father could actually remember some of the families mentioned in Kilvert's diary. In later life I came by some strange twist to observe in the parish where Kilvert's Diaries were actually discovered, just before the last war in the remote cottage of a recluse nephew of Kilvert's in the hamlet of Kingstag. But we are still not finished, I now find myself serving Sturminster Newton where Barnes was born, where he went to school, where he was helped by local worthies to achieve his fame and there too in Sturminster Newton, Thomas Hardy and Emma came to live in 1876 spending their two happiest years, and though (apart from "Tess") Hardy seems hesitant about using the Vale of Blackmore in his writings it is still the source of several of his most charming poems. Here my unique position grinds to a halt and I become very conscious that I am in the presence of those who know much more about these three great artists than do I. But may I begin my few words to you at the point where for me these three come together and here in this church. Henry Moule was the great Victorian Vicar of Fordington and a friend, and I guess an inspiration of all three. One recalls Kilvert's entry for May Eve 1874 and Henry Moule and his companion on that memorable walk to Winterbourne Came Rectory and the stories of Dorset's ecclesiastical past with which Moule entertained Barnes and Kilvert and which no doubt Hardy knew and were the stuff of his novels>- 'One day there was a christening and no water in the font 'water sir?' said the clerk in astonishment 'the last parson never used water he spit into his hand.' Hardy knew that tale.

Today we come together as the lovers of Kilvert, Barnes and Hardy to celebrate their lives in a service and for Dorset to receive something which actually belonged to Thomas Hardy.

A text from the book of Ecclesiasticus ch 44 "Let us now praise God for famous men. Some were composers of music and writers of poetry; others were endowed with wealth and strength living peaceably in their homes. All these won fame in their own generation and were the pride of their time".

Today here in this church three great men of letters come together, All three were essentially countrymen and spent the best part of their lives in rural surroundings amid, and greatly appreciating nature. And we come to do them honour to recall that momentous meeting between Kilvert and the man he greatly respected, the Dorset poet and parson William Barnes and to share also with our Kilvert Society chairman in the presentation of a tea service that once belonged to Thomas and Emma Hardy returning it to its roots here. I wonder did some famous visitors use it, did Virginia Woolf or T E Lawrence drink out of the cups, or some other of the great and the important who beat a trail to Max Gate in Hardy's old age?.

It is said that Emma Hardy used to invite the then vicar of Fordington regularly to tea in the hope that he might influence Hardy to become a christian. He failed miserably. Yet like Kilvert, Hardy too comes over to me very much in the tradition of the mediaeval English mystic. They were both in Hardy's words, "Men who noticed things". And I ask, given modern insights, may Hardy also have been a believer.

Kilvert accepted faith naturally and rarely seeks to question it. Hardy was of a different metal, one who while retaining a great love for the institution of the church, its words, its music and its buildings, none the less described himself as agnostic. Yet in him there is a deep seeking, even a yearning to get to the heart of things - as at the end of his poem "The Darkling Thrush" when he speaks of "some blessed hope whereof he knew, yet I was unaware". On my favourite "August Midnight", Hardy's encounter with the four humble insects, God's humblest they, I muse, yet why? They know earths insects that know not I".

Kilvert writes of Aberedw, "Every step was through an enchanted land, I was discovering a new country and all the world was before me ", and at Lanhill, it was one of the few supreme moments of existence, a deep delicious draught from the strong sweet cup of life".

The gospel of God, a belief in Father Son and Holy Spirit which I hold dear, makes me a suppliant at the feet of these men and by reading them I also am transported in my appreciation of creation in all its forms. Thomas Hardy's in depth description in his novels and poetry of the beautiful prose with its descriptions of people and places in a far off world of tranquillity, what Housman calls 'that Land of lost content'.

And the gospel of God makes me grateful of the courage of these men. The long climb upwards of Hardy from humble beginnings who like William Barnes managed to achieve his potential. The contentment of Kilvert, the poor curate with his lot and who all despite it gave us what he did.

The gospel of God drives me to feel a compassion for these men. For Hardy in his striving for faith with a deep yearning the which I detect in "The Imprecipient" written after attending a church service. 'Why thus my soul should be consigned to infelicity, Why always I must feel as blind, to sights my brethren see. Why joys they have found I cannot find, Abides a mystery.' And Kilvert during his rather short life accepting the limitations and yet being able to declare, 'Why so I keep this voluminous journal? Kilvert wonders writing on Tuesday 3rd November 1874, I can hardly tell. Partly because life appears to me such a curious and wonderful thing that it almost seems a pity that even such a humble and uneventful life as mine should pass away without some such record as this and partly too because I think the record may amuse and interest some who come after me'. It has indeed

Each of these in his own way has held to the gospel of God. Hardy despite his agnosticism never stops searching and retains always his love for things ecclesiastical. Barnes, I guess was imbued with a simple accepting faith, and Kilvert out of his also simple accepting of faith develops an almost mystic sense of what lies at the heart of things. He has that wonderful ability of conveying to his readers exact and beautiful descriptions of landscapes, of conveying the physical beauty of what he describes. It is Easter eve in Clyro Churchyard and the people are decorating the graves with wild flowers

"More and more people kept coming into the churchyard as they finished their days work. The sun went down in glory behind the dingle but still the work of love went on through the twilight and into the dusk until the moon rose full and splendid. A 8 O'clock there was a gathering of the choir in church to practice the two anthems for tomorrow. When the choir had gone and the lights were out, and the church quiet again, as I walked down the churchyard alone the decked graves had a strange effect in the moonlight and looked as if people had lain down to sleep for the night out of doors ready dressed to rise early on the Easter morning. The air was as soft and warm as a summer night, and the broad moonlight made the quiet village almost as light as day. Everyone seemed to have gone to rest and there was not a sound except the clink and trickle of the brook."

Kilvert, Barnes, and Hardy each in his own way holds fast to the gospel of God; Barnes and Kilvert with their orthodox faith base firmly on the King James Bible and the book of Common Prayer, and Hardy with his questioning borne of hard brushes with the realities with life. But however brilliant all our scientific investigations, the mystery of the creation remains a mystery. It was so for Hardy, who does share the Christian's love of all creatures great and small, but not, alas, Barnes' and Kilvert's belief in a living and loving God.

May I finish with some more quotes from each which sums up for me what lies at the heart of these great men.

William Barnes mourning his beloved wife:-

"Since I do miss your vaice an feace In prayer at Eventide I'll pray wi woone sad vaice vor greace To go where you be gone avore, Above the tree and bough, my love, Where you be gone avore, An be a waiten vor me now, To come vor evermwore."

And Kilvert writing on 9th March 1878 after illness and not much a year before his death. "But some day will come the last illness from which there will be no convalescence and after which thee will be no going out to enjoy the sweet sights and sounds of the earthly spring. The singing of the birds, the opening of the fruit blossom, the budding of green leaves, and the blowing of the March daffodils. May I then be prepared to enter the everlasting spring and to walk among the birds and flowers of paradise'.

And then Hardy. His poem 'A Woman Driving' seems desperate to know if his first wife Emma has survived death:-

"Where drives she now? It may be where No mortal horses are. But in a chariot of the air Towards some radiant star".

But my last must be "August Midnight" for its musing embraces all that is at heart of these three.

A shaded lamp and a waving blind,
And the beat of a clock from a distant floor:
On this scene enter- winged horned and spined-
A Longlegs, a moth, and a dumbledore;
While mid my page there idly stands
A sleepy fly, that rubs its hands

Thus meet we five, in this still place,
At this point of time, at this point in space.

--My guests besmear my new penned line,
Or bang at the lamp and fall supine.
"God's humblest they! "I'll muse, Yet why?
They know earth-secrets that I know not I.

The Christian's Gospel, his good news, is of one who at the end will gather up those fragments of our divided lives so that nothing is lost. In the meantime, Francis Kilvert, William Barnes and Thomas Hardy --- We thank God for every remembrance of you.

ARCHDEACON HENRY HARPER

by Miss Lyndall Hancock, Dunedin, New Zealand

In the past decade I have been surprised to find nearly a dozen links, large and small, between the Diary and faraway New Zealand. Most of these links have been pointed out by Edward West. So it was quite in keeping that after June 1993 Commemoration service at Eglwys Oen Duw, he lost no time in writing to tell me of Canon Price's mention of yet another link.

The Canon spoke at the service of Miss Clara Thomas, the local "great lady" whom Francis Kilvert met on February 11th 1870. (i.33, and the newsletter for September 1993) Apparently the Rev Henry William Harper wanted to marry her but she turned him down - and the New Zealand connection is that the same Henry later became (or already was?) a well known Archdeacon in New Zealand.

The plain facts about Archdeacon Harper's life aren't hard to find. He lived always in the public view, whether or not he chose it that way. But there is not a hint, naturally of any long-remembered love. All we know is that he never married Canon Price recounts, he was buried near Miss Clara's grave at Eglwys Oen Duw, the church of the Lamb of God.

Henry William Harper was born in 1833 at Eton where his father, Henry John Chitty Harper was a clergyman. He was educated at Eton and at Merton College, Oxford, and he graduated M.A in 1856. In that same year he journeyed to New Zealand with his parents and their younger children, straight after his father had been ordained in the Lambeth Palace Chapel as the Bishop of Christchurch in the South Island of New Zealand. (It was Bishop Selwyn, the first Bishop of New Zealand and a close friend, who had done the persuading for this faraway appointment) Henry had been trained for ordination but was not yet ordained, and so for a year or so after their arrival in Christchurch he helped his father as a layman.

Christchurch, the main town in the province of Canterbury, had only been founded 6 years earlier. It was one of New Zealand's planned settlements and was intended to be a transplanted piece of England - although in 1856 only the social structures and some placenames showed it. It was too early for today's carefully-cultivated "English" look.

After his ordination in 1858, Henry was given the arduous task of travelling on horseback around Canterbury province to collect guarantees of stipends and to organise this large area into parishes. About 1865 he returned to England to talk to clergymen and recruit some of them for all these new parishes, and then back in New Zealand again he was anointed as Archdeacon to the large parish of Westland (the West Coast of the South Island). From being a sparsely-settled and rather inaccessible area, parts of Westland by 1866 had been transformed by recent gold rushes. The new Archdeacon, then aged on 33, had his headquarters in the boom town Hokitika where the main street had 80 pubs, and he marvelled that at one of his preaching places there were 2500 miners working in an area where no white man had set foot until only two years earlier.

Westland was a well organised parish when Henry left it 9 years later. He was later appointed to St Mary's Church in Timaru, a port on the east coast of the South Island. There, as in Westland, there was plenty of scope for his talents as a good organiser and careful record keeper. The little original St Mary's Church had already been enlarged but was still too small, so Henry persuaded his parishioners that a completely new church was needed - he carried them along with his enthusiasm and his up to date knowledge of church architecture and furnishing, and the result was a very beautiful church in the early English Gothic style. It was built in stages, from the nave in 1888 to the completed church in 1909.

On a short visit to England in 1909, Henry chose the stained glass for the triple lancet east window - and found on his return that his parishioners had raised the cost of the glass and that they wanted the window to be a tribute to him. The glass is particularly fine, showing Christ with His hand upraised in benediction and 30 angels, saints and prophets in groups around Him.

St Mary's today has many reminders of its first Archdeacon. His head carved in stone looks down from the tower onto Church Street. His mother gave the lectern. And the first lectern Bible and the Vicar's Book of Common Prayer were given by Henry in memory of his father, Bishop Harper. Originally both had belonged to the bishop are inscribed, "Presented to the Rev. H J C Harper, M A, Vicar of Mortimer, by the cottagers and Servants in the parish, as a token of their gratitude and respect. August 1856. ("According to the St Mary's parish history, the lectern Bible has a missing

page in Isaiah-chapter 49, and pencilled instructions by the Archdeacon on where to find it. Once, in pre-instructions days,"a lay reader had read straight on and no-one appeared any the wiser. Others had improvised a verse and hastily closed down")

The Archdeacon resigned from St Mary's in 1911, and thereafter lived in England. He died in London on January 22nd 1922, aged 89, and was buried at Eglwys Oen Duw.

Obituaries described him as being tall and upright, a genial man with a keen mind and a great interest in education, astronomy and the arts. He was ever the optimist, as an often quoted story tells. Once, at a weekday evening service in Lent, his brother Walter preached for him. Afterwards Henry congratulated him, "Splendid congregation, Walter, splendid congregation." To which Walter replied, "Exactly forty Henry, exactly forty."

And so, now that we know the facts of Henry's life, what about the connection with Miss Clara Thomas? where and when did he meet her, propose to her, and decide to be buried near her. Also for the romantically inclined, I can't provide any answers from the New Zealand end. Henry could have met her in 1856 or earlier, while he was an undergraduate at Oxford and she was still in her early teens. But would a proposal of marriage had been more likely later on, when he was well established? Perhaps when he returned to England in 1865-1866. He was aged 33 in that year, and she was 24 and by then an heiress. Henry's next visit was for a year in 1889, when he was also on the Continent and particularly in Italy. (Cannon Price said that Miss Clara was in Italy every springtime for many years). After that Henry made only a brief visit to England in 1909 to choose the stained glass, before returning ~~g-for-returning~~ in 1912-Miss Clara died in London in 1914. Had they, perhaps, kept in touch through the years? We simply don't know. Any diaries, if extant, might have useful entries - or maybe not.

They are half a world apart, St Mary's Church in Timaru and the secluded little Eglwys Oen Duw. I spent my teenage years in Timaru, attending a school where Archdeacon Harper had been an early Governor, and cycling every school day along Harper Street. And now, years later, I have found through the Diary and Canon Price and Edward West that there is a tenuous connection between the New Zealand city and the little Welsh church. Who would have thought that it might have been a long-held love and old memories that made Henry Harper want to be buried where he is at Eglwys Oen Duw?

ALIVE AND WELL, DOWN UNDER

by Miss Lyndall Hancock, Dunedin, NZ

The newsletter for March 1993 reported that 8 American Kilvert Society members had entertained our Chairman and his wife one evening at Harvard University - "the first ever meeting of American members".

I can report that Down Under we are also keeping our end up, although less formally than at Harvard. A meeting of 3 New Zealand Kilvertians (i.e three quarters of our country's total membership!) was held in Dunedin in April 1994 on the occasion of a visit by a member from San Diego, California. Bill Cummings and his wife Jackie arranged the itinerary of their short visit to New Zealand, so that 3 1/2 days could be spent in Dunedin to meet other members - Evelyn Madigan, myself, and Ivy Goodsir who came north from Invercargill to join us. Unfortunately our long warm autumn gave way suddenly to weather straight from the Antarctic, and we didn't manage to do all we had planned for our visitors. Still, that leaves plenty to look forward to, with any future visit. Bill is the first overseas Kilvert Society member to make himself known to members in this part of the country - we hope he won't be the last!

KILVERT AND THE CLASSICS

by Mr David Hepworth (Sheffield)

Francis Kilvert's study of law seems to have had little impact on him. There is no trace of any interest in things legal in the diaries. Of Modern History, which he also read at Wadham, there is some trace, reflected in Kilvert's interest in the personal reminiscences of those who have been part of recent history. Another aspect of Kilvert's education does seem to have remained with him, and to have been an occasional source of some comfort for him. Kilvert had an awareness of classical literature, culture and history which may have been more than that expected of an educated mid-Victorian

Kilvert's education had been completed before Dr Arnold's revolution at Rugby had swept through the education system. As Lockwood comments, he was almost amongst the last generation to be educated outside the public school system. His brother, younger by 9 years, went to Marlborough. The basis of education was classics. Latin and Greek were central to education in the universities of the universities of the middle of the nineteenth century, and students, even those of Law and Modern History, as Kilvert was, would have had a knowledge of Latin and Greek.

His early education at Harnish and later at Claverton Lodge would have brought him to early contact with classical literature, through Augustus Hare's picture of education at Harnish suggests that

expectations and standards were not all they might have been. "My minds dwells drearily on the long days of uninstrusive lessons." (Quoted in Grice) Though Latin was certainly taught, it was taught badly according to Hare. After three and a half years at Harnish he "could barely construe even the easiest passages of Caesar".

We know little of Kilvert's experience at wadham, but his disappointing fourth class degree suggests that he was not a natural academic, or that his preparation was inadequate. Perhaps we can detect some faint echo of Kilvert's limitations as a scholar in the diaries. He is indiscriminating about stories of fairies and determined to identify a noble ancestry. He has a liking for an unusual nomenclature for months and a deep dislike of disagreement. Perhaps his academic approach was more enthusiastic than disciplined.

Though no scholar, Kilvert was certainly familiar with the classical world. We find kilvert reading the Iliad to help Henry Bates with his Greek and the many references in the diaries to classical myth, mottoes and cultures are evidence of a well-educated knowledge of the classical world. As Lockwood asserts, "His mind was well-stored with tales of Greece and Rome" Some of the references, it is true, are of a trivial nature. But there is evidence that Kilvert had more than a merely vestigial interest in classical literature.

Seeing a mother and child in Harnish Park he is reminded of a passage in Virgil's Eclogues. (Eclogues VII 37). He offers an English translation, surely his own complete with a mistranslation or slip of memory: the youth in the passage is a year younger than Kilvert remembers. It is not clear whether Kilvert was writing from memory, recalling the translation of a familiar passage, or whether he was translating from a text in front of him. The translation is accurate apart from the mistaken age. What is more significant is his choice of passage.

For someone in love with the country as Kilvert was, the Eclogues would have been ideal reading. Pastoral poems with gentle themes, rather different from Virgil's more famous and more martial Aeneid. But why does he choose this particular passage? To be reminded of a passage of Virgil. To recall it, or translate it to record it, suggests a knowledge of classical literature which, if not active, was at least sharp enough in focus to draw out a quotation appropriate to a particular situation.

Kilvert describes the passage as "sweet", a much overused Kilvertian adjective, but comments on the fact that Virgil must have drawn the description from early recollection. Kilvert was a sympathetic reader of poetry, but this insight hints at more than a superficial acquaintance with literary cliches.

The quotation is followed in the diaries by a lacuna resulting from Plomer's editing. We do not know if Kilvert continued the quotation in the passage removed by Plomer, but it continues:

ut vidi, ut perii ! ut me malus abstulit error !

.....nunc scio quid sir Amor

At first sight I perished. At first sight a wicked aberration stole me away.

Now I know what Love is really like.

The poem Kilvert quotes has Damon describe his sadness at Nysa's marriage to Mopsus. Nysa has spurned him and all his talents to marry another. It is Nysa whom Damon guided through the garden when he was almost twelve years old. A lover is spurned. His paramour marries another.

quid non speremus amantes?

What may we lovers not expect?

With Kilvert's propensity for falling in love at first sight, and his disappointments, this may have been a question he had asked himself before.

Why did Kilvert remember this poem? He responded warmly and sympathetically to poetry. Indeed, he responded through feelings in many situations recorded in the diary. Why does the poem surface now? Could Kilvert have read or reread this poem? On 11 August he had written of falling in love at first sight with Kathleen Mavourneen. Virgil surface two months later. It describes almost exactly what Kilvert records are his own experience on 11 August. Had this poem somehow been identified with Kathleen Mavourneen?

If this had were an isolated incident, it would be wholly trivial. It does not serve as evidence of anything more than a mere working knowledge of the classics. Something approaching a sympathetic identification with classical poetry and an ability to recall it with ease would require more than one instance. And that is exactly what Kilvert gives us.

On Monday 17 August, just six days after meeting kathleen Mavourneen, Kilvert records that he read the lessons in his Greek testament, and the first ode from Horace's fourth book. From this we can see

that Horace at least had a place in Kilvert's library. But what is this poem which Kilvert chooses to read, and also to record in the diary?

The poem is a love poem. It is the poem of a man feeling old, too old to be troubled by love, but smitten nonetheless. While he tries to persuade Venus to visit some younger, more talented individual, he clearly welcomes her call. The poem begins:

You, Venus, want to renew contests long suspended. Spare me, I pray, I pray. I am not the man I was under Cinara's kind regime.

(Ernest Dowson took this latter line as epigraph to his famous poem). Horace's subject is so deeply in love that tears roll down his cheeks, and he is unaccustomedly tongue-tied. He is in love, and rejuvenated through the experience. So was Kilvert.

It is interesting that the two classical poems Kilvert mentions were so appropriate to his mood at the time. It may also be significant that both were mentioned in a period of approximately two months at the beginning of his relationship with Kathleen Mavourneen. It was also a classical convention to disguise the name of the loved one with a metrically similar name. did Katharine become Kathleen in a classical context.

Katherine and Kilvert had begun to share poetry on the day of their meeting. She spoke of "her" favourite in Memoriam. On October 1 they had shared their favourite passages "and poems". Three days later he received some references to "our" favourite In Memoriam. Clearly poetry was very much on his mind from the start of this relationship. In Memoriam has quickly become "our" favourite. Perhaps it should be no surprise that in moments of heightened emotion Kilvert returned to the canon of poetry he knew so well, some of it was classical.

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THE BREDWARDINE FLOWER FESTIVAL

The event was organised to help the appeal for funds to repair Kilvert's "great south window". (The cost has been estimated at £8000). Since with Clyro, Bredwardine must be the most frequently visited of all the Kilvert churches, I felt some account might be of interest.

The porch spectacularly illustrated a riverside walk (July 3rd 1878). Either side of the Norman doorway wet pebbles on the floor gave way to daisies in turf, with above and behind a mass of grasses, ferns, brambles and leaves of flag iris all lit up by willow herb, meadow sweet angelica and Kilvert's favourite red campion.

Inside, facing the door, was a representation of Little Davy's funeral, feverfew and ox eye daisies for the snow, and a child's toy cast aside at a corner. Further up on the north side the wedding of April 26th 1878 was illustrated by a wedding gown, bouquet, the "musey arch" and the "carpet of flowers". The cottage lecture of January 3rd 1878 occupied the pulpit area. The open Bible and hymn book, and the lectern too were surrounded by the "hedge" of ivy, honeysuckle, foxgloves and angelica. rising to the pulpit itself, inside which burned "the cottage lamp". The great south window was a blaze of colour, a cottage garden - the reference for which and for the following I failed to record. This latter was of a garden again with a path leading to a stile into a wood. Here I was momentarily disapproving, for I noticed a very fine specimen of the New Zealand myrtle tree in the display. But I recalled that our three very loyal members all visited the church - two of them in my company. The tree, I decided was a symbol of how the little church had become a mecca for Kilvert lovers the world over!

I have visited Flower Festivals where the organisers' aim seems to have been to bombard the eyes with as much colour as possible. Bredwardine had two outstanding qualities that such festivals lack - simplicity and charm!

Excellent refreshments were served at Old Court where Mrs Whittall and her helpers extended a most cordial welcome (Members may recall a visit to Old Court and to Glebe Cottage in April 1992). I understand Mrs Whittall was the organiser of the event. I trust that the hard work she and the villagers put into the festival will have been well rewarded.

By way of postscript, and well aware that I have on more than one occasion, drawn members to the needs of local churches, I am going to add that the churchwarden, Dr. G Newsholme (of Yew Tree Cottage, Bredwardine, Hereford) will be very grateful for any donations to the Bredwardine Restoration Appeal. If every member sent £5 we would cover than a third of the cost!

The walk on 24th September will retrace part of Kilvert's coach journey through the Lower Wye Valley. Meet at the Wyndcliffe car park (O S Grid reference 524973) at 12.00 for a picnic lunch. The best way there is via the A466 Monmouth to Chepstow Road, turning right at a lane clearly marked WYNDCLIFF (O S Grid Reference 521968). Parking is limited.

After lunch we follow Kilvert's footsteps to the Eagles Nest, about three quarters of a mile up a rough stony track which rises gradually. Boots or stout shoes are recommended.

We then return to the cars and resume Kilvert's coach route to Tintern Abbey where we park in the large car park in front of the Abbey, for parties over 15 in number, costs £1.35 for Senior Citizens and £1.80 for others.

There are a number of hotels and cafes nearby where cups of tea or full cream teas are available

