

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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DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984. The names and addresses of members are held on a computerised list exclusively for the distribution of Newsletters, and other information about the Society, to its members. If you object to this, please contact the Hon. Secretary. It has been decided that if any member objected, that member would have to provide a **stamped addressed envelope** for dispatch of newsletter.

MARCH, 1999

Dear Members,

Saturday, September 26th, the day of the Society's autumn walk, was in hindsight the prelude to the wettest October on record for the Welsh Border. Of the 17 members who met at Pen-y-Graig fewer than half braved the walk. The crests of Llandeilo and Llanbedr Hills were hidden under low clouds, and the vast expanse of bracken a dark, sodden, green and most uninviting! However, led by Mr. Gordon Rogers, the party attained their goal, Tom Tobacco's grave. Mr. Rogers read the relevant extracts from the Diary, and as usual there was some discussion as to what Tom Tobacco was – innocent or guilty. It had rained for the whole of the walk, so wet clothes were hastily removed and members made their way to Erwood station, now an arts and crafts centre but also offering tea and refreshments. It was, of course, the last two of all these items that interested members! Mr. Rogers was warmly thanked for his leadership!

(Note – Since our walk and unknown to Edward, part of Erwood Station, that offering refreshments etc. has been burnt down due to an electrical fault. However, there are plans to rebuild and hopefully open again as soon as possible.)

The Commemoration service the following day was held in conjunction with Llowes' Harvest Festival, by kind permission of Revd. M. Reed who conducted the service. The Act of Remembrance was made by our Chairman, and the Lessons read by our Archivist and Vice-Chairman. The address was given by Mrs. Jackie Morris (Licensed Reader in the Cusop Group of Parishes). She stated that her brief had been "Kilvert through a woman eyes." Her bedroom window afforded views of Mouse Castle and Cusop, and the back of the house, the parsonage, the Wye Valley, Hay and Clyro. Whether he would recognise Clyro or not, he would probably have been horrified to see a woman in the pulpit! The Lessons (Genesis Ch.2 and S. Matthew Ch.25) had been specially chosen – the former as God as Creator, the latter of the sheep and goats. It was impossible for Kilvert to be unaware of God, surrounded by so much beauty, and as a devoted priest he took good care of his flock. Kilvert has a message for us to-day – be aware of God in this glorious countryside and to care for those less fortunate in the community.

After the service members adjourned to the Parish Hall at Glasbury where a sumptuous tea, provided by the ladies of the two parishes, awaited them.

1999 PROGRAMME: (Please note certain changes from the September Newsletter)

Friday, April 23rd at 7 p.m. Annual General Meeting to be held at The Bishops Palace, Hereford, by kind permission of Mrs. Oliver. Business over, an interval enabling the company to pay subs, to purchase literature and have refreshments at £3.00 per head. The talk will be given by our Publications Manager, Mr. C.J. Marshall – "A musical journey through the Diary".

Saturday, April 24th Walk. This will be led by our Secretary. Meet opposite the Baskerville Arms, Clyro at 12 noon. Bring a picnic lunch. The walk will be approximately 4 miles of reasonably easy walking, but stout footwear is advised. Remember – it may rain!

Saturday, May 15th Your attention is drawn to the leaflet enclosed regarding a whole day at Langley Burrell – organised by the Parishioners. Please support this strongly.

June 26th/27th In view of the ‘Langley Burrell Day’, there will be no June event.

September 18th/19th Our Committee member, Mr. John Wilks, hopes to organise a walk or visit in the Llanigon area, and the venue for the September service will be confirmed in the June Newsletter.

Two entries in the obituary demand special comment, Mr. Harold Butcher and Revd. Dr. C. Seaburg. Before his departure from Hereford to Bournemouth, Mr. Butcher was much involved in the Society. Chairman of the Committee for several years, and a keen researcher of Kilvert sites and associations. The Revd. Dr. Seaburg preached at the last service at Whitney-on-Wye, and read the Second Lesson at the Jubilee service at Hereford Cathedral. A great lover of the Diary, he spread his enthusiasm among friends – borne out by the fact that seven of them accompanied him to Hereford for the Jubilee weekend. Both gentlemen leave younger brothers, active in the Society: Mr. Basil Butcher, Committee member for several years, and Mr. Alan Seaburg who produced the booklet “The River Wye” as a contribution to the Jubilee celebration.

FOR SALE:
The 3 volume edition, illustrated
After Kilvert – A. Laurence le Quesne
Francis Kilvert, Priest and Diarist – Frederick Grice
Francis Kilvert (paperback) – D.N. Lockwood

Please apply to our Publications Manager.

KILVERT TRAIL: A joint project between Powys and Herefordshire, it will have a map of the border and individual leaflets for relevant churches. The launch of these publications will be at the Hay Festival (May 28th – June 6th). The venue will be Hay Church.

Yours sincerely,
E.J.C. West

NOMINATIONS FOR A.G.M.

The following Officers wish to retire and have tendered their resignations to take effect from the Annual General Meeting:

President:	The Lady Delia Venables-Llewelyn
Chairman:	The Revd. D.N. Lockwood
Treasurer:	Mr. H. Dance.

The Committee have nominated the following to the vacancies:

President:	The Revd. D.N. Lockwood	
Chairman:	Mr. R.O. Watts (the current Vice-Chairman)	
Vice-Chairman:	Miss Anne Wheeldon) Both serving
Treasurer:	Mr. John Wilks) Committee members

If further nominations (for any of the above) are received by the Secretary not later than Friday April 9th, elections will be contested at the A.G.M. for the posts in question

Michael Sharp, Secretary

OBITUARY

We regret to record the deaths of the following members, and offer our sympathy to those bereaved.

Mr. J. Butler (Middlesex). He joined in 1969 and became a Life Member in 1973.

Revd. Dr. Carl Seaburg (Mass. U.S.A.). He joined in 1967 and became a Life Member in 1996.

Mr. Harold Butcher (Bournemouth). A founder member of the Society from 1948, and an Honorary Life Member. He would have been 95 in July.

Miss Agatha Thomas (Llandrindod Wells). A member since 1977.

Mrs. G.M. Hill (Corfe Mullen). A member, with her husband, since 1972.

Just as we go to press, news has been received of the death of Mrs. Renee Payne of Langley Burrell. A member for 34 years, and eventually a Vice President, she was the most valuable link between activities in Wiltshire and Herefordshire, and many members will recall her warm welcome at The Old Brewery House.

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

From Lawrence Jackson (Subscriptions Treasurer)

Just a reminder that subscriptions for 1999, at the new rate of £6 became due on the 1st January. Many members have paid their subscriptions earlier this year following the reminder published in the September Newsletter and the number paying by standing order has increased. This helps us keep down running costs and improves our cash flow in the early part of the year.

If you would like to use this method of paying your subscription would you instruct your bank to pay on the 1st January each year. Our bank is Lloyds Bank, Hereford Branch, Sort code 30-94-14, Account number 0241904. If you decide to adopt this method of payment, it would be helpful if you would let me know so that I can note this on your membership record.

ADDRESS BY DR. B. JONES

(Jubilee Weekend, Hereford)

Many years ago I sent letters appealing for information about the subject of my research to the *Radio Times*, *The Listener* and other papers. Among the answers was one that drew enthusiastic attention to Kilvert's meeting with William Barnes. It came from William Plomer. Thereafter we remained in touch from time to time to the end of his life, and I like to think of an established writer finding the time to write to someone as young and unknown as I was. Such kindness, I think, deserves its place in the record. There is, then, a direct link between the editor of *Kilvert's Diary* and this Jubilee.

Although Kilvert was a born writer, his father discouraged him from trying to publish a book of poems in 1874. One thing that Kilvert the elder could do for his son was use his long-standing friendship with the Revd. Henry Moule, Vicar of Fordington St George, near Dorchester, to arrange for Kilvert to meet the Rector of the neighbouring parish of Winterborne Came, with Whitcombe, also near Dorchester. This Rector was William Barnes, and Kilvert's entry after the visit to Came is one of the most sustained passages in the *Diary* as it has survived. Kilvert already knew Barnes' poetry and took with him a volume of it for Barnes to inscribe. The meeting can have lasted only a few hours, during which Moule, who accompanied Kilvert, was rather talkative. Even so, Kilvert seems to have recorded more of what Barnes had to say about his own poems than anyone else.

Unknown as he was to the literary world, Kilvert was clear in his assessments. Barnes, without any qualification, was simply 'the great idyllic poet of England'. As Kilvert's admiration for Tennyson shows through in the *Diary*, this estimate must be taken very seriously for, later in the conversation, after Barnes had said that Tennyson 'had no love for and no sympathy with his *Northern Farmer*, Kilvert stated that this was 'a probably true and a just criticism'.

Kilvert had been 'immediately struck by the beauty and grandeur of Barnes's head:

'It was an Apostolic head, bald and venerable He is a very remarkable and a very remarkable-looking man, half hermit, half enchanter'.

He told Kilvert that all he had written was taken from life, but that - 'sometimes I wanted a bit of water or wood or hill, and then I put these in'.

This is the way of Turner and Constable in painting. Kilvert noted that Barnes's drawing room walls were covered with small oil paintings from floor to ceiling.

The *Diary* shows that Kilvert took every chance of learning from George Venables whatever he could of Wordsworth, his sister Dorothy and their relatives in the Marches, and that Venables met Wordsworth at Rydal Mount. What is the link between Rydal Mount and Llysdyman?

In one of his letters, Wordsworth wrote:

'Say to Mr. Monkhouse, C. Wilson's behaviour shews the good sense of Dr. Venables' advice. Have nothing to do with the Gentlemen'.

Referring, apparently, to some dispute of which he had heard when staying a Brinsop. The editor of Wordsworth's letters unluckily states in a footnote that Dr. Venables was Kilvert's Vicar at Clyro. Dr. Venables of Llysdyman was in fact the father of the Venables brothers, and unknown to Kilvert. Wordsworth's letter was written in early March 1828, and it is of interest because it shows that the link between Wordsworth and the Venables goes back a generation further than has been assumed. Thus George Venables's pilgrimage to Rydal Mount can be accounted for.

As a writer, Venables did not have the impressiveness that he seems to have had in conversation. Educated at Charterhouse, he there became a lifelong friend of Thackeray. At Cambridge in the 1820's he became one of the early members of the Apostles, as the Cambridge Conversazione Society was called. Contemporary Apostles included

Tennyson, Hallam, Maurice, Sterling, Kemble, Trench, Milnes, Spedding, the Lushingtons and J. Fitzjames Stephen. To be a verse prize man in such company must mean something. Venables was chiefly drawn to Tennyson, and he can be traced at most of the key moments in the lives of the Tennysons and their friends. Venables's final illness overtook him when he was staying with the Tennysons at Aldworth in Surrey in 1888.

Apart from the mostly posthumous notices of his friends from early life most of Venables's writing has to be looked for in magazines. Beginning in the 1820's he had a long career as a reviewer of diplomacy, continental affairs, philosophy, and literature. He had much to say of Carlyle, and in 1859 reviewed discriminatingly George Eliot's *Felix Holt*.

One hitherto unexamined article was devoted to Barnes just before the end of Venables's life. Much of it comes from Lucy Baxter's *Life of William Barnes ... by his Daughter* (1887), but he has one important point to make. Wordsworth, he says, writes of the characters in many of the poems in *Lyrical Ballads* from the outside. Barnes, on the other hand, dramatises them from within. It is an important distinction, and much to Venables's credit. About Barnes himself, however, Venables is condescending, and is inclined to treat him, for all his learning, as a country boor who happened to write exquisite poems. This is a disappointing conclusion to arrive at, and it shows that it is most unlikely that Kilvert ever talked to Venables about his visit to Barnes. Kilvert, one should note, made that visit from Langley Burrell, and not from Clyro.

On the one occasion of that meeting with Barnes in Dorchester in 1874, there was a good deal of talk about Horace Moule. Like Venables, Moule as a writer left little mark on the literary world, although his life is none the less interesting. In correspondence with F.J. Furnivall, the secretary of the Philological Society and collector of words for the Society's *Dictionary*, about Barnes's *Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset dialect* published by the Society in Berlin in 1863, Barnes made a point of congratulating Furnivall on recruiting Moule as one of his word collectors for the *Dictionary*. One of Moule's reviews dealt with Barnes, and Barnes thanked Moule for his kind words. Moule wrote an affectionate reply to someone he had known all his life. Moule was the collector for 'Letter H' materials for the *Dictionary*, and he has been blamed for letting the collection go astray. In fact it did not go astray. It was allocated to another reader after Moule's unhappy death.

The association of Moule with Furnivall and Barnes eventually leads to another aspect of Kilvert's concerns, philology, and also to his antiquarianism. The one known person to whom Kilvert showed his *Diary* – or parts of it – was a friend of Oxford days, Anthony Mayhew. Did Kilvert insist on not naming him when his friend sent to *Notes and Queries* a few dialect words with the following note:

My informant for the Radnorshire words is a clergyman for some years resident in Clyro.

This is the other aspect of Kilvert, Kilvert the philologist and antiquarian. There is very little evidence of it, as of the friendship of the two men.

Kilvert entered Wadham, at Oxford, in June 1859 to read law and modern history, and Mayhew followed a year later. It seems that Kilvert acted as vacation tutor to one family, and that he may have travelled on the continent during these years. Was he accompanied by Mayhew in these ventures? Kilvert went down with a Fourth in July 1862. The earliest reference to Mayhew in the *Diary* comes ten years later, when he was in charge of a mission school chapel just out of Rochester. Eventually, Mayhew went back to Oxford and settled there with his family. On his second return visit to Oxford in 1876, Kilvert stayed with the Mayhews. Was this an occasion when Kilvert met Lewis Carroll, who was known also to George Venables? In the same year they formed part of a group of visitors to Paris that included Elizabeth Rowland, whom Kilvert married in 1879. How much Kilvert knew of mainland Europe is far from clear, but was this knowledge of a kind that led to the offer of a Chaplaincy at Cannes? In 1878 the Mayhews stayed with Kilvert at Bredwardine. The next year Kilvert married and was buried a few weeks later.

The evidence here is slight. However, a glance at Mayhew's life after his friend's death may help to show the kind of person with whom Kilvert was most at ease. Mayhew was a considerable philologist and lexicographer as his books show. But it has only recently become known that when James Murray was in despair about the state and fate of the *New English Dictionary*, Mayhew was considered a possible replacement.

Mayhew's links with this *Dictionary* point to an interesting evolution in the history of the Philological Society. The founders of it had nearly all been Cambridge men, and some of the Apostles held Chairs in the new University of London. The *Dictionary* was to have been published by the Macmillans in Cambridge. The problems of keeping such a large undertaking going delayed publication and the initiative passed to Oxford. There, Mayhew was to play a nearly leading part in the creation of another dictionary.

Delays in the progress in the big *Dictionary* led to the founding of the English Dialect Society in 1873. Mayhew's concern with the dialect words of 'a clergyman resident in Clyro' now makes it seem likely that when he was shown the *Diary* he must have been arrested by the intimate portrait of Barnes, who had been steeped in philology and dialect before he and Kilvert were born. Some ten years after the foundation of the Dialect Society, its collection of words was moved from Manchester to Oxford, and Joseph Wright, the editor of the *English Dialect Dictionary* acted as Secretary to the Dialect Society, and his deputy, Mayhew, acted as Treasurer.

Kilvert surmised that aftertimes might take an interest in what he wrote. He was, of course, right. But it is interesting to speculate that he wrote the more freely – and the better – in his *Diary* just because he was not writing for immediate publication. That his work remained hidden away for so long, however, should not lead anyone to think of Kilvert as some sort of accidental writer. No one writes Spenserian stanzas by accident. Had his temperament been other than it was, he had links enough with the world of literature and learning that might well have enabled him to join the ranks of published writers. The art and craft of the *Diary* are understandable when one sees Kilvert bridging the space between the work of concentrating on words for the sake of making full collections of them, and the other world of poetry, in which words are put to their highest imaginative use. He was a lucky man to have such friends and connections, and the *Diary* shows that he knew how to take full advantage of what he learnt from them. Far from being an unattached solitary, Kilvert has a place nearer to the mainstream of the writing world of his day than has so far been acknowledged.

A LITERARY VISIT

By David Lockwood (Llowes)

In the middle weeks of October last year, my wife and I had a holiday in North Cornwall. On our last day we drove to Perranarworthal south of Truro. We went up the drive to Tullimaar, a two storied, elegant white house with a pillared porch and, before it, the gravel circling round a flower bed. Before we even got out of the car our hostess came out and welcomed us: it was so friendly, so trusting and, I like to think, very Kilvertian.

We went into the house and in the hall I felt an immediate familiarity, not from Kilvert's life, but my own, for it was so akin to my last vicarage. In fact Tullimaar is about twenty years younger than my old home. It is, however, somewhat grander, my doors were not solid mahogany.

Sitting in the drawing room with its high ceiling and big sash windows I said to myself, "So, this is where Kilvert sat talking to Mrs. Hockin quoting Cowper and Tennyson". It was a conscious recollection, not an easy and immediate one, because I felt rooted in the present talking over coffee with Mrs. Carver, the owner with her brother of this lovely house. She had made a special journey down from Bristol to receive us. Wonderfully kind.

Later we went round the house. The dining room is a spacious chamber and it contained two tables, one large, one smaller by the window, looking out on the thickly layered greenness of the shrubs, trees and many evergreens. I appreciated more than ever before, on this visit after so wet a summer, how temperate the climate of Cornwall is, where there is hardly any frost, so that there is no month in which plants cease to grow. Hence camellias gently riot.

More rooms and the library and everywhere there were books, more than a multitude, mostly the collection of Sir William Golding. Everywhere the stamp of William Golding and his wife was evident in the pictures and portraits – one was particularly striking, even a little fierce, of the author. It impressed me, but I remember a gentler more "magical" man when he came to the Hay Festival. There were photographs of their visit to Buckingham Palace when he received his knighthood and others of his being given the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Upstairs to the bedrooms and the one where, it seems possible, Kilvert may have slept, though to my mind the view from the window does not entirely tally with his description. However, Kilvert's shade was brushed aside by more recent history. General Eisenhower had used that room, prior to D. Day and to make it even more memorable an American soldier had attempted to shoot him through the window! A small plaque on the window-sill records this event.

Downstairs we went to the rear of the house and into the kitchen. This room, more than any other, made me think of that Cornish holiday in 1870. By the great window I could see in my mind's eye the wicker cage of the doves and my mind's ear could hear their soft cooing. It was a very pre-Raphaelite moment.

Where the range once stood, an Aga now reigns and in front of that a wonderfully large table, made for the Guys, previous owners, the surface of which was two thirds wood and one of slate. Suspended over it a vast oil lamp originally fuelled by whale oil. Here I could imagine so easily, the packing of hampers for the many picnics. Because in spite of the splendid modern additions the room was redolent of the high noon of Victorian middle-class life: a way of life wholly dependent on a small army of servants.

Back to the hall where Mrs. Carver moved aside a wall-hanging and revealed a large and I must add pretentious marble slab proclaiming that General Dwight Eisenhower had dwelt there for a fortnight. The three of us were wholly in agreement that "dwelt" was an incorrect word to describe so brief a stay. But we forgave the previous owner who had erected it, for she was interesting in herself. She was Princess Bibesco, a Romanian aristocrat with many links with the Bonaparte family. We saw photographs of the house when she lived there, (one could say "dwelt", it was for a long period). She had turned this very English house with its regular Regency features, though its date is 1828, into a French château with a tented drawing room, like Napoleon's study at Malmaison, with gilt chairs and tables of the Empire style. It housed her hundreds of mementoes of the Napoleonic era. Fascinating, but far from indigenous. One accepted this time of the house's history because the Princess was one of the very last people to be able to say with truth that she had conversed with Marcel Proust.

So a visit of enchantment trailing through many decades came to an end. On the doorstep we conferred and agreed that Tullimaar held an especial attraction for writers. I thought how gratified Kilvert would be to know that he, unwittingly, had started a literary connection with the house so very successfully. For, as we know, he in his lifetime always sought out houses where authors had lived.

Only as we drove away did I tell my wife that the previous day I had slipped on wet leaves in a churchyard, fallen heavily and then slithered bumpily down a flight of slate steps. The mission achieved, I could allow her to examine me and take me home, where, indeed, it was discovered that I had broken a rib and badly bruised my spine. But I never for one moment felt any pain in Tullimaar!! I am completely better now.

FRANCIS KILVERT AND THE ANCIENT ORDER OF FORESTERS (Continued)

(By Karl Showler, Hay-On-Wye)

These Orders and unregistered Societies were not out of keeping with social thinking at that time. Many Gentlemen's Clubs were exclusive with membership rules and codes of behaviour. Religious bodies outside the Church of England behaved as closed societies, with rules governing admission, belief and behaviour. They also had well-developed welfare systems including education and training for bona-fide members falling on hard times.

The Quakers are a well known and well documented dissenting group that placed itself outside the official system with its Members making substantial contributions to support the sick, widows and orphans. In other words they acted as an exclusive Friendly Society.

For those outside the Established Church the Parish Poor Relief could be seen as a material extension of that disliked Church, although in fact it was run by elected 'Vestries', but in areas where nonconformity was not strong they would be Anglican dominated.

The other aspects of the orders were the oaths and the clothing, although this was not out of line with then current behaviour. The legal system depended on much oath-taking and people regularly wore particular uniforms suitable to the function being performed.

It was natural therefore in the 18th century for the bodies that became the unregistered societies, which were themselves very diverse, to have strict rules of admission, enforced codes of behaviour, and ritual in meetings. Discipline was maintained by the threat of withdrawal of benefit.

The Friendly Societies Registered and Unregistered could be local, functioning in a particular street, works or public house, although some grew into regional bodies with a wider recruitment, and branches in outlying places.

This diversity led the Government in 1829 to appoint a barrister to assist local groups to become legal Friendly Societies and in 1846 he became the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

As social thinking changed and the threat of anti-government plots grew less, there was a reduction in the restrictions on the unregistered Orders and finally their being accorded legal status in 1850 if their objects were those of a Registered Friendly Society and they conformed to the requirements of the Act.

Introducing the Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society

The Ancient Order of Foresters, was an Unregistered Order born out of the wish of Members of an older "secret" society, the Royal Foresters, to become a democratic body. The Royal Foresters were centralised in the Leeds area with local branches called "Courts". During the Regency period this society had a rapid expansion in membership, to a point where it had 358 Courts. Then after debate and argument in its "High Court" the centralists were unable to contain the reformers who formed the "Ancient Order" in 1834. The new "Ancient Order" won the day by offering considerable freedom to local "Courts".

Expansion of the new order was rapid, including almost total absorption of the Royal Foresters. In many ways the AOF followed the practices of its predecessor. Courts were given names and numbers, with the option of joining together in 'Districts' in order to share the risk of members' funeral costs and for mutual support. However, Courts could, if their members wished, remain 'out of District' as some did until modern times. Both Courts and Districts sent delegates to the annual "High Court" which met in a different location each year. Members of the Order were known as 'Brothers'; widows and orphans received benefits in their husband's name. In 1892 the "High Court" admitted women in their own right as 'Sisters'.

There were several other national orders including the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, so naturally there was considerable rivalry between the Orders. In Hereford as well as several local charities the Oddfellows established a lodge in 1839 and in due course the Independent Order of Good Templars had three.

As a regular contributor of verse to the Hereford Times Francis Kilvert may well have read the issue for Saturday January 30th, 1869 that allows us to see Victorian Forestry in its heyday. The paper devoted two columns, running to over 2000 words, to the 12th Anniversary Dinner of Hereford's oldest Court Maiden at the Forester's Hall, 'Old Harp', 126 Widemarsh Street, Hereford, George Pearman, Landlord. 160 members and their friends sat down to dinner. At this event various speakers proposed and responded to 15 toasts that included the Bishop and Clergy of the diocese.

The speeches covered the history and work of the Order, stressed the advantage of Honorary Members' contributions that provided the Court with additional funds over and above those covered by the members' contributions.

Mention was made of how a sixpence per week contribution secured a ten shilling per week sick pay and that a further two pence per week could go to the Widows and Orphans Fund. Single men were encouraged to subscribe to the latter when contemplating marriage.

The meeting concluded with a presentation to the Secretary of a silver cup which was duly filled with port and passed from hand to hand, the meeting concluding with some hearty singing in an atmosphere of 'good feeling and propriety'.

The Newspaper report included a summary of the printed balance sheet which was supplied to each of the Court's members showing what had been spent on sickness, funerals, and widows, and how on the income side in addition to subscriptions, propositions and initiations raised £17.5s.6d. with an additional nine Guineas from Honorary Members' initiations.

Foresters in Hay-on-Wye: the Herefordshire District Connection

The opening of the railway between Brecon and Hereford in 1864 provided regular transport between Hay and the middle Wye Valley villages. At that time Hay was a trading centre in a rich agricultural area, very different from the places where the majority of the Herefordshire District Courts were located to the south of the city in the semi-industrialised mining areas of Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire.

Hereford City was, by the standards of the day, large and self important, with a great Cathedral and many regional connections. For example the weekly Hereford Times, with an advertised circulation of 12000 per week in 1876 served a vast area in the Marches, South and Mid Wales carrying international, national, and local news of regional interest. It claimed the largest circulation out of some 55 provincial papers. Reports of 'Forestric' events therefore faced considerable competition.

At the time the Order was expanding rapidly. By 1869 there were 17 Courts in the Herefordshire District with a total membership of 1345. In Hereford City there were two Courts, Maiden 2849 and Energy 3076 with 346 and 151 members respectively.

In Hay the Herefordshire District Officers opened Court 4906 Perseverance in 1866. Three years later with 65 members Perseverance was one of the larger courts in the District, with sufficient business to meet alternate Mondays.

According to the AOF Directory 1869/70 Perseverance met at the Wheat Sheaf Lion Inn with J. Wall of Gravel Street, Secretary. (The address should read Wheat Sheaf Inn, Lion Street. The Wheat Sheaf is still a public house, Gravel Street is now Chancery Lane).

The Hay and Wye Side District

In 1869 another new Court was opened at Eardisley, number 5381 Integrity (Tram Inn, 26 members, J. Jay, tailor of Eardisley, secretary, meeting every 4 weeks). Eardisley was a rapidly developing hamlet that served a large rural area with 57 'Commercial' people listed in Littlebury's Directory. A new community was being created at the wagon works of The Brecon and Merthyr Railway which was operating the Hereford Hay and Brecon Railway. At Eardisley the tramway to Kington was being replaced by a railway.

It was natural for the two courts (total funds £150) to found, November 24th 1869, the Hay and Wye Side District. In 1870 they were joined by two minute courts 5532 Farmers Glory at Maesllwch Arms, Painscastle (8 members, funds nil) and 5537 Unity, Upper Swan Inn, Kington (10 members, funds £5) meeting very optimistically each fortnight.

However in the AOF Directory returns for 1872; the two small courts have gone but the District funds have increased by £5. Court Perseverance also had a change of Secretary for Henry John Moro, of 40 Lion Street took over, although for the time being the Court continued to meet at the Wheat Sheaf.

In 1873 Perseverance moved its meeting place down the street to the room over the 'Red Lion' at number 41. This room seems to have been a public room for very many years, in 1765 it was licensed for the Quakers to hold religious meetings when they held their Welsh national gathering in Hay. In the 1950's it was converted into two flats.

Henry J. Moro was clearly a key figure in Hay "Forestry", by 1875 he was the District Secretary and Relieving Officer working with J. Jones, shoemaker of Castle Street who was District Chief Ranger, with G. Tilley, District Treasurer.

The function of the Forester's Relieving Officer was to provide cash to Brothers travelling in search of work. The traveller carried a 'Travelling Licence'. This document gave entry to Courts en route and enabled the traveller to cash cheques issued by his own Court to the value of either one shilling and six pence or two shillings per day. Only one cheque could be cashed at a time. Clearly the Relieving Officer had a very responsible office for he had to be certain of the bona fides of the traveller as well as having access to cash from which to meet the cheques.

A 'Clearance' or certificate of good standing enabled the traveller, once settled, to transfer to a local court without loss of benefit.

We know from the Diary that Francis Kilvert was sympathetic to the travelling workman and that he assisted the Rector of Hay, W.L. Bevan, with the town branch of the Brecon Savings Bank. In a small community it seems safe to assume he would have known Brother Henry Moro and the other District Officers.

The annual returns printed in the Directory allow us to get a brief picture of the Hay and Wyeside District during Kilvert's residence in the area.

	Perseverance			Integrity		
	1871	1872	1873	1871	1872	1873
Members	70	68	78	26	46	63
Hon. Members	2	5	5	2	1	6
Average Age	29	28	29	29	29	27
Funds	£130	£110	£150	£20	£45	£80
Days Sick	0	648	557	0	105	49

I would not like at this stage to comment on the rate of sickness experienced by the Hay Court. The rates of reported sickness for the Brecknockshire Districts, are shown in the Directories for 1871 and 1873 but need careful assessment as they are very variable. We find the oldest court in the area 1631, St. Marys' Brecon, founded 1846, with assets of £955 had 146 members, average age 37. The Court recorded 1462 days sickness, although at the same time it was able to increase its reserves by £115.

However, the other Brecon Court, St. David's, founded just before Perseverance in 1861, had an average age 36, with 48 members had £210 in funds with 658 days sickness.

Kilvert and the Forester's Fetes

Francis Kilvert's published Diary commences in 1870 although by then he had been a curate in Clyro since 1865 so was well integrated into the society of the neighbourhood, including Hay. It is clear from the Diaries that Kilvert was familiar with the Foresters who, although meeting behind closed doors, were very self-evident. He could not have avoided the Foresters' publicity typified by what I have called the Horden Poster.

The Horden Poster of 1869

The 'Horden' poster tells us about the Forester's Fete of 1869, the year before the Hay and Wyeside District was founded, whereas Kilvert describes the one held eight months after the new District came into being and which seems to have been a much grander event.

To be Continued ...