

## General History of Broughton

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Prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066, Broughton was held by Thorgautr Lagr. By 1086, the village was held by the tenant-in-chief "*Berengarii de Toden* (Berengar de Tosny)", who was the first-born son of Robert de Toden. Berengar's sister "Albreda" inherited Broughton, so her husband Robert de Insula was next to manage what was by then a profitable manor.

Broughton's C of E Parish Church "St Mary the Virgin" was built around the year 1300 in a style that is transitional from Early English to Decorated Gothic. The church is in the grounds of Broughton Castle which is a 14th- to 16th-century Country House and the seat of the ancestral line of the Lords Saye and Sele (the Fiennes family) and the building itself was restored using the consultancy of architect George Gilbert Scott.

Broughton's Rectory was rebuilt in 1694. It was altered three times in the 19th century: firstly, by Richard Pace of Lechlade, in 1808, and then with extensions by SP Cockerill in 1820 and HJ Underwood in 1842.

The Domesday Book records that in 1086 Broughton parish had two watermills. By 1444 there were at least three, one of which was a fulling mill. By 1685 there was a second fulling mill, and both mills supplied the local woollen industry. Fulling and cloth-dyeing remained local industries until early in the 20th century.

In the 17th century Broughton's agriculture was predominantly pasture for cattle and sheep, this explains names given to the parish such field names as Dairy Ground, Grazing Ground and New Close Pasture. Improved crop rotation during the agricultural revolution increased arable farming in the parish, with crops being diversified in the 18th century to include clover, flax, hops, sainfoin and woad. Some of these crops have given place names to the parish such as Sandfine Wood, Sandfine Road and Woadmill Farm. Woad was still grown in 1827, when it was used locally for dyeing wool.

Broughton has a pair of Gothic Revival Almshouses that were built in 1859.

**Village Name:** The name Broughton means "the enclosure or farm by the brook".

The village is bounded on the west, south and north east by the Sor Brook. On the western boundary is an ancient ford over the Sor Brook, where the remains of the abandoned village of *Hazelford*, can still be seen today.

There is an Iron Age fortification, known as Castle Bank, but otherwise there is no evidence of early settlement.

## **Hazelford Village**

The village contained two fulling mills and a paper mill. There were also mills making dyestuffs and bone manure, all closed after 1851.

In 1827 Lower Fulling Mill had a dye works attached to it and was dyeing cloth for the nearby village of Shutford.

The property in Hazelford consisted of shearing houses, woad houses and store houses.

Woad is a flowering plant where blue dye is obtained from the leaves. According to local tradition, the woad was milled by horse power at Woad Mill Farm.

## **Broughton Castle.**

Of course, the most imposing building in Broughton today is Broughton Castle. The Castle was built by Sir John de Broughton in 1300.

The manor was sold to Bishop William of Wykeham in 1376. Richard Fiennes succeeded in 1528 (Lord Saye & Sele).

## **Castle in the Civil War**

In the Civil War, Broughton was a place of great importance. Sir William Fiennes was one of the leading activists against Charles I. He allowed the castle to be used as a meeting place for those plotting against the king and many secret meetings of Puritans were held in the castle. It was written:

*For so it was that several years before the Civil Wars began, Lord Saye, being looked upon as godfather of that party, had meetings of them in his house at Broughton, where was a room and passage thereunto, which his servants were prohibited to come near, and when they were of a complete number there would be great noises and talking heard among them, to the admiration of those that lived in the house, yet could they never discern their lord's companions".*

Charles I, after the nearby battle of Edgehill, went to Broughton on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1642 and called the garrison to submit. They resisted for a day and spent another day discussing and agreeing on terms of capitulation. The castle strength was not great, though it was protected by a moat, over which was a stone bridge, defended by a gatehouse, all of which we know remain today.

**The Saye & Sele Arms** was built around 1300 and first licenced in 1782. It was originally called The Twistleton Arms.

In 1685 Broughton comprised 19 houses standing in their own gardens and orchards. Most were grouped in Church Lane or spread out along both sides of the Banbury Road between the Mill and Danvers Farm. Four of the houses, including two isolated fulling mills on the Sor Brook, were right off the road. Most of the houses in Main Road date from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. They are built of local stone in the Gothic style.

In 1841 twelve old cottages were pulled down and replaced by three new blocks, each block containing four tenements. In 1859 the almshouses were built by Elizabeth Bradford Wyatt. In 1864 the house opposite the Saye & Sele Arms was built.

Several outlying farms were built after the enclosure in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. They are Rectory Farm, Broughton Grange, Broughton Grounds Farm and Pike Farm. Pasture farming gave us field names such as Dairy Ground, New Close Pasture and Grazing Ground and shows the importance of sheep and cattle.

Broughton had a fruit bottling operation that was inaugurated by Lady Algernon Gordon-Lennox in June 1907, with agents being appointed in the villages around Banbury. Her Ladyship was prepared to take all varieties of pickled and graded fruits at market price, the idea being to show whether fruit bottling under proper and systematic management could be made to pay. The buildings were fitted up with modern appliances and run on business lines. It was hoped to save waste by using the produce of local fruit growers; to encourage fruit growing, and to provide regular employment for many girls drawn from the Banbury district. The scheme was being watched "with considerable interest". Lady Algernon asked why this country should spend a million annually when it could produce them as well and more cheaply at home.

In August 1911 it was announced that, owing to the state of her health, Lady Algernon would be unable in future to take any active interest in the undertaking. It was stated the business would be transferred to the neighbouring village of Sibford Gower and carried on under other auspices, but that Lady Algernon would continue to give the work the benefit of her advice and experience.

Lady Algernon was born as Blanche Maynard on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1864 and married Colonel Lord Algernon Charles Gordon-Lennox on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1886. They rented Broughton Castle from the 17<sup>th</sup> Lord Saye & Sele and owned a house in Mayfair. She was a famous lady gardener and created "The Ladies Garden" at Broughton Castle. She was interested in all kinds of schemes, one of which was wood carving. She died on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1945.

In the early 1900s she was also known as "England's Best Dressed Woman". It seems appropriate that as "Yew Tree Cottage" is also known as "The Hat Box" she is pictured here wearing a wonderful hat.



In the year 1900 whilst she was living at Broughton Castle, Lady Algernon Gordon-Lennox started a wood carving class for the villagers of Broughton and North Newington where members of the class did some carved oak panelling for the Great Hall at Broughton Castle. In 1902 Charles Dana Gibson, a famous American graphic artist who created the "Gibson Girl", visited Lord and Lady Algernon Gordon-Lennox. He was so impressed with the excellence and beauty of the wood carving that he gave the class an order to produce the whole of the

panelling of a new house he was building in New York. The house was at 127 East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street and is still standing.

**Below are two Photos of the crossroads in Broughton, the first c1922.**



**This one c1950.**



### **Murder in Broughton?**

On Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1848, the Saye & Sele Arms, formerly called The Twistleton Arms, was the scene of an assault by Richard Pargeter from Tadmarton on James Busby who lived in North Newington and who was a gamekeeper to Lord & Lady Saye & Sele. James Busby subsequently died as a result of the assault for which Richard Pargeter was tried for murder. He was found not guilty of murder but guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to 8 months in prison.