



# Religion and Society in the Diocese of St Davids 1485-2011

*John Morgan-Guy*

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During the medieval and early modern periods the Welsh diocese of St Davids was one of the largest in the country and the most remote. As this collection makes clear, this combination of factors resulted in a religious life which was less regulated and controlled by the institutional forces of both Church and State. Addressing key ideas in the development of popular religious culture and the stubborn continuity of long-lasting religious practices into the modern era, the volume shows how the diocese was also a locus for continuing major religious controversies, especially in the nineteenth century. Presenting a fresh view of the Diocese of St Davids since the Reformation, this is the first new account of religion and society in over a century. It is, moreover, not one which is written primarily from an institutional perspective but from that of wider society. As well as a chronological treatment, giving an overview of the history of religion in the diocese, chapters address key themes, including a study of religious revivals which originated within the borders of the diocese; consideration of popular and elite education, including the contribution of Bishop Burgess's pioneering institution at Lampeter (the first degree awarding institution in England and Wales after Oxford and Cambridge); the relationship of the Church to the revival of Welsh cultural identity; and new reflections on the agitation and realisation of disestablishment of the Church as it affected Wales. As such, this pioneering study has much to offer all those with an interest, not only in Welsh history, but ecclesiastical history more broadly.

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