

# **Bishop's Palace Refresher 2011**

**Bishop Thomas Ken**  
1685-90

**Bishop George Henry Law**  
1824-45

**Led by Janet James and Fay Clarke**  
**April 6<sup>th</sup> and April 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**10 am to noon**

- 1 Cathedral Tour 30 mins**
- 2 Coffee Break - Palace**
- 3 Illustrated Talks - Palace Conference Room**

## **Group 1**

### **1 Cathedral Tour**

#### **A Bishop Ken**

- 1** Exhibition in the Library - items include - Document appointing Ken as Bishop of Bath and Wells, A letter of thanks in Ken's hand writing, The account of the fees paid to transport Ken's books to Wells Books- including 'Prayers for use of all persons who come to the Baths for cure', a record of the 'Tryal' of the seven Bishops, copies of Ken's Exposition of the Catechism and of Hawkins' Life of Thomas Ken
- 2** The Memorial Window in the North Quire Aisle
- 3** Chocolate Pot in the Undercroft display
- 4** Quire Embroidery

#### **B Bishop Law**

- 1** Quire Embroidery
- 2** Tomb slab in St. John the Baptist's chapel
- 3** Memorial plaque in the South Cloister

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# Thomas Ken

## Bishop of Bath and Wells 1685-1690

### Early Life

**1637** Born at Little Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire. His father, whose family had close links with the Manor of Ken near Clevedon, was an attorney of Furnival's Inn and his mother Martha was the daughter of the poet John Chalkhill. Both his parents died when Thomas was very young and he was brought up by his half sister, Ann, and her husband Izaak Walton who held strong Laudian ( High Church) views and also wrote 'The Complete Angler'. Both of these good people must have had a profound influence on the young Thomas who called himself 'Tho:'

**1652** Started his education as a scholar at Winchester College

**1657** Entered New College, Oxford. Joined an Anglican Group which included George Hooper and Francis Turner and a Musical Society in which he played the lute. On graduation he became a Lector in Logic at the College

**1661/2** Thomas was ordained and became priest at Little Easton in Essex and spiritual counsellor to Lady Maynard, a devout lady whose husband was comptroller of the Royal Household

### Life in Winchester

**1665** Ken was appointed Bishop George Morley's chaplain and started his voluntary work at St John's in the Soke, a poor parish on the out skirts of Winchester where his pastoral and preaching abilities rapidly gained him an acclaimed reputation. In 1666 he was elected a fellow of Winchester College. For a short time he was Rector of Brighthelmston on the Isle of Wight - Ken never sort preferments and always worked in his given parishes. In 1669 he returned to Winchester to become a Prebendary of the Cathedral and lived in the Cathedral Close

So now he was Bishop's Chaplain, a Prebendary of the Cathedral, a Fellow of the College and the voluntary Priest of St John's in the Soke. He was very happy and very busy. He is known to have owned his own organ.

**1674** Published his Manual of Prayer for Winchester Scholars- the 3 hymns were added later in the 1695 edition

### Work abroad

**1675** Went on a tour of Europe with his nephew, his stay in the grandeur of Rome confirmed his adherence to the catholic apostolic faith of the Church of England. On his return he was create first a Bachelor and then a Doctor of Divinity

**1679** Ken was appointed Chaplain to Princess Mary, wife of William of Orange, in The Hague. His duty was to protect Anglican Mary from the Calvinism of William who Ken was 'horribly unsatisfied with'. Ken had need to rebuke William for his treatment of his wife

**1680** Ken returned to Winchester and was appointed one of King Charles' Chaplains. Three years later Ken refused to house Nell Gwyn in his prebendal home when she and Charles came to oversee the new palace that Christopher Wren was building for the King in Winchester

**1683** Ken was appointed Chaplain to the fleet that was sent to Tangiers to bring the garrison home. He had terrible rough journeys on the 'Grafton' in the company of the Commander, Lord Dartmouth, and Samuel Pepys and, on the way home, with the highly disagreeable Colonel Percival Kirke. Ken was appalled by the depravity he witnessed all around him in Tangiers and on the journey home, a depravity of which Pepys wrote 'nothing but vice in the whole place of all sorts, for swearing, cursing, drinking and whoring'. After the 6 months taken for the stormy return journey this morally and physically courageous man must have been thankful to return to Winchester

## **Bishop of Bath and Wells**

**1685** Bp Mew had been translated to Winchester and 'Odds fish!, Who shall have Bath and Wells but the little fellow who would not give poor Nelly a lodging'-King Charles II- and Ken was consecrated Bishop that *January* at Lambeth. His enthronement in Wells went ahead by proxy as BP Ken was summoned in *February* to the King's deathbed, there he demanded the removal of the Duchess of Portsmouth, the King's mistress. The King insisted on Father Huddleston, a Catholic priest, administering the last sacrament. In *April*, still in London, Bp Ken fulfilled the Bp of Bath and Wells' role at the coronation of James II. He was in constant attendance in the House of Lords at this time.

In *June* Monmouth, the protestant illegitimate son of Charles II, landed at Lyme Regis and during his campaign stabled the horses for the night of June 30th in Wells Cathedral where his troops, and later the mob sympathizers, caused considerable damage. On *July 6<sup>th</sup>* Monmouth was defeated at the Battle of Sedgemoor and taken to the Tower. Bp Ken went to administer to him and on the *15<sup>th</sup>* stood by Monmouth at the scaffold Bp Ken could now come to Somerset where he administered to the appallingly treated prisoners in the goals of Taunton, Bridgewater and Wells, the overflow was kept in the cloisters of the Cathedral. He appealed to the King, the two Commanders (Feversham and Kirke) and Judge Jeffreys to little purpose. At the Bloody Assizes held in Wells of the approx. 500 prisoners, 95 were executed and 385 transported as slaves to the West Indies. ( these figures do vary)

**Bp Ken now began his main work in his Diocese.** He found the parish churches in a sorry state, many needing much repair and lacking proper altars, prayer books, a bible, a chalice and paten. He found much ignorance amongst clergy and congregations. For them he wrote, in 1685, *The Practice of Divine Love*, an exposition of the catechism- 'Thou, Lord, art my hope, my trust, my life, my joy, my glory, my God, my all, my love' He also wrote a book of prayers for the Poor.

He founded some Parish Schools and himself gave books and other materials

In 1688 he wrote to his clergy a Pastoral letter laying out how they should behave during Lent. Bp Ken started all his letters with the words 'All Glory be to God'

He invited 12 men or women of Wells to join him for Sunday lunch in the Palace and sent them home with a 'doggy bag' for their family.

**1687 Trouble started again.** Bp Ken was a loyal supporter and friend of King James II and they seem to have had a mutual respect for each other. James appreciated Bp Ken's forthright and impassioned preaching 'The best preacher among the Protestants' but Bp Ken began to preach strongly against the growing tide of Romanism at court. However Princess Anne attended these sermons on at least two occasions.

James touched for the King's evil in Bath Abbey without Ken's knowledge, and banned some opposing Bishops from court. Matters became strained between the Bishop and the King

**1688** in April King James issued his second Declaration of Indulgence and ordered it to be read publicly in the churches, this led, on May 18<sup>th</sup>, to Archbishop Sancroft and 6 other Bishops, including Bp Ken, drawing up and delivering by hand to the King a petition against his use of dispensing powers (over- ruling Acts of Parliament). Unfortunately it was leaked and, on the advice of the Chancellor-Judge Jeffreys, the Bishops were committed to the Tower on a charge of seditious libel, a trial followed at which, to popular delight, the prelates were acquitted

Ken had many discussions with the King hoping to fend off the arrival of William of Orange to take the throne, but with little response. William landed at Brixham in Nov. and in Dec. King James left his kingdom. Bp Ken had returned to Somerset and was there when the Dutch started seizing houses in the Wells area.

**1689** in Jan Bp Ken was in London advocating a Regency but, unhappy, he returned to Wells where he hesitated deliberating whether to take the oath of allegiance to the new monarchs or to join the non-jurors and thus also the schism developing in the Anglican Church. Finally in August he decided to refuse to take the oath and was suspended, a year later he was formally deprived of his Diocese. Before leaving he protested publically from his throne in the Cathedral and in Wells market place. He never really came to terms with his deprivation and referred to his successor, Bp Kidder, as his 'supplanter'.

## **Life at Longleat**

Lord Weymouth, an old Oxford friend, gave Bp Ken a home at his family estate at Longleat and an annuity of £80. Bp Ken had only £700 from the sale of his possessions. He distanced himself from the more extreme non-jurors particularly when they were implicated in a plot to assassinate William- he was arrested as a suspect but quickly released- and did what he could to end the schism in the Church of England- Bp Ken was always a moderate. He worked with his host at Longleat to develop the Library, build a chapel and also start a school in Warminster. When, in 1702, Queen Anne offered to restore him to Bath and Wells he declined but was delighted that his old friend George Hooper was installed and now he, at last, abandoned his Episcopal signature. Queen Anne gave him a pension of £200.

Ken then encouraged moderate non jurors to return to the C of E and made plans to take communion in Wells Cathedral. But ill health was catching up on him and on March 19<sup>th</sup> 1711 Bishop Ken died.

He bequeathed his books to Lord Weymouth and to Wells Cathedral and money to several 'deprived' groups. He is buried at St John the Baptist's church in Frome, the nearest parish within his former Diocese, in a grave attached to the outside of the East End of the church. The canopied tomb was added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century probably by Dean Plumtre

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April 2011

## **Bibliography**

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

The Life of Bishop Ken by Dean E H Plumtre 1888

Other Lives of Bishop Ken have been written by William Hawkins, the Grandson of Isaak Walton and Ken's executer and also by A Layman

Ken's poems were published after his death by William Hawkins

## **Bishop Ken's Prayer for Wells Cathedral**

God, our Heavenly Father,  
Make, we pray, the door of this Cathedral Church wide enough  
To welcome all who need human love and fellowship and a Father's care;  
But narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and lack of love.  
Here may the tempted find help, the sorrowing receive comfort,  
and the penitent be assured of your mercy;  
And here may all your children renew their strength  
and go on their way in hope and joy.  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen

## **Bishop Ken's Morning Hymn No 3 Hymns Ancient and Modern**

Awake my soul, and with the sun;  
Thy daily stage of duty run;  
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise  
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

## **Bishop Ken's Evening Hymn No 23 Hymns Ancient and Modern**

Glory to thee, my God, this night  
For all the blessings of the light;  
Keep me, O keep me, King of Kings,  
Beneath thy own almighty wings.

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(final verse)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise him all creatures here below,  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

## **Some other writing**

Teach me, O my God, to use this world so not to abuse it;  
To receive and manage all thy temporal blessings  
With thankfulness to thee, sobriety to myself  
And charity to all besides

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'Be sure to teach your children with all the sweetness and gentleness you can,  
lest you should be severe, or should over task them so that  
Religion should seem to them rather a burden than a blessing'