

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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March 1996

Dear Member,

I begin with apologies to those members who were inconvenienced by the late arrival of the last newsletter. The fault was mine, and I shall strive to ensure that this does not happen again.

To report on our September weekend, the 35 members who turned up for the Walk were shocked to learn our Chairman had been rushed to hospital, for he was to be our leader. Mrs. Lockwood, however, had met our Hon. Secretary, advised him on the route, and he it was who took charge (Our Chairman, after another operation, is making steady progress).

Cars were parked at Forest Common, and after a picnic lunch, the party set off past the Upper Noyadde (where Florence Hill lived) down to the Moity, no longer a chapel but a private dwelling. From here, the party retraced Kilvert's walk of April 19th 1876, to the bottom of the road leading to Gogia, made their way back to the Lower Noyadde and thence to where cars had been parked. Our leader read from the Diary relevant passages en route. A very enjoyable walk, sunshine, fine visibility, and thanks to Mr. Sharp for so ably deputising!

The Autumn Commemoration service was held the following day at Glaschw, by kind permission of Revd. A. Pearcey (priest in charge). Despite the late dispatch of the newsletter there were some 70 present. For those of us who travelled by coach, the drovers' road from Newchurch, very narrow, was achieved without delay, and a short detour was made to visit Colva church. Mr. Kenneth Clew was one of the party, and demonstrated the "echo" (February 26th 1870). And what a contrast between Colva's almost barn-like structure the elegant church at Glaschw, the former high-up on the open hillside, the latter in a secluded valley!

The service, attended by some 70 members was conducted by Revd. A. Pearcey (priest in charge). The Act of Remembrance was performed by Revd. Canon D.T.W. Price (a Vice President of the Society), the lessons read by Mr Sharp and myself, and the address was given by Revd. P.B. Barnes. The vicar of Cusop, he is also in charge of Clifford, Moccas, Hardwick and Bredwardine. It is hoped that his thoughtful address will be included in our next issue.

There followed a sumptuous tea at the village hall, provided by the ladies of the parish. Our Hon. Sec. deputising for our Chairman, read relevant passages from the Diary, and it was good to meet old friends again and to make acquaintances. The Society's thanks go to all those who made for a most enjoyable day!

But the delight did not end there. Coming down from Newchurch to Clyro, those of us on the coach were treated to the panorama of Bredwardine Hill, Mouse Castle, Cusop Hill, the Black Mountains and the Brecon Beacons, all bathed in golden evening sunshine. Travelling on the coach with his wife and sister was an old school friend of mine, who until a few months earlier, I had not met for 63 years. He had grown up in the area, and claimed that the view was as magnificent as he could ever recall. I agreed!

1996 Programme: details regarding the weekend of April 26th - 27th appear at the end of this newsletter. Summer Commemoration Service on June 30th at Builth, by kind permission of the vicar, Revd. A. Hall. More information will appear in the next issue.

Yours sincerely,

E J C West



Hardenhuish Rectory, Kilvert's birthplace. Members who attended the service at the church held to commemorate the 150th anniversary of his birth will recall the kind invitation to visit the Rectory from our life members, Mr. and Mrs. K. Snook. I regret to record that Mrs. Snook has died and the house is now on the market. The Society thanks the estate agents for permission to use the photograph.

OBITUARY

Mr. John Pugh, aged 99 years, a member since 1961. Retiring from farming in Powys, he lived in Hereford for some 20 years and travelled regularly with the coach party to commemoration services.

BOOK REVIEWS

"Wandering in Wales and the Borderlands" by Veronica Thackeray (published by Cressrelles Publishing Co. Ltd., Colwall, Worcs WR13 6RN at £12.50)

Of the 14 chapters that comprise this book, 3 are devoted to Shropshire and the remainder very largely to the northern half of Powys. The author (a member of the Kilvert Society) has based her "Wanderings" on the books of A.G. Bradley, the well-known travel writer of about 100 years ago (For those who find his style oppressive, it must be said that Miss Thackeray uses a clear, precise idiom) The first chapter sets the tone of the book. It contains an account of meeting an old Ludlow man whose working life had been spent in service in great houses, and who in retirement had returned to his native place to be the chief bellringer and sexton of the wonderful parish church. Such oral history is contrasted with a visit to the hall and the church at Bitterley, where she uses factual history in reference to these buildings. It is a feature of her book that she seeks out interesting characters and offsets their history with that of the great landowners.

I admired her treatment of market towns, so often dismissed all too briefly in guide books - such as Llandrindod, Rhayader, Knighton. It is following this last that she travels to Pilleth, where she writes of Owen Glendower's last victory over the English, and proceeds to Abbey Cwmhir. Here Kilvert gets his fullest treatment, followed by the wonderful account of Grandfather Lewis, salmon poacher.

But with all the history and the anecdotes, the reader is constantly present with Miss Thackeray, going with her into post offices and farms to collect the key to the church, sharing her misfortunes with her car, her pleasure at seeing sugar mice for sale at Christmas, and her emotions on finding one of the Elan valley reservoirs quite empty, revealing traces of the house Shelley rented for 2 years.

How often have I met fellow members visiting Radnorshire for the first time who have been struck by the beauty and interest of mid-Wales! This book should enlarge their interest, and would be a very valuable read for any who plan a tour on holiday in the area.

"Marked Paper": 30 new poems by David Lockwood, published by Gomer Press.

While nine of the poems in this production draw their inspiration from the paintings of Keith Andrew and a few are based on deep personal feelings, the remainder are considerations of the commonplace - an old family photograph, a pomegranate, a dead lamb, ink and a committee meeting (not a Kilvert

one I trust!). Subjects such as these, it might be thought, offer little in description or comment, but a reading of the poems indicates clearly that our Chairman has the real poetic gift of making the commonplace memorable, often by sharp, precise observation. The pomegranate is "burnished like a well-worn saddle"; the old family photograph taken while "plans for peace in mirrored halls" are being carried out (1919), offers him the rare joy of holding in his hand "the gladness of the day, the soul in a camera's click"; the dead lamb has "crisp, paper bones, linked with a still articulated spine"; and ink is "the potent liquid" (which) "sometimes shoots the heart into the skies".

His comments, conclusions, vary in mood. From the commonplace he can draw sympathy, humour, irony, wit and wonder. The more serious personal poems ponder the mystery of life and death. And it is not surprising that Kilvert makes two appearances!

"Marked Paper" can be obtained, at £4 per copy, from our Chairman, whose address is given at the heading of this newsletter.

"Kinnersley: a Kilvert Guide" by K.R. Clew.

Yet another leaflet by our tireless member, Mr. Kenneth Clew, assisted by our Hon. Sec. who lives in the village! Kinnersley features only in the last year of Kilvert's life, having the advantage of being the most accessible railway station while he was vicar of Bredwardine, from which he would travel either to Hay and Brecon or to Hereford where he could change trains for returning to Wiltshire or to the north. Information is given about the train service. The two most important buildings, the castle and the church, are described, also a short walk which includes the Rectory visited by Kilvert for a garden party. A map is provided, and there are pleasing sketches of both the castle and church - the whole production well up to Mr. Clew's usual standard of accuracy and clarity.

All sales go to Church Funds. Copies can be obtained from our Hon. Sec., Old Forge, Kinnersley, Hereford HR3 6QB at 25p plus postage.

The Bishop's Address at Peterchurch, 25th June

Text: Psalm 104, Verse 24 - "O Lord, how manifold are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches", and from the New Testament, Acts, Chapter 14, Verse 17 "God has not left himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness".

Those are two texts which I feel Kilvert would have approved, and which would have moved him and inspired him: the psalm is a great hymn of praise to God in creation, and St. Paul's use of the natural religion argument, which he was to develop further in his debate at Athens in the Court of Areopagus.

But let me set alongside those texts - important as they are, and very much in tune with the theme I would like to try to develop - one of the most moving and beautiful passages from Francis Kilvert's diary:

"The afternoon had been stormy but it cleared towards sunset. Gradually the heavy rainclouds rolled across the valley to the foot of the opposite mountains and began climbing up their sides weaving in rolling masses of vapour. One solitary cloud still hung over the brilliant sunlit town, and that whole cloud was a rainbow. Gradually it lost its bright prismatic hues and moved away up the Cusop dingle in the shape of a pillar and of the colour of golden dark smoke.

"The Black Mountains were invisible, being wrapped in clouds, and I saw one very white brilliant dazzling cloud where the mountains ought to have been. This cloud grew more white and dazzling every moment, till a clearer burst of sunlight scattered the mists and revealed the truth. This brilliant white cloud that I had been looking and wondering at was the mountain in snow. The last cloud and mist rolled away over the mountain tops and the mountains stood up in the clear blue heaven, a long rampart line of dazzling glittering snow so as no fuller on earth can white them.

"I stood rooted to the ground, struck with amazement and overwhelmed at the extraordinary splendour of this marvellous spectacle. I never saw anything to equal it I think, even among the high Alps. One's first involuntary thought in the presence of these magnificent sights is to lift up the heart to God and humbly thank him for having made the earth so beautiful. An intense glare of primrose light streamed from the west, deepening into rose and crimson. There was not a flake of snow on anything but the mountains and they stood up, the great white range rising high up into the blue sky, while all the rest of the world at their feet lay ruddy rosy brown. The sudden contrast was tremendous, electrifying. I could have cried with the excitement of the overwhelming spectacle. I wanted someone to admire the sight with me. A man came whistling along the road riding upon a carthorse. I would have stopped him and drawn his attention to the mountains, but I thought he would probably consider me mad. He did not seem to be the least struck by or to be taking the smallest notice of the great sight. But it seemed to me as if one might never see such a sight again".

That is a place that I know and love; weather I recognise, although I have never seen it quite as Kilvert describes it. But what strikes me above all else - and draws me right into Kilvert's way of thinking - makes me want to say "Yes, I know exactly how you felt" is his reference to the man riding the carthorse.

I can recall vividly feeling precisely like that on a journey not all that long ago by train to Carlisle. We had passed through industrial Lancashire, grey and forbidding still, and were approaching the foothills of the Lake District. We ran along the Lune Gorge, with the Howgills to the east of us, and then briefly a glimpse of the high mountains to the west. The sun broke through, and the first snow of autumn glittered on the mountaintops. It was amazingly beautiful, a miraculous vision.

In a seat near me there was a girl sitting reading a women's magazine, slowly consuming a packet of potato crisps. Her eyes remained firmly fixed on the trivial text in front of her. I wanted desperately to awaken the girl's interest - I felt deeply sorry, even in a curious way indignant, that she could not or would not look up; that she was missing something so precious and beautiful and fleeting. And I wished that somehow I had had the courage or the impertinence to say "Look! It's wonderful; it's magically beautiful". I was grateful for that view, that experience, the exaltation of that moment, the sense of being moved and inspired by it, and I longed to share it, and like Kilvert I couldn't.

Kilvert was of course an intensely shy person, at least in some ways. All hedged about by the conventions of Victorian society, moving quite frequently among the gentry, but being himself for so long a curate without prospects, he was again and again inhibited - above all of course in his approaches to the girls he was attracted to and whom - in the privacy of his diary - he is able to describe so enthusiastically, with such fulsome and innocent longing.

But it is characteristic of him that he is reticent. His pastoral ministry is faithful and caring, but he seldom talks openly of the Gospel, of the love of God in Christ. We often do not know whether he prays with the sick and dying, who are so often the people he visited in that age of widespread illness and premature death. But he cares deeply; he is sensitive, profoundly moved by sickness and poverty, and sad when - after leaving Clyro - he has to write in his diary "Sad accounts reach me of the neglected state of my poor Clyro"; "My sheep wander through the mountains". He is heartbroken by the sight, one Maundy Thursday, of the dead blackbird caught in the trap: "a gin fastened to a post by chain had been set on the top of the post to catch marauding birds. It has caught a poor blackbird by both legs between its cruel teeth. The bird in its struggles must have dragged the gin from the top of the post and there hung 'the ouzel cock so black of hue with orange tawny bill', the poor bird silent for ever, quite dead, a blue film over his bright dark eye and his orange tawny bill closed, never to open again. He has not I think been long dead. And what a death, the slow agonies of hunger, and the agonies of two crushed and broken legs. I felt sick and sorrowful as I went on. 'The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now'. Somehow the suffering creature reminded me of the Saviour on the Cross. I felt as if some sin of mine had brought him there".

He is delighted when some of the constraints are removed, and he has a rare opportunity to preach to a congregation consisting only of the ordinary country people. On Palm Sunday 1872 there was a heavy fall of snow, and he writes: "I had the happiness to have all the poor people to myself. None of the grand people were in church by reason of the snow, so of course I could speak much better and more freely". The words "of course" are significant, and reflect the shyness he felt in the presence of those he thought of as his social superiors - though they were seldom his intellectual betters.

And when he returns to Clyro, a year after leaving, he is surprised and touched by the warmth of the welcome the children give him - genuinely surprised, and deeply touched. It must have been a very good ministry; conscientious, generous, sensitive and full of love. But, unhappy and uneasy about some of the problems he found confronting him, and of poverty and social inequality, he has no idea how to try to change things. He is surprisingly acquiescent in a social order he does not much like, and an economic system whose often cruel and unfair results he sees all around him. He writes with deep regret and sadness of the dreadful consequences of the South Wales Coal Strike, especially insofar as his parishioners cannot obtain fuel, and suffer terribly from cold and the inability to cook hot food. Yet there is seldom enough any attempt to analyse or reflect on the causes of the unrest or the issues behind the Strike.

What emerges from a reading and re-reading of the Diary is a very good man; an immensely attractive person (despite his occasional ill-tempered outbursts, especially his ferocious castigation of tourists; "Of all noxious animals the most noxious is a tourist. And of all tourists the most vulgar, ill-bred, offensive and loathsome is the British tourist". This is strong stuff, and yet he seems blissfully and perversely unaware of the fact that we are enjoying his own description of countless tourist visits to practically every corner of England).

But he is often intensely lonely, using the diary to pour out the thoughts and reflections amid longings which he can often not share with any really sympathetic friend or member of his family. And he lacks the intellectual rigour and practical courage to question assumptions and inherited values when they cry out to be changed. He is essentially a pastor, not a prophet, and although he writes often superbly, with an artist's eye and a poet's pen, he cannot share his joys and insights with the man on the carthorse or with so many others he meets in the course of his ministry.

As we celebrate Kilvert today - his very remarkable literary achievement, but even more his good and faithful life in this beautiful Marches country, we can renew our sense of gratitude for what he recorded, and what he shares with us through his written word. But perhaps we may also seek to learn from what I might even dare to call his failures and his shortcomings; learn to be braver and more effective in sharing our own enthusiasms, above all for the goodness of God, the beauty of the

created order, and the Good News of Jesus Christ - to be more openly evangelistic, in a society where so many people are touchingly, even desperately longing to hear the Good News. And let us resolve to be more bold and effective in working to change what is wrong in a society whose casualties are only too evident to us, as they were to Kilvert. To his pietism, let us bring a degree of prophetic fire. Delighted and sustained by his writing, let us do all we can to share his sense of awe and wonder among a wider circle.

And let us be glad that, in some small way, this service will be helping to ensure the future of this beautiful church, and its landmark spire, which Kilvert himself knew and loved. There is a short quotation from the Diary on the back page of your service sheet, but let me end by reading a little more from that passage.

"William and I walked up to the top of Moccas Park, whence we had a glorious view of the Golden Valley shining in the evening sunlight with the white houses of Dorstone scattered about the green hillsides, 'like a handful of pearls in a cup of emerald' and the noble spire of Peterchurch rising from out of the heart of the beautiful rich valley which was closed below by the Sugar Loaf and the Skirrid, blue above Abergavenny.

'As we came down the lower slopes of the wooded hillside into the glades of the park, the herds of deer were moving under the brown oaks and the brilliant green hawthorns, and we came upon the tallest, largest stateliest ash I ever saw, and what seemed at first in the dusk to be a great ruined grey tower, but which proved to be the vast ruin of the King Oak of Moccas Park, hollow and broken but still alive and vigorous in parts and actually pushing out new shoots and branches. That tree may be 2000 years old. It measured roughly 33 feet round by arm-stretching.

I fear those grey old men of Moccas, those grey, knarled, low-browed, knock-kneed, bowed, bent, huge, strange, long-armed, deformed, hunchbacked misshapen oak men that stand waiting and watching century after century biding God's time with both feet in the grave, and yet tiring down and seeing out generation after generation with such tales to tell as, when they whisper them to each other in the mid-summer nights, make the silver birches weep and the poplars and aspens shiver and the long ears of the hares and rabbits stand on end. No human hand set those oaks. They are 'the trees which the Lord hath planted'. They look as if they had been at the beginning and making of the world, and they will probably see its end."

It is language worthy to be set alongside that of the Psalmist, and like St. Paul's words at Lystra, it ought to point us clearly to the wonder and beauty of creation - and to the reality of God.

THE SECOND KILVERT DINNER AT HARVARD

A year ago, Revd. Dr. Carl Seaburg, his brother Revd. Alan and some fellow members of the Society spent a holiday in the U.K. Wanting to meet again our Chairman and Mrs. Lockwood who had been the guests of honour at the first Kilvert Dinner, they made a flying visit to Llowes, via Ross-on-Wye, where I joined them. Little did I think that a few months later that the brothers would invite me to be guest of honour at a second Kilvert Dinner - and when the invitation came, I didn't immediately accept it. But assured of the care that British Airways take of the elderly and infirm, I flew to Boston, was met by the brothers, and the tail-end of a hurricane!

Within 24 hours the hurricane had given way to the most beautiful autumn weather, persisting to the end of my stay. Knowing my enjoyment in history and literature, the brothers and other members took me to sites of the War of Independence - Lexington, Concord, North Bridge - and to houses (now museums) where such famous writers as Louisa May Alcott, Longfellow, Hawthorne and Emily Dickinson had lived and worked. Everywhere there was the brilliant scarlet, orange, gold and pale yellow of autumn foliage, and an undergrowth of crimson sumacs. Wonderful!

But to the dinner, held at the Faculty Club at Harvard, a very handsome 19th Century house! Sixteen members and friends were present, some of whom I knew only by their address; it was a great pleasure to meet them. A stirring and eloquent toast to Kilvert's memory was given by Mr. Peter Turgeon, and an excellent meal followed. Over the coffee Professor Cassara read an accomplished paper on Kilvert's Humour (which follows this item). When my turn came, I spoke of how my pleasure in the Diary had been enhanced not only through having in Radnorshire grandparents, roughly contemporary with Kilvert, but also through a long acquaintance with Llanthomas; how a legible handwriting for addressing envelopes led to my becoming Hon. Sec. and that stint leading to a visit to the States. Kilvert would have enjoyed the conclusion of the evening - we sang "Lead, kindly light" to the old A. and M. tune!

I shall never forget the kindness of Professor and Mrs. Cassara, Revd. and Mrs. Widrick, and above all that of Carl and Alan. My gratitude is too deep for words!

E.J.C.W.

this is Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Readers of Gibbon obviously learn many facts about Rome, but they learn a great deal, as well, about the skeptical attitudes of a gentleman of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, as brought to bear on both Roman history and on the affairs of his own day. In preparing for this evening, I decided that I must read through William Plomer's three-volume edition of the diary, since, up to that point, I had read only his condensation. In so doing, I learned, of course, much more about Francis Kilvert, but also about Editor Plomer. I learned that the latter appreciated a good guffaw, for he had included in the condensation every one of the stories that had elicited such a response from me when I read it.

I shall draw on the three-volume edition of the diary this evening, however, for there are elements of humor in it that are worthy of note, even if they do not qualify as uproarious.

How to proceed? I believe I am correct in saying that the humor in the diary falls into two obvious categories: Kilvert's experiences and his observations thereon; and stories that he records second hand. Both have their own charm.

I suppose the most well-known, beyond the circles of the Kilvert Society, is his account of the funeral of Aunt Maria Kilvert of Worcester, which I learned from the Reverend David Lockwood's biography, Virginia Woolf called the funniest account of a funeral in the English language. (*here he gives the funeral of Aunt Maria*)

Now, to examples that merely bring a smile to the face, or, as I remarked earlier, cause the reader to guffaw. I'll now proceed chronologically.

30 April 1870:

May Eve, Saturday

Mr. Venables started in the Hay omnibus from Clyro Vicarage for London for his two months' absence at 10.15.

This evening being May Eve I ought to have put some birch and wittan (mountain ash) over the door to keep out the 'old witch'. But I was too lazy to go out and get it. Let us hope the old witch will not come in during the night. The young witches are welcome.

16 July 1870:

The party at Pont Vaen divided itself into croquet and archery. High tea at 7 just before which someone managed to shoot a chicken with an arrow, or it was said so, and Margaret Oswald told me that as I put my head through the railings to rake a croquet ball out of the field on to the lawn, my head looked so tempting that she felt greatly inclined to shoot at it. Certainly there would have been this comfort that if she had shot at me I should have been very much safer than if she had not, because wherever else the arrow might have gone, it certainly would not have hit me.

8 March 1872:

At the Scripture Lesson at the School this morning asking Eleanor Williams of Paradise, 'What happened on Palm Sunday?' she replied, '*Jesus Christ went up to heaven on an ass*'. This was the promising result of a long struggle to teach her something about the Festivals of the Church.

16 December 1872:

Mrs. Banks told again the story of old Dame Matthews and the man who stole the pound of butter which her mother old Mrs. Thomas Knight used to be so fond of telling.

Dame Matthews used to live at the Home Farm at Langley Burrell. She was a member of the family, but she must have lived a long time ago, as Mrs. Banks remarked, because she called cows 'kine'. The Dame used to sit in the chimney corner and near her chair there was a little window through which she could see all down the dairy. One evening she saw one of the farm men steal a pound of butter out of the dairy and put it into his hat, at the same moment clapping his hat upon his head.

'John,' called the Dame. 'John, come here. I want to speak to you.' John came, carefully keeping his hat on his head. The Dame ordered some ale to be heated for him and bade him sit down in front of the roaring fire. John thanked his mistress and said he would have the ale another time, as he wanted to go home at once.

'No, John. Sit you down by the fire and drink some hot ale. 'Tis a cold night and I want to speak to you about the kine.'

The miserable John, daring neither to take off his hat nor go without his mistress's leave sat before the scorching fire drinking his hot ale till the melting butter in his hat began to run down all over his face. The Dame eyed him with malicious fun. 'Now, John,' she said, 'you may go. I won't charge you anything for the butter.'

(*Here he gives the Vicar of Fordington's account of when he first came to the church*)

3 January 1875:

"One New Year's Day Mr. Rich, the Vicar of Chippenham, was administering the Holy Communion when a poor man taking the Chalice into his hand wished the Vicar 'A Happy New Year'."

15 January 1875:

Speaking to the children at the school about the Collect for the 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany and God's peace I asked them what beautiful image and picture of peace we have in the xxiii Psalm. 'The Good Shepherd,' said I, 'leading His sheep to ?' 'To the slaughter,' said Frederick Herriman promptly. One day I asked the children to what animal our Saviour is compared in the Bible. Frank Matthews confidently held out his hand. 'To an ass,' he said.

3 March 1876:

I went by the mahogany tree across the evening meadows to Peckingell. Farmer Austin was a little better. He told me that when his first child was born he was one day on business at Farmer Thomas Knight's at the Langley Burrell Manor Farm. The old farmer asked him if he did not want to have his wife downstairs again. Austin said he did, for it was very inconvenient her being upstairs so long and he missed her sorely. 'Then,' said Farmer Thomas Knight, 'I'll tell you what to do. You pinch the nurse on the stairs and make her holler out and that'll fetch the missis down fast enough.'

23 August 1878:

Dined with Dora at the Cottage at 7.30 to meet the Pooles and Mr. Bewton and passed a pleasant evening. I saw Sophy Poole to the Lion as we went home. It was very dark and neither of us could see the door and in groping along the wall for it I put my head through a pane of the bar window with a crash. What a story could be made out of this circumstantial evidence. The clergyman of the parish having dined is seen walking about in the dark with a young lady. He then goes to the public house and breaks the bar window.

I am sure that, were you in my place, you might choose other selections to add to those I have read. Since the time allotted to me is long since up, allow me to close with this personal experience, which I believe that any reader of the diary will appreciate. As much as I enjoyed Kilvert's sense of humor, I found it to be a bonus. It was not what caused me to become a devotee of this remarkable human being. I had handed the one-volume edition of the diary to a friend to look through, when I had read about a fourth of it. It was handed back to me, with the comment that it seemed to be an account of a series of picnics and pleasure trips. A superficial glance, of course, might justify such a comment. But, then, continuing my reading, I came to this remarkable entry that caused me to fall in love with Kilvert for life:

14 March 1871:- the description of snow, cloud and sun on the Black Mountains, used in the Bishop's address.

Kilvert had such an uncanny ability to convey to the page the beauties and wonders of nature, that he could, over hundreds of pages, describe so many aspects of nature, each in such a unique manner, that it makes the diary a remarkable human document. Just when I thought that he could not possibly outdo his power of description, I came to this passage about mid-way through volume three. I'll close with it.

22 April 1876:- Here again, he quotes an extract used in the Bishop's address - the Moccas Oaks.

(Editors's note - the Transatlantic spellings have been retained)

ARRANGEMENTS FOR WEEKEND OF APRIL 26th - 27th

The AGM will be held at Holy Trinity Institute (also known as Hereford Operatic Hall) on Friday, April 26th at 7.00 p.m. The guest speaker is Ms. Veronica Thackeray whose latest book is reviewed in this newsletter. Holy Trinity Church is a large building on the right hand side on the A438 Brecon Road, a little over half a mile from Hereford City Centre, and has a car park for members to use, The Hall is adjacent.

The Walk (Saturday, April 27th). Meet at noon at the car park at Kinnersley church. From Hereford take the A438, then just beyond Wyevale Nurseries the A480. At Sarnesfield turn left on the A4112. From the Welsh border, the A438 to just beyond Willersley then the Leominster A4112. Kinnersley church is conspicuous, its tower having a saddleback roof. It is to be visited, and it is hoped to view the exteriors of the Old Rectory (visited by Kilvert) and of the castle. Picnic lunch.

REMINDER - 1996 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscribing members are reminded that their annual subscriptions (£5) became due on the 1st January.

Under Rule 8, subscriptions must be paid by the 30th of June enabling members, who wish, to pay at the AGM on the 3rd of May.

Lawrence Jackson
Subscriptions Treasurer