

WILLIAM BRUCE KNIGHT
SHERBORNE SCHOOL (ARCHON CODE: GB1949)

The Welsh scholar, ecclesiastic and theologian William Bruce Knight was born on 24 December 1785 and baptised on 31 December 1785 at Braunton, Devon. He was the second son of John Knight (d. 15 October 1799) of Fairlinch, Braunton, Devon and Margaret (d. 20 May 1809), daughter and heir of William Bruce of Llanblethian, Glamorgan.

William attended Cowbridge Grammar School in the Vale of Glamorgan and then Sherborne School in Dorset. William's actual dates of attendance at Sherborne are not known but it was probably between 1797 and 1802. He attended Exeter College, Oxford, where he matriculated on 23 May 1803, gaining a BA in 1807 and a MA in 1811. In 1804 for a wager William is said to have walked from Merthyr to Brecon and back, a distance of 86 miles, in 33 hours.

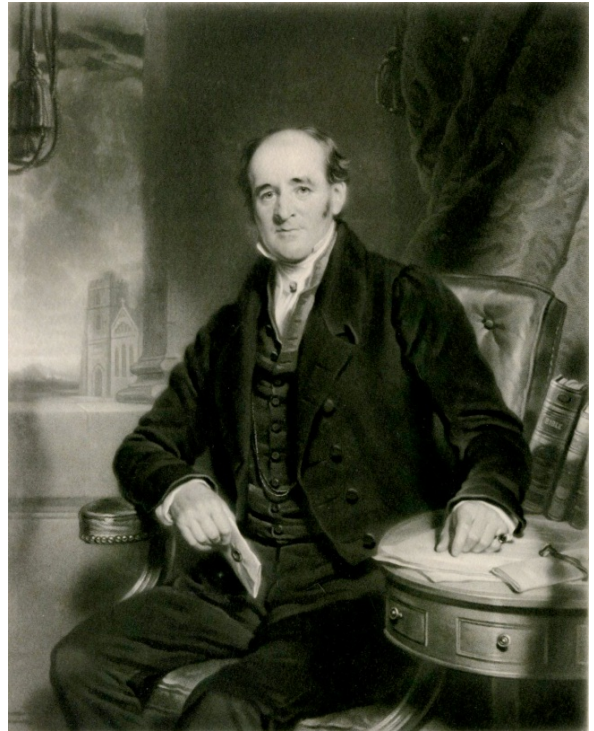
William's elder brother John Bruce Knight (1784-1872) attended Sherborne School c.1795-1800 and then Exeter College, Oxford. In 1805, on inheriting his uncle's estate in Dyffryn, Glamorgan John changed his surname to Bruce and in 1837 changed it again to Bruce-Pryce. In 1844 he was made High Sheriff of Glamorgan.

William's younger brother James Lewis Knight (1791-1866) was educated at King Edward's Grammar School, Bath and from 1800 to 1805 at Sherborne School. In 1817 he was created a Barrister-at-Law at Lincoln's Inn and in 1838 changed his surname to Knight-Bruce. He was knighted in 1841. From 1842 to 1851 James served as Chief Judge in Bankruptcy and from 1851 to 1866 as Lord Justice of Appeal (Chancery).

William Bruce Knight became curate of Llanishen, Glamorgan followed by two years as curate to Dr Lisle, serving the chapel of Llanillterne. During this period he devoted his leisure to the study of Welsh and Hebrew. In 1815 he was presented by Sir John Aubrey to the living of Llantrithyd, Glamorgan and in 1817 to the living of Margam and the consolidated rectory of Llandough-juxta-Cowbridge and St Mary-church. In 1843, he moved to Llandaff as archdeacon of Glamorgan before becoming dean of Llandaff in the same year. He died on 8 August 1845 and was buried before the altar in the Lady Chapel at Llandaff Cathedral.

In 1841, William Bruce Knight produced the revised version of the Welsh Book of Common Prayer, and is credited with saving the Welsh Bible from Pughe's followers.

Ref. SS/OS/K/Knight, W.B/



Portrait of William Bruce Knight as Dean of Llandaff by Henry Cousins, after Sir Martin Archer Shee, c.1843. Copyright: National Portrait Gallery (ref. NPG D37107).

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| 1 | <p>Manuscript school exercise book kept by William Bruce Knight while a pupil at Sherborne School, covering the period 28 September 1800-4 December 1801. A printed book plate is pasted inside the front cover: 'W.B. Knight, Sherborne School, 1801'.</p> <p>The exercise book contains Latin, French and Greek translations together with translations of the 104th Psalm, the 137th Psalm, Gay's fables and Shakespeare's 'Seven Ages of Man'. It also includes notes made by William Bruce Knight in which he counts down the number of days until the end of term and comments on his own work, on his headmaster Mr Cutler, and on his school fellows.</p> <p>[Acc.no. 2014/009]</p> | 1800-1801 |
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| 2 | Print of a mezzotint portrait of William Bruce Knight as Dean of Llandaff by Henry Cousins, after Sir Martin Archer Shee, c.1843. Copyright: National Portrait Gallery (ref. NPG D37107). | C.1843 |
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Rachel Hassall
8 December 2014