

# Rockingham Castle

Rockingham Castle was built by William the Conqueror on a promontory overlooking the valley of the River Welland at the Northern edge of the great Rockingham Forest.

It was regularly used by the early Kings of England as a hunting box and an administration centre in the Midlands. King John was a frequent visitor. On his last visit he left an iron chest behind and there is a legend that his treasure is also buried somewhere in the castle grounds.

By the 16th Century the castle had fallen into disrepair and Henry VIII granted it to Edward Watson, ancestor of the present owner in 1530.

Apart from a brief spell in the Civil War when it was taken by the Roundheads, the Watson family have been there ever since.

Charles Dickens used to visit the castle and was so captivated with it that he used it as a model for 'Chesney Wold' in the Bleak House.

This historical castle has a fine collection of paintings, old masters, and contemporary furniture and armour. The Gardens extend to 12 acres with a rose garden on the site of the old keep and the famous 400 year old 'elephant hedge'.