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BATH AND WELLS: A DIOCESAN CELEBRATION

Robert Dunning

The diocese of Bath and Wells was founded in 909 and in 2009 celebrates its 1100th anniversary. Over those centuries its bishops, some famous, some notorious, and at least one saintly, have been responsible for its religious life. This is the story of their attempts at ensuring order and discipline over clergy and laity alike and of the failures of all. It is the story of struggles for the truth, of deep disputes and divisions, but also of rebirth and revival. The exquisite churches of Somerset were expressions of the devotion of men and women to whom these bishops were both pastors and judges, and their continuing survival is but one expression (and an important one) of a community of faith that has, over these 1100 years, been an essential part of our national heritage.



Robert Dunning ranges widely over 1100 years of history and across the diverse county of Somerset, from the windswept heights of Exmoor to the pastures of South Somerset, and from the seaside resorts of the coast to the glories of medieval Wells and Georgian Bath, to paint a vivid portrait of this community of faith through more than a millennium.

Robert Dunning has been licensed by five bishops of Bath and Wells as a reader in their diocese and long ago wrote a thesis on the activities of five of their predecessors. He was for nearly forty years the official historian of the county of Somerset.



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Example of a double page spread.



West front,
Wells cathedral.
Richard Neale



The nave ceiling, Axbridge, 1636. John Page

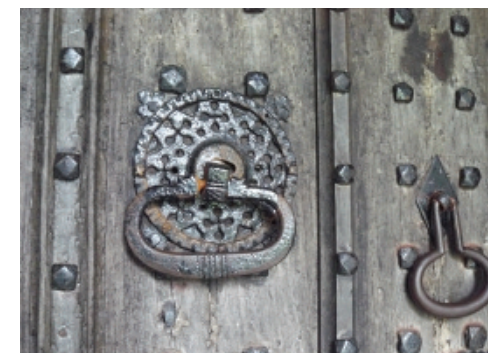


Nettlecombe church and manor house in close partnership:
a Raleigh probably built the church, Trevelyan extended it,
and Trevelyan and their relations were rectors continuously
between 1724 and 1851. Robert Dunning

Right: Nave Pulpit, Wells Cathedral, bearing the Arms of
Bishop Knight, subsequently altered. Michael Blandford
(© Dean & Chapter of Wells)



Right: St Swithin, Walcot, Bath, designed by Thomas
Jelly and John Palmer and built 1777-80. It was
almost immediately extended eastwards by two
bays and given tower and spire by 1790. Robert
Dunning



Sanctuary ring, Baltonsborough. Robert Dunning

