

GOWER, HENRY (1278? - 1347), bishop

Name: Henry Gower
Date of birth: 1278?
Date of death: 1347
Gender: Male
Occupation: bishop
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

According to one source he was born in Yorkshire, but his surname, his possessions in Gower, and his evident interest in Swansea, lend support to the common belief that his roots were in Gower. He was doctor utriusque juris of Oxford, Fellow of Merton, and for a time chancellor of the university. About 1314 he was canon, and about 1319 archdeacon of S. Davids; and on 21 April 1328 (according to [Yardley](#)) was appointed bishop of S. Davids, and consecrated on 12 June - [Yardley](#) adds that he was then 50 years of age. There are strong hints that he was of the party of Mortimer and queen Isabella; but he made his peace with Edward III and represented him abroad more than once, besides holding royal offices in England on occasion. But by far the greatest part of Gower's life as bishop was spent at S. Davids itself. He died there in 1347 (on 1 May, says [Yardley](#)), and was buried on the south side of the choir. It is as a generous and splendid builder that he is justly famous - in this respect, says E. A. Freeman, he left his mark on the place to an extent unequalled by any other builder. He enlarged the lady chapel and added a chantry to it; the fine stone rood-screen is his; he added to the height of the walls of the church and enlarged its windows; he walled the close, and built within it the magnificent episcopal palace whose walls stand to this day. He removed ' Bishop Beck's College ' from S. Davids to Abergwili, near Carmarthen, and repaired a good number of the episcopal manor-houses of Dyfed, together with three at least of the churches in that region. At Swansea, he founded a hospital, built the fine chancel of S. Mary's church, and heightened the tower of Swansea castle.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

T. F. Tout in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (and his references)

E. Yardley, *Menevia Sacra. Arch. Camb.* (1927)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Henry Gower](#)

Additional Links

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