

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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September 1997

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Dear Member,

When our Hon. Secretary first considered Whitney-on-Wye as the base of the Society Walk on June 27th, a tentative approach was made to Mr. John Hope of Whitney Court, a member of the Society, regarding the site of "Wordsworth's Terrace" (27 March 1874 and 28 April 1870). A most cordial reply offered both suggestions for the site and a willingness to lead the Walk. This was eagerly accepted, and on a day of low cloud and poor visibility 26 members turned up for the Walk. Mr. Hope had arranged in the lounge of the Court a display of some of the material which had featured in his memorable exhibition of "Whitney through the Ages" (1992), dealing with the Dew family and Kilvert's association with the village.

While Mrs. Hope took charge of the 3 octogenarians, Mr. Hope led the main party up through the woods, and both parties met at the sole surviving perry pear orchard in the parish. (Kilvert had enthused over the pear orchards of Whitney. (27 April 1870)). On their walk, the main party were shown the house occupied by the Revd. Henry Dew before his marriage, the stonework twice recycled from the walls of the mediaeval Whitney Castle via the first Jacobean Whitney Court. Mr. Hope also pointed out the oak trees, some naturally regenerated after cutting in the 1914-18 War; others, more than 200 years old, the last relics of Common Wood.

Heavy rains earlier in the week had not been confined to tennis courts in S.W. London, and a detour which would have yielded one possible site for "Wordsworth's Terrace" had to be abandoned. The other possible site was the Court itself. As I stood there, eastward I could identify Credenhill Camp, just west of Hereford, Merbach (Bredwardine), Mouse Castle and the vague outline of Cusop Hill. A wood in the foreground obscured what would have been Hay Bluff, and low cloud hid the long, imposing, cliff-like northern aspect of the Black Mountains. To the extreme west would have been the Brecon Beacons, clearly visible, Mrs. Hope told me, on a good day. Here, then, was a panorama embracing some 40 miles of the steep woods, and lofty cliffs and green pastoral landscape that Wordsworth loved. I was convinced that this was indeed "Wordsworth Terrace". In a letter to me, Mr. Hope had written, "how angry the aged Revd. Henry Dew had been at a house going up on the hill above him (his Rectory was the highest big house in the village at the time). It seems not at all unlikely that much of his anger

could have been due to a house being built bang on the "Wordsworth Terrace Site!" The Society is indeed most grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Hope for a most enjoyable afternoon.

About 60 members were present at the Commemoration service the following day, held at Kinnersley, by kind permission of the Rector, Revd. Jennifer Pollock, who conducted the service. Robed clergy were Revd. R. Birt (vicar of Weobley and priest in charge of Monnington) and Revd. Canon D.T.W. Price (Vice-President of the Kilvert Society), the preacher and remembrancer respectively.

The singing was led by the choir of the neighbouring parish of Almeley (conductor Mrs. D. Brain), the organist was Miss Annabelle Brown and the lessons read by Mr. P. Wilkins and Major J. Greenfield. The latter gentleman and his wife again had very kindly made The Old Rectory available for the tea. And what a sumptuous spread it was! Our Chairman's vote of thanks to all who had made the afternoon so memorable was most heartily endorsed by those present. (Mr. Birt's most interesting address is printed elsewhere in this issue.)

The September Weekend

This will be based on Presteigne. While the Diary records no visit by Kilvert to this town, our excellent researcher, Mrs. Teresa Williams, has established that he preached at the church in 1865. Yet the Diary index gives several entries. Since Mr. Venables made regular visits to the town as chief magistrate for Radnorshire, it can be assumed that Kilvert was recording comments made by him. A portrait of Mr. Venables hangs in the courtroom. (See entry for 3 December 1874)

Saturday, September 27th. A tour of Presteigne led by Mr. Keith Parker. Meet at the Shire Hall, Broad Street, at 2 p.m.

Sunday, September 28th. Commemoration service at the Parish Church at 3 p.m. The Address will be given by the Revd. E. Fenn. Provided that there is a sufficient number of bookings, a coach will be hired to travel from Ross-on-Wye via Hereford to Presteigne. Members wishing to use this service are asked to include a deposit of £5 with their booking, to be made to me by September 16th.

1998 Jubilee. The Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral have given permission for the Jubilee Commemoration service to be held on June 29th at 3.00 p.m.

Yours Sincerely,
E.J.C. West

OBITUARY

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

Mr. Noel Brack: In a letter to the Hon. Secretary his son wrote the following obituary note.

"Noel Brack, a life member since 1967 died in March aged 94. He worked for Longmans, the book publishers for 40 years, becoming joint managing director. His membership was first a present from a colleague - and never was a gift more apt, since especially after he retired he became a devoted and active Kilvertian. For him, four strands met here. He was fascinated by diarists and diary writing (himself keeping one from 1940 onwards); his father and grandfather (contemporary with Kilvert) were Church of England parsons; he inherited many family records from the 1860s to 1880s on which he and his son worked; and with a home in Surrey and a holiday cottage in Ceredigion the Kilvert country was ideally placed for him to visit and to join in Society events." To this must be added his generosity in an annual donation to the Society, and it is good to think that on one of his last trips to Wales he was able to revisit Bredwardine.

Mr. J. Golesworthy (Hay-on-Wye) a member since 1992. The news of his death came as a great shock to those members who had participated with him in that wettest of Walks last March. He had retired to live at Hay-on-Wye and became a keen member. He acquired the site of the Old Soldier's cottage, now indicated by a plaque. His lively, genial personality will be much missed.

At the Whitney Walk Mr. Hope informed me of the death some while ago of Mr. Philip Dawson. Though his membership had lapsed, some record, I feel is in order. He was the grandson of Mary Bevan, whom he remembered well and whose diary he made available to the Society. He was most helpful in giving information on the Bevan and Dew families, and those members who visited the Whitney exhibition in 1992 will recall the fascinating memorabilia he loaned for the occasion.

THE REVD RICHARD BIRT'S ADDRESS AT KINNERSLEY

I am most grateful to the Rector and the Kilvert Society for giving me the opportunity to preach on this occasion. I have lived in this area now for nearly nine years, and I have in recent years become far more aware of the significance of this part of the borders of England & Wales for a true understanding of the Christian faith as we approach the Millenium and the 21st century.

Writing on Tuesday November 3rd November 1874, Francis Kilvert, still at that time acting as Curate to his Father at Langley Burrell in Wiltshire, wrote words that seem to be the only reference to his motives throughout the 22 thick notebooks spanning the years 1870-1879; They are words that must cause us to regret just how much we have lost of his writing:

"Why do I keep this voluminous journal? 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 altogether away without some such record as this, and partly too because I think the record may amuse and interest some who come after me."

But what kind of writing was it? And what were the his basic attitudes that inspired his writing? There have been some misinterpretations of Kilvert's writings that mirror reactions to some other borderland writers, notably Thomas Traherne. Writing in the Spectator in June 1969, J.M.W. Thompson has some very interesting comments on the initial reactions to Kilvert's writings when they were first published between 1938 and 1940:

*"In that time of war, some readers were tempted to find in it an escape to a cosy imaginary world, where idyllic rural scenes were still unthreatened either by Armageddon or by the internal combustion engine. Paradoxically, much of the diary's lasting value lies in the opposite direction. Kilvert marvellously anatomises a social scene which, while indeed set in an arcadian countryside, possessed a **roughness and rigour** that contrast starkly with the comfortable urban culture of today, founded upon full employment, television, and the parked car outside the council house Today his world has almost wholly vanished; we have abolished most of the human hardships which moved him to compassion, and most of the natural glories which stirred him to now unfashionable awe."*

One wonders what Mr Thompson would say in 1997 about the contrasts today. Would he say that in this year awe was even more unfashionable? In March 1871, in weather reminiscent of what we had on Thursday and Friday in his very countryside (apart from the mountain snow) he wrote this: it is one of the few descriptions which includes an insight into what lay at the heart of his thinking: (Vol. 1 p.308)

"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... 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". He ends his description with these words: *"I could have cried with the excitement of the overwhelming spectacle"*.

Now if we have read much or all of the rest of his writings we might think that he was happiest being able to take in such spectacles on his own. He hated going about in a herd. He did once write that he was grateful for being entirely on his own when taking in the beauty of a particular place. In 1871, he made a pilgrimage to a tumulus on the Black Mountains that had just been opened. He was delighted to find the place deserted. It was so much grander, he thought, to visit the old-world resting place of the wild warriors alone with no one to look on but the silent mountains, than to be stunned by the prattle of the Woolhope Club, or to be disgusted by the sight of a herd of Hay holiday makers and sight-seers cutting bad jokes. He goes on to reflect: *"It is a fine thing to be out on the hills alone. A man can hardly be a beast or a fool alone on a great mountain. There is no company like the grand solemn beautiful hills. They fascinate and grow upon us and one had a feeling and a love for them which one has for nothing else. I don't wonder that our saviour went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in praying to God **there**."* (I. p.350)

But on the day he saw the cloud and mist lift majestically from the Black Mountains, Kilvert actually wanted someone to share his experience with him: (I p.309)

"I wanted someone to admire the sight with me. A man came whistling along the road riding upon a cart horse. 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."

A vivid and all consuming awareness of the world was something that he shared with another priest who had had a country living only a few miles away exactly 200 years previously. And

even more than Kilvert, the other priest, Thomas Traherne, wanted to share his experience of the world with others. He saw that as one of the principal purposes of his ministry. And there is no doubt that he too had a sadness about the way people were blind to the beauty of the world, and a sense that some people thought him mad. Traherne was Rector of Credenhill, near Hereford, from 1647 until his death in 1674.

Although very sadly we are unlikely to find any more Kilvert, the reverse now seems amazingly to be true of Traherne. In 1964 an agent looking for manuscripts on behalf of an American scholar came across a particularly interesting one in a sale not many miles from here, in Birmingham. It turned out to be an unknown writing of Traherne's. In a few weeks' time it is to be published for the first time. Written in about 1660, entitled "Select Meditations", it is one of his earlier writings, and coincides with the crucial moment at the end of the Civil War, when the Church of England and the more traditional politics were born again after the Civil war. In this work, which seems in some way even more adventurous than his later work, he writes this:

Narrow Souls seldom Consider all thy Glories. Even Ants can see the splendour of this world, the Glory of the heavens, Grass, Trees, and flowers, the Brightness of the Sun, and the Beauty of the Day. Blind men Seldom see them. (S.M. 1.87)

Earlier he wrote: *They will not know Him that Nourisheth them, nor feel the Nature joy and Glory of His image in them Selves. Nor see the heavens that splendid crib, nor understand His Love, who Established the Earth, and created it for them. The seas, The sun, the clouds the corn the wine and oyl, all minister and Serv in vain....and that which Glorifieth more every Soul is more despised.*

What Traherne does in much of his writing is to examine what lies behind people's despising of the world. In his writing he both describes experience, and constantly reflects, expressing in thought what lies at the heart of experience. Thus in his poem entitled "Thoughts", Traherne writes:

*We in heaven may be even here on earth, **did we but rightly see.*** Kilvert is mostly content to describe, but he too sometimes reflects, as for example when he writes, on Monday March 6th 1871:

"I like wandering about these lonely, waste and ruined places. There dwells among them a spirit of quiet and gentle melancholy more congenial and akin to my own spirit than full life and gaiety and noise." (Vol 1. p.307)

And towards the end of his life, in August 1874, he reflects on how many people have trodden the same paths as him, over the centuries, little knowing (or did he have an inkling?) that he would soon be joining them:

I love to wander on these soft gentle mournful autumn days, alone among the quiet peaceful solitary meadows, tracing out the ancient footpaths and mossy overgrown stiles between farm and hamlet, village and town, musing of the many feet that have trodden these ancient and now well deserted and almost forgotten ways and walking in the footsteps of the generations that have gone before and passed away. (Aug 31st 1874 Vol III p.74).

In the last few months there have been some significant new discoveries of four hitherto unknown works of Traherne, in of all places the Lambeth Palace Library, where they have been at least since 1911. And one of these writings is entitled "Considerations on whether to lead a solitary life". It will be fascinating to see his conclusions, but if he follows his own inclinations there is no doubt that he would come down in favour of company. He loved company, he loved to be with people, he never stopped talking to them. An early description of Traherne reads:

"...he was so wonderfully transported with the Love of God to Mankind,...and with those inexpressible Felicities to which we are entitled by being created in, and redeemed to, the divine Image, that he dwelt continually among these thoughts, ...and was so full of them when abroad, that those that would converse with him, were forced to endure some discourse upon these subjects, whether they had any sense of religion or not..He was a man of a cheerful and sprightly temper, free from anything of the sourness or formality, by which some great pretenders of Piety rather disparage and misrepresent true religion than recommend it, and therefore was very affable to his Friends, and charitable to the poor almost beyond his ability. (Unsigned preface to "A serious and pathological Contemplation" (1699)).

Now that seems a fine description of what a parish priest should be, and I am sure that much of it applies to Kilvert in like manner. Like Traherne his heart was in the right place. He loved the world that he found: he would believe with Traherne that "we in heaven may be even here on earth, did we but rightly see." And that for both of them included the people around them for whom they cared deeply, whose joy they shared, and whose sorrow they shared, as they found it. For them both perhaps these words of Traherne are specially suitable:

(S.M. 11. 44) *It is a pleasant thing to enjoy Heaven and Earth, but much more pleasant to love a man that is possessor of it. The sweetness of conversation upon wise foundations, being an elevation of the Soul above the Spheres. To see a Mother Contented with his Being, Contemplating the Glory of Heaven and Earth, Adoring God, and Living in the Temple of this world a Divine and Beautiful Life, a celestial joy to the Holy Angels.*"

There is a hint that Kilvert shared Traherne's constantly positive view of life, and earth, in spite of the horrors - Traherne witnessed the English Civil War as a boy - in Kilvert's reflections on Clyro churchyard: (March 24th 1871 Vol 1 p.315)

I sat awhile on the old Catholic tomb of the "Relict of Thomas Bridgwater" ... This is my favourite tomb. I love it better than all the tombs in the churchyard with its kindly "Requiescat in pace", the prayer so full of peace, with its solemn reminder "Tendimus huc omnes" and the simple Latin cross at the head of the inscription. There is something more congenial to my mind in these old Catholic associations than in the bald ugly hideous accompaniments which too often mark the place of Protestant or rather Puritan burial. The Puritans of the last century seem to have tried to make the idea and place and associations of death and burial as gloomy, hideous and repulsive as possible, and they have signally succeeded. What a difference between the orthodox and horrible "Affliction sore long time I bore, Physicians were in vain," and the unorthodox but beautiful and soothing words of prayer "Requiescat in pace."

Traherne would have agreed. For him, we are at all times, whatever our circumstances, within the sphere of God's love and his infinity. He showers us with his love, everywhere, here and now, and beyond death. It is clear that Traherne's view of sin does not take an ultimate pessimistic view, anymore than Kilvert's, any more than Mother Julian of Norwich, the first printed edition of whose writing in English appeared in 1670, just four years before Traherne died. In all these writers there are signs of a view of life that we have lost for too long, and must now rediscover, summed up perfectly by the 20th Century William Beach Thomas, in 'A Countryman's Creed' (Michael Joseph, 1946):

"To those who remember the natural gaiety of their early years, radiating even into old age, the grim doctrine of original sin looms as high treason against whatever gods may be. It is at best a folly of pessimism, if not an impiety to suppose that we inherit the mood of Adam and Eve's one act of disobedience, but not of the natural joy that preceded it. They had loved their garden once. Traherne runs perhaps to the opposite extreme. His ecstasy overflows; but the doctrine of original joy is truer, and therefore more consonant with any real religion, than the libel of original sin."

Of all things, I think I would like to hear Traherne and Kilvert conversing in heaven. The irony of the total unawareness of Traherne in Kilvert's day is highlighted by the last entry we have in his diaries, Thursday March 13th, 1879:

A lovely and cloudless day. Walked with Sam to Kinnersley Station to catch the 11.45 train to Hereford. I got out at Credenhill with Mr Fowle and Charlesworth. We three walked to Credenhill Church, then up by Credenhill Court, and along the hillside under the wood to Brinsop.

A few months later, Kilvert died. 18 years later some of Traherne's writing was found on a barrow bookstall in London. Finally published in 1903, it led to a memorial being erected in Credenhill Church, just 30 years after Kilvert died.

May they rest in peace, and continue to strengthen us in our lives.

A KILVERTIAN ANECDOTE

by the Chairman of the Kilvert Society

One of the things that I admire most about Kilvert as a writer is his realism. He depicts the world as it was all around him. It is a very efficient photograph of his time. Who can forget that passage about Evans, whose loft does duty for a bedroom, and where the black cat awaits his death so that "it can begin on him". (Vol 1. 243)

To some Kilvert lives in a world of pretty girls, charming frocks, croquet and archery parties, picnics and balls. Well, such people have a right to such a reverie, but it is only half of the picture. I am always struck by the contrasts in Kilvert's world and his acceptance of them. But he did what he could to alleviate the poverty he saw - but not as a crusader.

He did not live in a fairyland by any means.

It so happens that the most excellent churchwarden of LLowes who farms next door to where Florence Hill lived is a true Radnorshire man. His humour, his quietness and shy good manners

are typical of characteristics that Kilvert remarks upon.

Last Christmas he told me a story, which I feel I must share with you, for it is truly Kilvertian and it also touches upon the harshness of rural life the aspect we often forget.

Some ten years after Kilvert died, a farm labourer near Cefn y Blaen died. He left a widow and three small children and no money. His wife did seasonal work on the land and in the winter this was scarce. She was proud and independent, on the whole they managed, but it was only subsistence.

One Christmas, a hundred years ago, during one of the periodic agricultural depressions, her money ran out completely. There were certainly no presents for the children, worse there was no food in the house.

On Christmas Day the poor woman reached the very nadir of her misery and depression for their dinner was to consist of nothing more than potatoes. As she peeled them it was the blackest blackest moment of her life. But whilst she did it she heard a strange thumping and fluttering at the door, at first she took little notice but as it continued she fought against her lethargy and went to the door. Opening she found her cat had dragged a cock pheasant to the house.

The remaining life of the bird was quickly despatched, the fowl feathered and cooked and a happy little family - and I hope the cat - enjoyed a real dinner.

My friend's mother never forgot this event, it was a turning point in their lives for not only were they given food they were given hope. Life did not in itself change but their attitude to it did. Work was still hard and it taught those who survived to be tough. He says "My mother was the strongest woman I ever knew. Golly she was strong."

I, only a countryman by choice, not birth, born too, in a cynical time said, a little ironically. "That pheasant was a gift from God." I felt very humbled when with utter, but gentle conviction Trevor replied "Yes, a gift from God".

ANOTHER DIARY

by Mrs. A. Doggett (Lincoln)

"Sunday 13th Feb. 1870. Most bitterly cold. Sponge, water jug and bath water all frozen."

No, not an extract from Francis Kilvert's diary, though he did in fact, write something very similar on December 24th of the same year. The words are taken from the diary of another Victorian country clergyman, born eleven years earlier than Kilvert.

He was John Coker Egerton, curate, then rector of Burwash in East Sussex, from 1857-1888. Like Kilvert, he was the son of a vicar and a graduate of Oxford University. Like Kilvert, he served as curate to a relation - in his case an uncle - whom he succeeded at the age of 37.

Egerton's diary, contained in a number of exercise books, came to light quite recently in the East Sussex County Archive. The material has been carefully researched, edited and annotated by Roger Wells. In 1992 it was published in one volume under the title "Victorian Village".

The book no doubt aroused much interest in the Burwash area but, unlike Kilvert's Diary, has not achieved wide popularity. The reasons are not hard to find.

Kilvert's Diary was one of the first books to appeal to a mood of nostalgia for nineteenth - century rural England. "Victorian Village" nearly 60 years later, is one of very many such publications.

Mr. Wells decided to omit entries concerning the diarist's social and family life, leaving mainly a day-to-day record of his parochial activities. There are no lyrical descriptions of the beauties of nature or the charms of young women. Neither are there any mystical perceptions; we are not given much insight into Egerton's personal faith.

In appearance, as in his writing, he was more prosaic than Kilvert. The frontispiece photograph shows a blunt-featured man with spectacles and a rather portly figure. He himself comments ruefully on the last fact. Above his high-buttoned waist-coat, he wears a clerical collar, unlike Kilvert, who evidently followed the earlier tradition of wearing a white bow-tie.

Although Egerton's diary is not a work of literature, it is certainly an interesting and valuable record of church and village life in the second half of the nineteenth century. Enough of the diarist's personality comes through for us to feel respect and liking for him. Readers of both

diaries will enjoy noticing the similarities and differences between Egerton's Burwash and Kilvert's Wiltshire parish of Langley Burrell.

Burwash was the larger and more unruly place, and in the eighteenth century had been notorious as the haunt of smugglers and highwaymen. Lawlessness still abounded when Egerton became rector and he set out to be a civilising influence. As there was no resident squire, he regarded himself as the "boss" (his word) of the place.

He worked very hard - administering poor relief, meditating in disputes and helping the young men to find work or to emigrate. Like Kilvert, he was a conscientious visitor to the poorest cottagers and often left them a small gift of money or undertook to settle a bill. It was not unusual for the man of the house to have drunk away the money that should have gone to his wife and children.

Drunkenness was a problem in Langley Burrell, too, but apart from this, it seems to have been a more peaceful place than Burwash. Kilvert did note, however, that the villagers appeared less happy with their lot than those in Welsh Clyro.

On the lighter side, both men enjoyed presiding over the tithe suppers, Sunday school parties and penny readings. At these, Kilvert used to recite but Egerton sang, -from a rather small repertoire. His audiences must have grown quite tired of "A Thousand a Year" and "When the Heart was Young". In Burwash, as in Langley Burrell, village youths sometimes tried to sing rude music hall songs and had to be hastily suppressed or ejected.

But Egerton loved music and struggled to bring the church choir of often rebellious young boys up to standard. He was lucky in not having an autocratic Squire Ashe breathing down his neck and interfering in church arrangements.

Egerton had to wait even longer than Kilvert for marriage. When he was 44, he married a woman much younger than himself and they had five children. Sadly, when the youngest was only three, Egerton died, after a short illness, aged 58. He seems to have been sincerely mourned by the people of Burwash. To honour his memory and to mark his long service to them, they installed a clock in the church tower.

If John Egerton and Francis Kilvert had met, would they have liked each other? I think they would. Both were dedicated to their calling. Both were modest, unassuming men with kind hearts and a sense of humour.

They shared an interest in history, national and local and enjoyed the reminiscences of their oldest parishioners. Egerton's book, "Sussex Folk and Sussex Ways" was published in 1883 and he presented a specially bound copy to Queen Victoria. Kilvert would have been rather envious.

It is not entirely impossible that the two men **did** meet, or at any rate that their paths crossed. They both liked to visit their old University in May, to see the boat races, among other things. So it is rather pleasant to imagine them passing the time of day on the tow-path or nodding 'good-morning' to each other as they entered a college chapel for divine service.

Victorian Village ed. Roger Wells. Alan Sutton, 1992, £9.99.

BOYHOOD MEMORIES OF CLYRO by THE BISHOP OF SWANSEA and BRECON

by Mrs. Teresa Williams (North Wembley, Middlesex)

The following letter written by the Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, the Right Reverend Edward Latham BEVAN appeared in **The Times** on 18th January 1934 in response to an obituary published the previous day for Colonel W B CAPPER CVO, (1856-1934), formerly Director of Military Education in India and later Commandant of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, who had settled in Clyro after his retirement in 1913. During his residence in Clyro, Colonel Capper apparently "took a great interest in local affairs and devoted much of his time to public service."

From: **The Times**, Thursday 18th January 1934

ASSOCIATIONS OF CLYRO

Dear Sir: It pains me to note in your memoir of Colonel Capper you have transferred our beautiful Parish of Clyro to a neighbouring county. [Herefordshire] It was certainly still in Radnorshire when I passed through it on Tuesday morning. We are jealous of this mis-handling of Clyro, for not only has it been (until recently) the home of the distinguished soldier to whose fine qualities you bear testimony, but Clyro had had many claims to a distinguished history in the past. It was in Clyro Vicarage, for instance, that famous gatherings of the "**Saturday Reviewers**" used to take

place. Richard Lister VENABLES was Vicar in my boyhood, and here George Stovin VENABLES, the LUSHINGTONS, Frederick Denison MAURICE and others were wont to foregather. A reference to the published volumes of F D MAURICE's sermons will show how many of these were preached in Clyro Church.

I beg you therefore, to leave us in possession of this most charming village.

The Bishop of Swansea and Brecon.

Readers of the Diary, will, of course, know Edward BEVAN as 'Teddy' BEVAN of Hay Castle, and references to Teddy riding over from Hay on his donkey to deliver a note to KILVERT, walking with the Diarist to Pont Vaen, visiting Wombwell's Menagerie at Hay, etc. can be found in volumes 1/372-3; 2/133; 2/192 and 2/270. It is ironic that when Edward BEVAN mentioned the fame of Clyro, he was not to know that some four years after his death, the publication of Volume 1 of **Kilvert's Diary**, would make the village of Clyro far more famous than the "**Saturday Reviewers**" were ever able to do.

On Saturday, 3rd February 1934, just three weeks after Edward BEVAN's letter, **The Times** had the sad task of publishing his obituary, as follows:

"The First Bishop of Swansea and Brecon:

The Right Reverend Edward Latham BEVAN, DD died suddenly last night at his native town of Weymouth at the age of 72. He was spending a short holiday at Weymouth and was taken ill while sitting in a chair at the Royal Dorset Yacht Club of which he was a member, and died immediately. His first curacy was at Weymouth and for many years he had visited the town, staying in a fisherman's cottage overlooking the harbour. He was the founder of the Gordon Boys' Home at Weymouth. He was described as "cheery, unaffected and direct in style." Three years ago in a letter to **The Times** he said he had grown accustomed to being addressed as "Bishop of Swansea Esq.," but the office of a Chief Inspector of Taxes in London had introduced a delightful version by addressing him as "Messrs Swansea and Brecon." The Bishop who was unmarried, leaves a brother and sister. The fourth son of Archdeacon W L BEVAN, he was born at Weymouth on 27th October 1861. He took his degree from Hertford College, Oxford in 1884 and after preparation at Wells was ordained to the curacy of Holy Trinity, Weymouth in 1886. In 1891 he was appointed Chaplain to the Gordon Boys' Home and in 1897 became Vicar of Brecon, holding the benefice until 1921 and being also rural dean for some years. From 1907 to 1923 he was Archdeacon of Brecon and prebendary of Lanvaes in St David's Cathedral. In September 1915 he was consecrated Bishop Suffragan of Swansea in succession to the late Bishop Lloyd. When the new diocese of Swansea and Brecon was created in 1923 he was naturally elected its first Bishop, and was enthroned in the Priory Church on September 14th. He had the oversight of 140 beneficed clergy and 54 curates in the counties of Brecon and Radnorshire and a portion of Glamorgan.

The Bishop had long been keenly interested in the Church of England Men's Association for which he did much valuable work, and had been its chairman since 1923. He was also deputy governor of the Church Lad's Brigade. More than once he pleaded in **The Times** for the abolition of football matches on Good Friday. It has been written of the Bishop that his subjects [of his sermons] appealed to the average man because they were human and not academic."

The funeral services at Holy Trinity Church, Weymouth and Brecon Cathedral on the 5th and 6th February were reported in **The Times** for Wednesday 7th February 1934, from which the following extract is taken.

"The first part of the funeral services for the Bishop of Swansea and Brecon took place at Holy Trinity Church, Weymouth on Monday and was taken by the Reverend C M Ricketts assisted by the Reverend E A Trasenter, the Reverend C H Fox Harvey and Mr A Simpson (local Superintendent of the Christian and Industrial Fellowship).

The coffin was taken by road to Brecon and lay in state in Brecon Cathedral on Monday night. The second part of the service was held at Brecon Cathedral yesterday and was taken by the Bishop of St David's assisted by Canon E A T Roberts and the Archdeacon of Gower. The committal sentences were said by the Archdeacon of Brecon and the Bishop of Bangor gave the Blessing.

The mourners included: the Reverend and Mrs Lewis Davies (brother-in-law and sister), Captain and Mrs Mumford, Hereford, the Reverend E N Dew, the Lord Lieutenant of Breconshire (Lord Glanusk), Major the Hon William Bailey, the Hon Mable and the Hon Gwladys Bailey, Mr A T Dew, Miss Ellen Dew, Miss Alice Dew and Mrs Lloyd Oswell. Amongst those present were the Bishop of Llandaff, the Dean of Monmouth, the Archdeacon of Carmarthen, Lord and Lady Swansea, Sir Charles and Lady Dillwyn-Venable-Llewelyn, Captain E Aubrey Thomas, etc."