

Daniel Francis Durand (1745-1832)

Under Master of Elizabeth College, 1765-1772 & 1780-1794

Rector of St Andrew, 1780-1794

Dean of Guernsey and Rector of St Peter Port, 1794/5-1832

Daniel was born in Norwich and educated in Canterbury before being admitted Sizar at St John's College, Cambridge aged seventeen, where he gained his BA and MA.

Later, he was ordained and appointed curate of his father's parish of St Sampson and the Vale, in Guernsey. Shortly afterwards he purchased a chaplaincy in the 96th Regiment, which was then garrisoned in Guernsey, but went on half pay when it left the Island. After six years in Guernsey, he returned to England and accepted the role of tutor to a young nobleman with whom he took the Grand Tour (of Europe). His account books of their travelling expenses are included in the extensive Durand Collection (currently held in the States of Guernsey Archives).

Whilst on tour he visited the family seat at Fontcouverte outside Montpellier from which his great grandfather Francois Guillaume Durand, a Huguenot priest, had been evicted after the repeal of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 by Louis XIV. Daniel was offered the estate and titles that went with it after the two resident Durand ladies had died. This offer was made subject to him reverting to the Church of Rome. He declined the offer and returned to Guernsey in 1779 to become Rector of St Andrew.

Seven years later he married Anne de Jersey, daughter of Richard de Jersey and Ann (née Sauvaire) of St Helène Manor in St Andrew, just up the road from the Rectory. He was Under Master at the Elizabeth College from 1780 until 1795.

When the Dean of Guernsey died in 1794, Daniel boarded the first packet bound for England, hired a horse and presented himself to the Bishop of Winchester, who was responsible for appointing the Dean. The Bishop was obviously impressed and the following year Daniel was appointed to the most senior ecclesiastical position in the Island. He remained Dean and Rector of the Town Church for thirty seven years until his death in 1832, aged eighty seven.

There are a number of memorials to Daniel Durand throughout the Island. His name is engraved on a bell in the tower of St Saviour's church and it appears again over the entrance on the north side of the Market Building in St Peter Port, alongside the names of several other dignitaries. There is also a superb memorial to him and his wife on the south wall of the Town Church, showing the Durand de Fontcouverte and the de Jersey coats of arms, together with him and his wife in relief silhouette.