



## Notes on Broughton Castle.

*By Lord Saye and Sele.*

---

**B**ROUGHTON CASTLE, which is an almost unique specimen of a fourteenth century manor house, stands in a small park, and lies in a hollow, encircled by low wooded hills. It is about three miles from Banbury. The castle is surrounded by a broad moat, with a gatehouse and bridge; the old mill stands on the stream close by, and the church, which is coeval with the castle, was always, until the end of last century, attached to the lordship. Broughton, as appears in Domesday, had been held by the Saxon Thane Turgot, and was granted by the Conqueror to Berenger de Todeni, a Norman knight. After him the family of "De Broughton" held it till 1377, when it was sold by Sir Thomas de Broughton to the celebrated William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester. The Bishop settled this and other estates on Sir Thomas Perrott (who assumed the name of Wykeham) and Alice his wife, daughter of Agnes, the Bishop's sister. On the death of Sir Thomas's son William, who was a knight of the shire, Oxon, circa 1450, it passed by the marriage of Margaret, his only child and heir, to William Fiennes, second Lord Saye and Sele, son and heir of Sir James Fiennes, who was summoned to Parliament 3rd March, 1447, 26th Henry VI., as Lord Saye and Sele, and in 1449 Lord High Treasurer of England, Constable of the Tower, and of Dover Castle, and Warden of the Cinque Ports, who was murdered in London during the Jack Cade riots of 1450. William, the second Lord, was Constable of Porchester and Pevensey Castles, and Vice-Admiral of England, under Richard Neville, the great Earl of Warwick. He was slain at Barnet, fighting for Edward IV., 14th, April 1471, and has a monument at Broughton Church.

In this family Broughton has remained ever since, and is now held by John Fiennes, fourteenth Lord Saye and Sele. His lordship is descended from the old barons Say, and is twenty-fourth in descent from Geoffrey, Lord Say, one of the twenty-five barons appointed to enforce "Magna Charta. It is not known by whom the castle was

first erected,<sup>1</sup> but the architecture of a large part of it, both outside and within, bespeaks a building of the time of Edward I., circa 1300. Some of the buttresses, windows, the chapel, and the little tower at the southeast angle are of this date. Additions and alterations were made at different times, especially by Sir Thomas Wykeham (who had a license to crenellate in 1405 ; 7 Henry IV.), and by Sir Richard Fiennes, temp, Queen Mary, 1544. The most interesting historical events connected with the castle are of the time of Charles I. and the Great Rebellion. William, the eighth baron and first Viscount Saye and Sele, the then possessor, was one of the Parliamentary leaders in opposition to the King, and here Pym, Hampden, Lord Brooke, St. John, and others met to plot the overthrow of the King.<sup>2</sup> Three days after the battle of Edgehill (about six miles from Broughton), fought on Sunday, 23rd Oct., 1643, the King marched to Broughton, which was then garrisoned by a troop of horse for the Parliament, and sent Sir William Neve, Clarencieux King of Arms, to demand its surrender. The garrison, however, held out until the next day before it capitulated. In the park can still be seen the remains of the earthworks thrown up at that time by the Royal forces.

The styles of the building are practically of three periods, viz., 14th century, the De Broughtons (1301-1307); 15th century, the Wykehams (1404); and 16th century, the Fiennes (1554). The De Broughtons' work is at the east end of the present house, the chapel being part of their building, situated as it is in the north-east angle. The chapel has several windows or peep places looking into it, and in order to reach the infirmary on the floor above and other rooms as well, the staircase is very lofty.<sup>3</sup> Adjoining it is a groined priest's room, and leading away to the west is a beautiful groined corridor branching off to the circular staircase. The stair is said to have been originally the only one; if so it was a most inconvenient arrangement. It leads at the top to the "barracks," the "guard-room," and the "council chamber," where the above-named Parliamentary Leaders met before the meeting of the Long Parliament, 1641, the

---

(1) The castle is stated to have been built by John de Broughton, who rests beneath the highly decorated tomb in the wall of the south aisle of the neighbouring church.

(2) Colonel the Hon. Nathaniel Fiennes, second son of Lord Saye and Sele, was also one of the foremost Parliamentary leaders. His brother, John, also fought stoutly for the Commonwealth.

(3) It may be added that the chapel retains its ancient stone altar slab, marked with the five crosses, and supported by stone brackets.

Hon. Lord Saye and Sele, being as Clarendon says, "the oracle of the Puritans," and "acknowledged head of the dependent sect." He became Lord Privy Seal in the first Cabinet of Charles II. after his return from Schevenening.<sup>4</sup> The bag or purse which belonged to this office is exhibited in a glass case in the present private dining room, where there are portraits of Hampden and other "root and branch" men. In 1407 license was granted to crenellate the castle, and of this date are the remains of the embattled walls to the moat, the great gatehouse, the embattled rooms of the house, containing the kitchen, guard-room in roof, &c., and the stables. The hall which measures 54ft. by 26ft., is said to have been of the 14th century date, but it was considerably altered, and the bay windows thrown out in 1554, when Tudor windows were generally inserted in place of earlier ones. Along the north side of the house on the first floor runs a fine gallery some 90ft. long by 12ft. 3in. wide, with rooms opening out to it. The latest portion of the house is the dining room, which has a splendid ceiling and fine chimney piece. The room is panelled throughout, and in the corner is an angle lobby or screen forming the entrance; the original of this quaint specimen being, of course, the interior doorway of the ante-chamber of the Hall of the Council of Ten in Venice. This is an elaborate work of beautiful detail, thoroughly Elizabethian in style, reminding one of another example at Bradfield, and in one or two other houses in Devonshire. The drawing-room above also has a fine ceiling dated 1599, with rich pendants, &c. King James's bedroom, out of the gallery above named, has a large Jacobean chimney-piece of very unusual design, owing to the treatment of the figure sculpture; indeed most of the rooms are splendidly decorated in the Jacobean style. There is a picture of William of Wykeham in the hall, and the collection of historical pictures forms one of the features of the house.

---

(4) Although a leading member of the Puritan party, steering all their counsels and designs, yet after the death of the king, he turned from Cromwell with abhorrence, and took no further part in politics until the Restoration.