

## Book Review

*Broughton Castle and The Fiennes Family*, by Nicholas Allen, Wykeham Press (ISBN 978 0 9566059 0 0). A5, card covered, 94pp, 20 illustrations/ maps. 2010, £7.50. Mail orders (adding £2.00 p&p) from BHS members, with cheque, to Nick Allen, Barn End, Keyte's Close, Adderbury OX17 3PB.

I little thought when my fellow guide Nicholas Allen showed me some notes on Broughton Castle some years ago, and asked for comments, that my curiosity would encourage him to write a book. I'm delighted that it did.

The book charts the history of the family from before they became the owners of Broughton Castle, starting with their arrival in England with William the Conqueror.

The family were particularly prominent during the English Civil War, as active Parliamentarians, and the book rightly concentrates on that important time in our history. The castle was besieged and taken by Royalists, and years later when the moat was dredged cannonballs were found.

After the restoration of Charles II, Lord Saye and Sele ("Old Subtlety") was pardoned and life at Broughton became less exciting. Because of financial trouble the castle was occasionally let and the family lived elsewhere, the book ending with their return in 1912. It's left to another book to record the hard work of the family in the twentieth century to return the castle to its former glory.

Nicholas Allen sheds light on some of the peculiarities of British history, particularly on wardship. Several Lords Saye and Sele inherited the title before maturity, and it turns out that the wardship of them could be sold on to other people, who could take advantage by arranging advantageous marriages for their daughters. That was totally unknown to me, and absolutely fascinating.

A significant number of the family died young or without heirs, so the title moved sideways a surprising amount. This wasn't unusual for the time, but I would have liked to have known more about the individuals.

I was interested, though not convinced, by Nick's definition of "Twisleton" as the division of a river, as I'd always understood that "Twisle" was an old English word for a mole, and moles are depicted on the family flag. Can any reader clarify this?

It's a minor criticism, but I would have liked the family tree to have been in a larger font. Though given how far back it goes and its complications, I can see that this wouldn't have been easy to achieve. [It would need two more pages. *Ed.*]

Nicholas has produced a fascinating guide to a beautiful house with a distinguished history. It will prove invaluable to anyone who wants more information on Broughton than is in the castle brochure. And on a personal note, it will be an indispensable guide for stewards on Broughton's open days, and it fits in my pocket beautifully.

Mary Quinlan