

= Hugh of Wells =

Hugh of Wells ( Hugh de Wells , or Hugh of Welles , sometimes Hugh Troteman ; died 7 February 1235 ) was a medieval Bishop of Lincoln . He began his career in the diocese of Bath , where he served two successive bishops , before joining royal service under King John of England . He served in the royal administration until 1209 , when he was elected to the see , or bishopric , of Lincoln . When John was excommunicated by Pope Innocent III in November 1209 , Hugh went into exile in France , where he remained until 1213 .

When he returned to England , he continued to serve both John and John 's son King Henry III , but spent most of his time in his diocese . He introduced new administrative methods into the diocese , as well as working to improve the educational and financial well @-@ being of his clergy and to secure the canonisation of his predecessor Hugh of Avalon as a saint in 1220 . Although the medieval writer Matthew Paris accused Hugh of being opposed to monastic houses and monks , there is little evidence of the bishop being biased , and after his death on 7 February 1235 parts of his estate were left to religious houses , including nunneries .

= = Early life = =

Hugh was the son of Edward of Wells and elder brother of Jocelin of Wells , Bishop of Bath . Hugh 's year of birth is unknown , but he was probably an old man at his death in 1235 . The fact that he never left his residence from March 1233 until his death implies that he was impaired from old age . He first appears as a witness on documents of Reginald fitzJocelin , the Bishop of Bath in the late 1180s . After fitzJocelin 's death in 1191 , Hugh continued in the service of the next bishop , Savaric FitzGeldewin . By the end of the 1190s , Hugh was a canon of Wells Cathedral . Although Hugh 's brother Jocelin was given the title of magister , implying that he attended a university , Hugh is never called magister , making it unlikely that he ever received much schooling .

Hugh was a keeper of the king 's seal , serving as deputy to Simon of Wells , the Archdeacon of Wells who was Keeper of the Great Seal from around 1199 to 1204 . Simon was also a relative of Hugh 's , and seems to have helped secure positions for both Hugh and Jocelin in the royal administration . Hugh was a royal clerk in the chancery , the royal secretariat , and was named Archdeacon of Wells sometime before 25 April 1204 . He held prebends in the diocese of Lincoln and diocese of London as well . His service in the chancery would have involved him in Hubert Walter 's administrative innovations during his term as Chancellor .

Besides his episcopal appointments , Hugh was rewarded with two manors in Somerset , including the Treasurer 's House in Martock which he made his primary residence , and the right to collect taxes and fines in two hundreds in Somerset . He also served as the royal custodian of the diocese of Lincoln while the see was vacant between 1200 and 1203 , collecting the revenues of the see , most of which went to the king while a see was without a bishop . In 1205 and 1206 , Hugh was royal custodian for the diocese of Bath , which was similarly vacant .

= = Bishop of Lincoln = =

Hugh was elected to the see of Lincoln about 14 April 1209 , after a papal command to the cathedral chapter to elect a new bishop , as Lincoln had again been without a bishop since 1206 . During the summer of 1209 , Hugh , along with his brother , was one of the councilors of King John urging the king to settle with Pope Innocent III before the pope excommunicated the king . However , negotiations with papal representatives got nowhere , and the king was excommunicated on 8 November 1209 . Hugh and his brother Jocelin had continued to support King John until this , two years after many of their fellow bishops had deserted the king , but by late in the year , Hugh left the king 's service and went into exile .

The election , meanwhile , had aroused papal suspicions of undue royal influence , and Innocent sent Stephen Langton , the exiled Archbishop of Canterbury to investigate Hugh and the circumstances of his election . Langton was also to investigate rumours that Hugh was not celibate ,

and had two daughters . The results of the investigation must have been satisfactory , as Hugh was consecrated on 20 December 1209 at Melun . The consecration was performed by Langton . Hugh was in exile in France until he returned to England on 16 July 1213 . His only known activity while in exile was the writing of a will , which was dated November 1212 and was drawn up at St Martin de Garenne , near Paris .

Hugh attended the papal Fourth Lateran Council held in 1215 in Rome , along with a number of other English bishops , and both English archbishops . Soon after his return from the council , Hugh served as a royal judge , serving as one of the justices of the eyre for Lincolnshire , Nottinghamshire , and Derbyshire in 1218 and 1219 . In 1226 he was once more a royal justice . Later , he was employed by King Henry III as an ambassador , helping negotiate with King Louis VIII of France over the status of Normandy and Poitou . Hugh also worked to secure the canonisation of his predecessor Hugh of Avalon as a saint , which occurred in 1220 .

= = Diocesan affairs = =

In 1222 , along with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Norwich , Hugh ordered that all those in their dioceses refrain from contact with Jews . This decree , however , was countermanded by a royal decree to the county sheriffs in the affected dioceses ordering them to imprison any residents who refused to interact with Jews . Besides these activities , Hugh was active in his diocese , including supervising the various monastic houses within it . In 1227 , a visitation to Eynsham Abbey resulted in Hugh deposing the abbot . Although the 12th chronicler Matthew Paris accused Hugh of being biased against monks and nuns , and even called him the " untiring persecutor of monks , the hammer of canons , nuns and all the religious " , there is little evidence that Hugh singled out monks for persecution . One reason for Paris ' dislike of the bishop may have been the fact that the chronicler 's own abbey of St Alban 's had to compromise with Hugh over two legal disputes , dealing with the right to appoint to various benefices .

Hugh once was credited with creating 300 new vicarages within the diocese , largely on the basis of his surviving documents dealing with this , known as the Liber Antiquus . Further research has shown that a number of the vicarages he was once assumed to have founded were instead earlier foundations that Hugh either augmented or reassessed . Hugh also worked to improve the educational level of this clergy , even refusing to allow some candidates to benefices to be installed because of their lack of education . The bishop also worked to improve the conditions of the poorer clergy in his diocese , attempting to ensure that all the clergy in his diocese had enough to live on . Previously , it was thought that Hugh had sent out a set of articles of inquiry to his diocesan clergy , but these articles are now shown to have been produced by Hugh 's successor , Robert Grosseteste .

In the administration of his diocese , Hugh introduced new methods of recording documents . This system was modelled on that which Hubert Walter had introduced into the chancery , with separate registers for each archdeaconry , and registers , or rolls , for charters and memoranda , much like the Charter Roll or Memoranda Roll of the royal chancery . He also undertook a survey of the endowments of the vicarages within his diocese .

Hugh supported the building campaign of Salisbury Cathedral , ordering that money be collected throughout his diocese . Likewise , he ordered similar collections for Daventry Priory , Sulby Abbey and parish churches in his diocese . Not only churches benefited from these sorts of collections , as the bishop offered indulgences to those who helped build bridges at Brampton , Rockingham , and Aynho .

= = Death and legacy = =

Hugh died on 7 February 1235 , at his episcopal residence at Stow Park . He was buried on 10 February 1235 in Lincoln Cathedral , in the north aisle . In 1233 he had written a new will , which mentions his brother and a niece named Agatha . He left bequests to his family , his household , Lincoln Cathedral , and a number of monasteries in his diocese . What was left after the specific

legacies was to be divided between poor religious houses , such as the Barrow Gurney Nunnery , students and teachers at Oxford University , Jewish converts and the poor on the episcopal manors .

Hugh 's register of ordinations still survives , and is in the Lincoln cathedral archives . Parts of this were published by Alfred Gibbons in 1888 , and others in 1904 by the Canterbury and York Society . These records give not only the name of the person receiving a benefice , but what the clerical status of each new benefice holder was .