

# **Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Volume 07 — Bulkeley, Arthur**

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**1886**

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**BULKELEY** or **BOKELEY**, ARTHUR (*d.* 1553), bishop of Bangor, was the son of Richard Bulkeley, a member of a Welsh family of that name. Bulkeley graduated in law at Oxford, possibly from New Inn Hall, suggests Anthony à Wood, who also says that he was held in esteem as a good canonist. Upon taking his degree he was appointed to the living of Llanddeusant in Anglesey, and about the same time was made canon of St. Asaph, 1525. In 1531 he became rector of St. James, Garlick Hythe, in London, and in 1537 was made prebendary of Clynnoc Vechan, or Llangeinwen. This last preferment occasioned him much trouble. According to Bishop Humphreys, Thomas Cromwell, earl of Essex, ‘obtaining a blank institution’ of Clynnoc from John Capon, then bishop of Bangor, inducted his nephew, Gregory Williamson, a boy eight years old, into the prebend. On Bulkeley's resisting this invasion of his rights, Cromwell applied to his kinsman, Sir Richard Bulkeley, through whom he made threats of such a nature to Bulkeley that the latter yielded, but upon Cromwell's fall in the year 1540 resumed possession of the living on the plea that his resignation was a forced one, and not made of his own free will. In 1541, not long after the execution of Cromwell, Bulkeley was consecrated bishop of Bangor, and, we are told, continued to hold his prebend of Clynnoc Vechan *in commendam* for some years longer. Bulkeley was the first bishop of Bangor who had resided in his diocese for a hundred years, and he appears to have devoted himself with zeal to the duties of his office, in some respects with a

result not wholly satisfactory. He incurred heavy expenses in lawsuits upon which he entered for the purpose of recovering advowsons of livings alienated by some of his predecessors. Godwin (*Comm. de Præsulibus Angliæ*), followed by Fuller in his ‘Worthies’ (where Bulkeley meets with much abuse on the strength of the story), says that Bulkeley sold five bells belonging to the cathedral of Bangor, and, going to see them shipped off, was on his return struck with total blindness by way of punishment for the sacrilege. Browne Willis, on the other hand, asserts that there is no foundation whatever for the statement that Bulkeley ever was blind. Bulkeley died on 14 March 1552–3 at Bangor, and was buried in the cathedral without monument or inscription. His will directed that his body should be buried with the heart of Thomas Skeffington, bishop of Bangor, 1509–33.

[Godwin, *De Præsulibus*, p. 626; Wood's *Athenæ Oxon.* (Bliss), ii. 764; Willis's *Survey of the Cathedral Church of Bangor*, p. 101.]

[A. M.](#)

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*Dictionary of National Biography*, Errata (1904), p.[41](#)

N.B.— *f.e.* stands for *from end* and *l.l.* for *last line*

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*f.e.* March



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