

## Visit to Broughton Castle and Broughton Grange Gardens, June 2016

We had an interesting morning visit to Broughton Castle, the moated and fortified house near Banbury. It was selected by Simon Jenkins as one of only twenty to be awarded five stars in his book England's Thousand Best Houses. It is still the home to Lord and Lady Saye and has been in the same family since 1447.



The tour started in the Great Hall, used for filming scenes in the BBC's Wolf Hall. We had an excellent guide who explained the history of the house and its inhabitants, including their support for the Parliamentarians in the Civil War. She pointed out several interesting interior features including the double pleated oak panelling in the dining room, the original medieval tiles in the chapel and hand-painted wall paper in the bedroom.

We also enjoyed the gardens and saw the roses at their best.

After a sandwich lunch, we made the short journey to Broughton Gardens. These gardens are privately owned and the Assistant Head Gardener gave us an .garden was redesigned in 2001 by Tom Stuart Smith, and the centre piece is the three terraced walled garden. Other interesting features include the Sunken garden and its stumpery - a collection of old tree stumps which in a Victorian garden would have been used to cultivate ferns. There had been extensive planting to create a new arboretum.



Thank you to Wendy Castle for making all the arrangements for such a successful visit and to Judith Bentley for leading the group on the day.

Faye Pring