

FAWLEY COURT

The following article was written by Julian Wyatt and deals with the treatment of Fawley Court during the Civil War. Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke was a prominent Parliamentarian and Fawley Court suffered the consequences.

Sir James Whitlock bought in the Michaelmas term (September-October), 1616, the Manor of Fawley in the counties of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, from Sir William Alford of Meux in the county of York.

From Sir James Whitlock's "Liber Famelicus" he says...'it cost me £9,000., that is to say I paid £3,000., ready money, and am to pay £6,000., £2,000., ultimo November 1617, £2,000 ultimo May 1618, and £2,000., ultimo November 1618. I took livery of season upon the 5th December 1616 of the land in Buckinghamshire, and of the land in Oxfordshire, 20th December, 1616' At this time, a purchase of such a fine estate gave him the rank of a county magnate, afterwards Sir James settled the estate in 1630 on the marriage of his son Bulstrode, later Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke, with Rebecca Bennet.

In 1642, Sir John Byron's regiment of Cavaliers were acquiring a taste for pillage as the campaign of Edgehill progressed, Broughton Castle and Fawley Court, the homes of Lord Saye and Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke, were both plundered with something of the heartlessness which Wharton's companions had shown to malignants and papists. When Prince Rupert's brigade was quartered at Henley, Sir John Byron's regiment was at Fawley Court. Byron and his brothers 'gave orders that they should commit no insolence to my house, nor plunder my goods; but soldiers are not easily governed against their plunder,...' Whitelocke alleges that there was '... no insolence or outrage usually committed by common soldiers on a reputed enemy which was omitted by these british fellows at my house. There they had their whores with them, they spent and consumed one hundred load of corn and hay, littered their horses with sheaves of good wheat, and gave them all sorts of corn in the straw; divers writing of consequences, and books that were left in my study, some of them they tore into pieces, others they burnt to light their tobacco, and some they carried away with them,...' Not content with that, they killed his deer, and presented a tame young stag and his 'extrordinary good' hounds to Prince Rupert. They ate and drank 'all that the house could afford' broke open all his trunks and chests, stole his linen, let the feathers out of the beds, carried away his coach, and four good horses, and all his saddle-horses, ...and did mischief and spoil that malice and enmity could provoke barbarous mercenaries to commit...' It was not, of course to be expected that either side would spare the victuals or the horses of their enemies, but it is clear that Byron was no great disciplinarian.

Fawley Court was later sold to Richard Stevens, presumably on behalf of William Freeman, who rebuilt it in 1684.