

10 - Almshouses



The South Street almshouses

The almshouse was originally an institution endowed by charity to provide accommodation for the old and infirm who were unable to work and therefore earn a living. Their establishment in England has a long and honourable tradition and they were administered by trusts and were therefore distinct from the publicly financed institutions formerly known as poor-houses or workhouses and later as public assistance institutions.

The origin of the almshouse is mediaeval because the “hospitals” of the middle ages were not as a rule medical, but for the support of infirm and aged people. Many of those that survive therefore are still known as hospitals and the name is particularly prevalent in Scotland. Some were ecclesiastical in foundation and one of the earliest is St John’s Hospital at Canterbury in Kent, founded in 1108, while the best known is the hospital of St Cross at Winchester in Hampshire. The rise of the middle classes during the 14th and 15th centuries gave a fresh impetus to their creation although some disappeared during the dissolution of the monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII but their endowment became popular in the ensuing years through the work of charitably disposed individuals.

Almshouses are generally found in the older, historic towns and villages and usually lacking in the larger urban growths of the industrial age. By 1950, there were nearly 13,000 almshouses in Britain, most of them in England, and half were erected before 1840 although most have been modernised or repaired since then. The accommodation of these cottages or flats is usually minimal but not sparse, with at least two rooms and a kitchen and the tenants are chosen under the terms of the original foundations, sometimes from the locality or often from a particular trade. There is never a lack of suitable applicants and almshouses are likely to serve a useful purpose even today in providing homes for the aged who still choose their independence and cannot or will not live with relatives.

The Buildings of Bourne

Bourne has had a strong tradition of care for the aged, the needy and the handicapped through the benevolence of wealthy people who either lived here or who had connections with the town. The advent of the welfare state has not removed the need for this and so much is still done on a local and voluntary basis to meet the demand. The result is that two sets of almshouses from past times can be found in the town where they continue to provide much needed accommodation for deserving cases.

A stone tablet on the front of the Tudor Cottages in South Street suggests that these almshouses were built in 1636 but this is misleading. They most likely date from the late 18th or early 19th century and the original buildings on this site were the Trollope Bedehouses. They were erected in that year although the present cottages were built on the original foundations and much of the materials from the previous properties were probably used in the reconstruction.

The benefactor for this charitable undertaking was William Trollope, a landowner, and member of a prominent wealthy family that had been associated with the Bourne area since 1543. He founded a hospital and provided a yearly sum of £33 for the maintenance of "six poor aged men" from the parish who were accommodated in the almshouses. Trollope was also instrumental in providing sufficient funds to help put education on a firm footing and his generosity was typical of several rich landowners of the period who contributed greatly to the welfare of the people and the development of the town.



The West Street almshouses

Bourne United Charities has been responsible for the twelve alms or bedehouses and a warden's bungalow in West Street since they opened in 1932 to provide homes for elderly inhabitants. They were built at a cost of £6,000 by Messrs Wright and Son Limited of Lincoln who tendered for the work along with eight other builders and although theirs was not the lowest, the tenders varying by as much as £1,600, it was preferred by the architects who drew up the specifications, Messrs Webster and Trower of Spalding, the time allowed for completion being eight months. Work began in 1931 and was finished within contract. The capital was provided by BUC mainly by realising investments of

property in Leytonstone, London, left to the town under the Harrington bequest, which was sold for a street widening scheme. The almshouses are situated in an attractive setting just off the main road and ranged on four sides around lawns and flower beds and tenancies are much sought after. A bronze plaque has been erected at the front of the almshouses to perpetuate the memory of the local benefactors who contributed money in past centuries for such philanthropy, William Trollope, William Fisher and Robert Harrington, the founders of various charities in the 17th century.

11 - Monkstone House



The front of Monkstone House and the rather unimposing rear

Among the oldest domestic buildings in Bourne is Monkstone House at No 12 West Street. Few houses in which the townsfolk lived in earlier times have survived but this one is virtually intact and is similar in style and period to the property nearby that is now used by Lloyds TSB. The rear part of the house dates back to 1620 while the impressive red brick frontage was erected in the mid-18th century and the original doorway incorporating a broken pediment and fanlight still graces the main entrance.

This handsome Grade II building rising to two storeys above the ground would doubtless have been the residence of one of the town's more affluent citizens in centuries past and in more recent times was the lifetime home of the late Mr Jack Rayner, a teacher at Bourne Grammar School who died in June 1990 at the age of 73. His family ran a carriage making and undertaking business from the building behind, now occupied by the stationery shop Fovia overlooking the Burghley Street car park.

Rayner was an expert in timber and carpentry and began transforming the house and spending much of his spare time filling the main rooms with intricate wood carvings of foliage and small animals, particularly mice, converting the drab interior into the splendour of a richly decorated Elizabethan home. Mr Rayner also carved many other items that are still preserved in the Bourne area, including a chair and a replacement staircase finial in the Red Hall, and a wooden cross mounted on the wall and illuminated by spot lights behind the pulpit of the Methodist Chapel in Abbey Road during major renovation work in 1968. Later in the century, when the house fell vacant, it stood empty for several years but was converted for use as an Indian restaurant in 1993.

When they agreed the change of use the previous year, South Kesteven District Council made it a condition of planning permission that the carvings should be preserved and the front facade of the building remain unchanged. Mr Clifford Hirst, agent for the owners said at the time: "They have bought the building because of its character and with the intention of retaining that character as a feature of the restaurant. All hardwood carvings, the carved fireplace and beams, including those with carved mice, will be retained, as will the listed staircase and carved doors."

12 - The Old Maltings



One of the most imposing of the town's historic buildings is the Old Maltings in West Street, particularly so because the handsome building of mellow red brick and blue slate roof which dates back to the late 18th century has been sympathetically restored for modern business use. The original owner was John Dove, a local farmer who brewed his own ale, and who owned a maltings office and orchard on the site but the property was destroyed by fire in 1790 and rebuilt in 1806, being gradually enlarged over the years by later owners who added a wine and spirit vaults, bottle house, counting house and other ancillary buildings. When John Dove died in 1818, the maltings were sold and subsequent owners were Thompson, Clifton and Co (circa 1835) and William Blankley Thorpe (circa 1904) who installed a manager, William Bradley, to run the business.

The building was previously known as the old Pidcock malthouse after the last owners, J Pidcock and Co Ltd who were in possession during the early years of the 20th century. They are listed as the owners in 1913 and again in 1937. The manager in 1920 was Mr Frank Rose who lived on the premises with his wife Rose and they are pictured here with their two sons, Dick and Harry, in a photograph most probably taken by William Redshaw. By 1965, when it was still owned by Pidcocks, the business had become one of the few manually operated maltings left in the country, employing 20 people and still using tools like the turning shovel, turning fork and floor plough on the malting floor. But

The Buildings of Bourne

trade declined and the maltings closed down in 1967 when the building was bought by Boston Tractors Ltd, a firm of agricultural machinery specialists founded in 1947, who restored it to the condition we see today under the personal supervision of their managing director Mr J C Allen. He took great pains to keep the original appearance of the building by reinforcing the brickwork and timbers and so the work was more in the nature of a restoration than a refurbishment. A heavily pillared pine doorway was let into the brickwork in the front of the property giving access to a showroom covering 1,800 sq ft made from the original malthouse beams and original wood was also used for the interior panelling and the oak reception desk. This theme continued throughout the building, including the new workshops at the rear where the firm serviced customers' machinery. To make the building additionally attractive, the work included the construction of a pavement garden at the junction of West Street and Manor Lane.

"The restoration has been of the highest order and carried out entirely by small local firms", said Mr Allen when the building was re-opened in the autumn of 1968 and the firm's activities were transferred from their previous premises in Meadowgate. The company also had branches at Holbeach and Kirton, near Boston, but the West Street premises became their central depot from then on, with showrooms, workshops and equipment stores for tractors and garden machinery. But the company closed soon afterwards and the building was bought by an American firm but they eventually abandoned their plans for re-development and pulled out, leaving it empty and semi-derelict for the next five years until bought by Warners Midlands plc in 1976 and it is now the headquarters of their expanding colour printing business employing more than 300 people on an expanding site.

13 - Cavalry House

An unusual property can be found in South Street called Cavalry House, so named because the former owner Mr Thomas Rawnsley (1755-1826), a wool stapler of some means and a Deputy Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, raised at his own expense a volunteer cavalry troop among local residents in the late years of the 18th century when Britain was at war with revolutionary France for national defence against a possible invasion threatened by Napoleon.

The troop was one of three mounted units known as the Folkingham and Bourne Cavalry, operating within the Bourne and Folkingham Squadron which was raised in June 1794 under the command of Sir Gilbert Heathcote with his son, Captain Robert Heathcote as second in command. It was the practice of the period for wealthy businessmen to finance military units in times of emergency and as a result of his participation, Rawnsley was gazetted cornet in 1794 and subsequently promoted lieutenant in May 1799.

His troop was also known as the Loyal Lincolnshire Light Horse Rangers which was eventually recognised by the War Office as part of its official military strength. By 1803, it consisted of almost 60 officers and men and he had been promoted to captain and appointed both adjutant and paymaster of the Folkingham and Bourne Cavalry and was being paid £146 a year. The volunteers practised military drill regularly on common land in the town and surrounding villages while the emergency lasted but had no chance to

The Buildings of Bourne

display their valour because the invasion never came. In 1808, Rawnsley's service in the cause of national security was recognised when Lady Heathcote presented him with a handsome silver goblet. But by 1816, the unit had been disbanded, along with all other volunteer units which were not revived for more than 30 years.



Rawnsley was a member of a well known Lincolnshire family who settled in the county during the 18th century. He was the great-grandfather of Canon H D Rawnsley, author of *Memories of the Tennysons*, and of W F Rawnsley, who wrote *Highways and Byways in Lincolnshire*, and owned land in the town and in Thurlby, the Isle of Ely and Norfolk, but chose to live in Bourne where he married a local girl, Deborah Hardwicke, in 1784. Their fifth son was the Rev Thomas Hardwicke Rawnsley (1789-1861) who became rector of Folkingham, and another of their sons, Charles Rawnsley, a graduate of Emmanuel College, Oxford, died in July 1811 at Futtergurgh in the East Indies while serving as a lieutenant with the 18th Regiment of Native Infantry.

Thomas Rawnsley died in 1826, aged 71, and there are memorial tablets in the north arcade of the Abbey Church to him, his wife Deborah and six of their children who died in infancy but were placed high on the north arcade and can only be seen with difficulty from the nave.

The Abbott's Garden once formed part of the picturesque grounds of Cavalry House but this land has since been sold for development although in past times it was the venue for many public events through the generosity of a former owner, retired farmer Mr Albert Dainty. He spent the last years of his life as tenant of Cavalry House which he bought for his retirement and became associated with most of the social functions in the town and frequently allowed his attractive gardens to be used for various events such as garden fetes and promenade concerts. A typical occasion was on Wednesday 21st June 1899 to raise funds for the Volunteer Corps when the gardens were illuminated and there was dancing late into the night. Mr Dainty was dogged by ill health during his final years and in the last two months, he was confined to his house apart from short excursions in a Bath

chair. He had also tried to recoup his health with a visit to the South of England and had only returned the week before his death on Monday 19th May 1902, aged 58, which was sudden, although not unexpected. Since then, Cavalry House has had many owners and although outwardly much the same in appearance, there have been many changes within the structure which remains Grade II listed.

14 - Bourne House



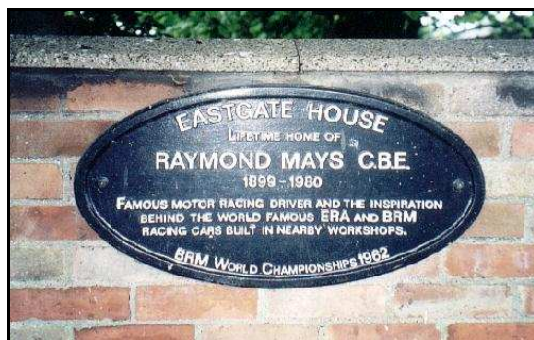
No 46 West Street, also known as Bourne House, was built in 1830 in the Regency style that was still prevalent at that time. This was the home of the Bell family, latterly Major Cecil Walker Bell, a solicitor and churchwarden at the Abbey Church, and he salvaged ancient stones from around the church in 1892 and used them as landscape features in the extensive gardens at the rear of the property. When he left Bourne in 1940, the house was bought by Kesteven County Council and used as dormitory accommodation for evacuees from Hull and after the war the authority converted it into a hostel for maladjusted and problem children, orphans or those from broken homes.

The house continued in this role for a quarter of a century until being phased out and after standing empty for some years, it was acquired by property developers who planned to turn it into a complex of retirement homes and maisonettes. Conservationists objected that the extensive alterations would ruin the character of the building although they made no suggestions as to how the money to preserve it in its original condition might be raised. In the event, planning permission was granted and the transition was carried out in 1988-89 at a cost of £1¼ million and it remains an attractive part of the street scene.

The main house and outbuildings were turned into flats and 19 bungalows were built in the grounds but the trees were preserved, including some fine cedars, walnuts, a weeping ash and an old pear tree, and a new landscaped garden area. The Civic Society also gave its blessing to the work. "The house has been greatly enhanced by its sympathetic

renovation", said the vice-chairman Councillor Don Fisher. The ancient stones salvaged in 1892 were preserved during the 1988-89 conversion work as seats in the gardens at the rear of the property where they can still be seen although they have started to deteriorate as a result of severe winter frosts.

15 - Eastgate House



The large and imposing house at the north end of Eastgate was the family home of motor racing pioneer Raymond Mays who was born there in 1899 and died there in 1980 at the age of 80. Eastgate House is a splendidly tall building that has been extended over the years. Although built in the late 18th century, the elegant brick frontage in the Regency style was added during the 19th century to the main part of the original stone building that had its own well. The property had long associations with the tanning and wool trades and an impressive coat of arms in carved stone is set high above the back entrance with the initials J C and the date 1796 on a scroll. Mini sun gods decorate the lower border.

The property dates back two years earlier to 1794 when it was bought by Thomas Chamberlain, a miller, and originally included in the estate were a number of cottages that were destroyed by fire. The initials J C are thought to refer to the birth of Chamberlain's son John who later took over the house and in 1827 built a brewery, bakery, barns and stables on the site. The work however extended him financially and his affairs were placed in the hands of trustees, Thomas Lawrence of Dunsby and Edward Thompson of Morton, acting for his mother Mrs Mary Chamberlain, who also administered the farming interests that were attached to the estate.

The house was then acquired by Thomas Mays, a fellmonger and skin dealer, in 1856 and continued as the family home until his grandson Raymond died in 1980. During much of Raymond's occupation, the house was run by Mrs Myrtle Hammond who served with the family for 50 years. It was lavishly decorated with period furniture and there were many paintings on the walls including a portrait of Raymond painted in 1950 by Sofy Asscher and water colours of Raymond racing past the chequered flag in several of his successful events by the distinguished motoring artist Gordon Crosby.

Eastgate House was also the scene of many parties attended by famous stage celebrities and photographs hung on the walls signed by Ivor Novello, Mary Ellis, Phyllis and Zena Dare

and Norma Shearer and an oil painting dominated the main staircase of José Collins the actress in her famous role as *The Maid of the Mountains* that had previously hung in the foyer of the Gaiety Theatre in London. There was also a large signed portrait of Amy Johnson (1903-41), the aviatrix who in 1930 became the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia, and the inscription read: "To Raymond, in great admiration, Amy". The famous woman flier had shown an interest in hill climbing and motor racing and subsequently stayed at Eastgate House several times. The house was sold after Raymond's death but he is remembered by a metal commemorative plaque on the outside wall.

16 - The Bourne Institute



The imposing building on the corner of St Peter's Road is a perfect example of Victorian ostentation, now home to the Pyramid Club. No 63 West Street was once a farmhouse but its wealthy owner during the 19th century gave it a Gothic style façade, the porch containing ballflower decoration and wheat sheaf capitals while the date 1872 has been included in the arch rosette above the upper window on the side of the front and the owner's initials J G are also visible to the discerning eye in a similar position above the upper central window.

This reminds us that the original red brick house and grain store attached once belonged to Mr John Gibson, a corn merchant and brewer, who improved the property in that year, adding the imposing stone front and stained glass windows that depict the four seasons of the barley growing cycle which is also featured in the decoration over the front door. He lived there with his family for 25 years and in 1896, the premises were rented out for use by a newly formed social organisation for the town which began after a public meeting called by leading citizens at the Corn Exchange on Tuesday 20th October when the elected committee was empowered to secure suitable premises for the purpose. The public meeting was well attended and it was unanimously decided to call the new organisation the Bourne Institute and that it be conducted on non-sectarian and non-political lines by a popularly elected committee, the objects being to make provision for healthy recreation,

The Buildings of Bourne

education and mutual intellectual improvement, and providing facilities for a wide range of social activities including a music room with a piano, musical and debating societies, billiards and other games, and a modest library.

A proposal to this effect was moved by Mr Robert Gardner, who presided at the meeting, and in seconding his motion, the Rev G H Bennett, minister at the Baptist chapel, expressed cordial approval and added: "There can be no doubt as to its necessity and I predict that it will be successful. I therefore welcome its formation on behalf of the young people of the town and I hope that a library will also be provided." Running costs were estimated at £80 a year and initial expenses £45, in addition to the cost of a billiards table and other fixtures. The Bourne Institute therefore came into being and opened at the premises in West Street the following month, in November 1896, with Mr Gardner as president.

In the event, the library became one of the most popular amenities and every effort was made to extend the available stock. On Tuesday 2nd May 1897, a novel idea was successfully carried out by the library committee when a concert was organised with a book as the admission charge. The club president, Robert Gardner, was the first to respond and in a short space of time, the library had amassed 400 volumes, a remarkable collection at a time when they were prized possessions and eagerly sought after by those anxious to read and expand their knowledge of the world. The debating society was another popular feature of the Institute's activities, robustly discussing a wide range of current topics, both local and national and there was also an active theatrical section, in particular the Bourne Institute Amateur Minstrels, who specialised in giving concerts consisting of songs, dances, monologues and sketches.

The premises were rented initially on a three-year lease but in 1897, the committee was given the opportunity to buy the building. John Gibson was still the owner at that time but he was in financial difficulties and had been declared bankrupt. To add to his problems, he had also been charged with fraud, having tried to obtain goods on credit, and so what assets he had were being realised to pay off his creditors, including the building which was then being used by the Bourne Institute. A series of fund raising functions began with a bazaar to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee on Wednesday 9th June, a grand occasion for the 200 members which was marked by the issue of a Bourne town guide as a souvenir of the event, and opened by Mr William Younger, the Stamford MP, who was taking an active interest in the Institute. In his speech, he gave members an insight into the development of similar organisations throughout the country. He said:

Institutes such as this have become a necessity of the times and in large towns they are the means of accomplishing very useful work and are therefore highly appreciated. Young people who have been closely confined during working hours at the desk or in the shop wish for opportunities where they can both secure social enjoyment and improve their minds. Mr Balfour [Arthur James Balfour, Conservative politician and Prime Minister from 1902-05], seeing the value of similar enterprises, has said that the literary power of the next twenty years will be in the artisan class. The inhabitants of Bourne are not favourably situated for enjoying literary advantages, as they are in the midst of a purely agricultural district. But in this Institute, they will find opportunities of spending their leisure

The Buildings of Bourne

time with pleasure and profit. Of course, Institutes like this cannot be started and carried on without money and I trust that during the continuance of this bazaar, sufficient money will be forthcoming to set your minds at rest as to your financial position. When Queen Victoria acceded to the throne in 1837, books were very scarce and very expensive and the bulk of the people were unable to read; now, the power of reading is, thanks to popular education, universal. Books are plentiful and so cheap that the poorest have opportunities of enjoying them. Hence, there is more need for the formation of a correct literary taste which can be fostered in a place like this Institute where the best literature of the day is available.

Unfortunately, the weather was bad for the opening and plans to hold the bazaar in a large marquee in the grounds were abandoned and the stalls were set up in the billiards room and granary as a result. All had been decorated in red, white and blue to mark the Diamond Jubilee and during a concert in the evening, a series of tableaux were staged to illustrate the leading events in the Queen's reign. There was also music, songs and dancing and as the weather improved, decorated gondolas took guests on short trips along the Bourne Eau.



The Pyramid Club today

The money raising continued and in 1899, the Institute was able to purchase the property for £900. Donations of almost £330 were received towards the cost and £600 was borrowed at an interest rate of 3½ per cent but an appeal for a further £350 was launched to pay for pressing repairs to the building. The success of the project became apparent at the annual general meeting of the Institute held on Tuesday 30th January 1900 when Mr Gardner was re-elected as president and it was reported that the assets of the Institute were £1,090, being a balance of £459 9s. 10d. over the liabilities. He told the meeting: "This handsome block of buildings, splendidly adapted for the purpose, are now the property of the Institute and during the year, the value has been enhanced by their being put into a thorough state of repair. Every department of the Institute shows activity and progress. The membership is 187 and we confidently hope that this might well be increased to 300 very soon."

A strict code of conduct applied to all members using the premises and anyone who transgressed the rules of good behaviour were likely to be hauled before the committee. The old minute books that have been preserved record several such instances and in one case two members were banned from the premises for three months for "unacceptable behaviour in the reading room", although what they did was unspecified, while another

member was banished for being found out of bounds in the ground floor room reserved for use by the ladies. The first billiards table was bought in 1900 and a second in 1908 and this began the tradition for the game on these premises that exists today. During the Great War, injured soldiers sent to Bourne for treatment at the Vestry Hall in North Street that had been turned into a temporary military hospital, were given honorary membership of the Institute in order that they could enjoy the facilities as part of their rehabilitation.

In 1921, Mr Gardner marked his 25 years as president, an office he held until his death in 1926, by bequeathing a generous endowment to help pay off the outstanding balance on its mortgage of the premises and in October 1946, the Institute celebrated its golden jubilee with a gathering at the Corn Exchange. In July 1953, the committee approved leasing one of its rooms to Kesteven County Council for use as a branch library for Bourne at an initial rental of £1 a week and although the original agreement was for a five-year period, it continued until the town's present library was opened in South Street in 1969. In 1975, the Bourne Institute was renamed the Pyramid Club that flourishes today, an organisation owned by its members whose activities are devoted mainly to billiards and snooker, as the name implies, but the owners resisted the temptation to spoil this grand frontage with gaudy advertising signs. Despite its attractive period appearance, the building was not listed during the last survey of 1974 although it will most certainly be included in the next check now underway by South Kesteven District Council.

17 - The Butterfield

The Bourne Nursing Association was established in the late 19th century through the encouragement of Alderman William Wherry (1841-1915). He proposed that such an organisation should be formed with voluntary subscriptions and public grants as a permanent memorial to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 but the suggestion got a mixed reception and there was some opposition.

Nevertheless, Alderman Wherry pressed on with his idea which was eventually given unanimous approval at a meeting in the Town Hall on Thursday 29th April 1897 called to consider the jubilee celebrations. The change of climate for his suggestion came after he had mentioned it to the Countess of Ancaster and not only did she approve, but also promised generous assistance once the scheme got underway. It was calculated that the association would cover Bourne and 20 of the surrounding villages and would entail an annual expenditure of £110 for the town and £130 for the rural area. The meeting decided to send a letter to Lady Ancaster informing her of the decision and asking her to become patroness of the organisation to be known as the Bourne Diamond Jubilee Nursing Association.

The association was formed two years later in 1899 and Alderman Wherry became its president with an organising committee to administer day to day affairs. The nursing association was offered a property in 1909 for use as a cottage hospital, a large detached house of red brick and blue slate on the corner of North Road and Meadowgate. The house, called Brooklands, had been the home of Mr Joseph Butterfield who had moved from Yorkshire some years before and when he died in 1909, aged 53, it was bequeathed in his will to the town on the condition that it should be devoted to the relief of suffering.

The Buildings of Bourne

Miss Eliza Butterfield, one of his two daughters, was appointed a trustee to ensure that his wishes were carried out.

Alderman Wherry, one of the overseers of the parish of Bourne at that time, was also a trustee of Mr Butterfield's will and under his guidance, it was decided that the association should have the use of the house as a cottage hospital and as much of the furniture as they desired. The trustees also offered £50 towards buying equipment and a further £50 a year for three years and at the end of that time, the association would take over responsibility for its running. The trustees would then make a free gift of the premises to the Committee of the Nursing Association and invest a capital sum of £1,000 to provide income that would be devoted to the upkeep of the hospital. The trustees also stipulated that they would serve on the committee whose members would also include all of the general practitioners resident in the town at that time.



Because of the complicated legal procedures, the actual deed handing over the building was not presented to the Nursing Association until its annual meeting on Tuesday 3rd June 1913. The document provided for the transfer of the property in trust, to be used for the same purpose as at present, namely the Butterfield Hospital, together with an endowment of over £1,000 capital, with a proviso that that annual interest be allocated to the upkeep of the hospital. The first trustees appointed were Alderman W R Wherry, Mr T F Alletson (Louth) and Mr A E K Wherry, all of whom had been trustees of Mr Butterfield's will, together with Mr T M Baxter (treasurer), Mr Arthur Saul and Mr C H M Baxter.

The official opening of the hospital took place on 28th June 1910 and was performed by the Countess of Ancaster who lived at nearby Grimsthorpe Castle and a report on the event in the Stamford Mercury said: "The home is an ideal one for its purpose and is now being used. It is pleasantly situated and is in every way convenient. The front room on the left of the entrance is the patients' room with two beds and that on the opposite side is the nurses' apartments. One of the front rooms upstairs also contains a bed for a patient and

The Buildings of Bourne

an operating table, the other rooms being for the nurses. The house stands in a considerable area of garden ground which could be utilised by extending the building for additional wards." The first matron was Miss Crawley who was allowed 25s. per week to stock her store cupboard, 25s. for the maintenance of staff and 1s. per head per day for patients. By the time of the official opening, the first patient was already being treated. He was William Thornton, aged five, who had fallen from a bridge in Eastgate breaking his thigh which was set on the kitchen table before he was admitted to the ward to recover which he did sufficiently to present a bouquet to the countess. William incidentally, lived to be 63 and died in July 1969.

The house and grounds had been decorated for the opening and a temporary platform erected over the steps at the front entrance and it was from here that Alderman Wherry told the gathering of the committee's hopes for the new facility. "It is only the beginning of a much larger work", he said. "There is room behind the present building for wards with another 150 more bed spaces if necessary."

The cottage hospital soon became a valued medical amenity for the town and district. In 1914, a total of 71 patients were admitted while staff nurses paid 2,068 visits to various cases of sickness in the district. All householders and their dependents in Bourne were admitted to the hospital free of charge provided their gross income did not exceed 25 shillings a week while people living outside the town were given a similar facility on payment of one guinea a year. Regular fund raising also continued to boost hospital finances with an annual subscription from the Earl of Ancaster and other donations from all sections of the community, some as small as one penny.

The building was greatly enlarged in 1920 as a memorial to those who fell in the Great War. The total cost of the extensions was £2,250 but the Red Cross contributed £1,000 of this and a further £700 was raised by a Peace Memorial Fund in the town and district while there were also a number of small legacies. The new wing was officially opened on Wednesday 11th May 1921 by Lady Florence Willoughby who was accompanied by her husband, Colonel H D Willoughby, the Member of Parliament for the constituency. It extended eastwards from the main building and the side door was merged into a main entrance where a stone cut in gilt letters was placed above it saying: "Erected 1920 in grateful remembrance of those who made the great sacrifice 1914-18."

The improvements included the addition of two new wards, one with four beds for women and named the Ingle Ward in recognition of a £1,000 legacy given by the trustees of the late Mr Frederick Ingle of Colsterworth. A similar room upstairs was adapted for use as a men's ward. Each of the wards had a small adjoining room for nurses in attendance and each had lavatory and bath accommodation while a large room downstairs was converted for use by private patients.

The new wing also provided a flat for the matron and sufficient staff accommodation whereas before, some of the nurses had lived outside in a hostel. The building contractor was Mr J H Roberts of Bourne and the plans and specifications were drawn up by Messrs Traylen and Lenton of Stamford, architects to the parish church, who also supervised the work and their fees and expenses amounted to £158. Mr A E Wherry OBE, who presided at the opening ceremony, told the gathering: "I am happy to inform you that we are

The Buildings of Bourne

opening the new hospital free of debt but that does not mean we are not requiring more money for the opening of an operating theatre has been postponed until such time as the money required for it is in hand."

Colonel Willoughby used his speech to remember the part played by the ordinary man during the recent conflict in which he said:

The Peace Memorial is most fitting to the memory of those whose lives have been sacrificed. Our county regiment maintained through the war its previous proud record for valour. I have not had the honour of serving with that regiment but I am in a position to speak in the highest terms of its achievements. In the war however, there were other forces besides the soldiers who must be remembered. The bravery of the men in the navy and the courage of our airmen were equal forces in the victory secured. We must also remember our merchant seamen and while the spirit shown by these services prevails, our nation will maintain its position. This is not to forget the work of those at home who ministered to the comforts of others and it is hoped that all of the blessings that have been invoked in this dedication service will be realised for the benefit of our less fortunate neighbours in Bourne and the surrounding district.

Lady Willoughby then declared the new building open with an expression of her appreciation at being asked to perform the ceremony and to associate herself with the brave men to whose memory the hospital had been extended as a Peace Memorial. The visitors then toured the new wards and tea was provided, the refreshments being contributed by various ladies in the town.

By 1923, the general committee reported that the hospital was "holding its own". Figures presented to their meeting on Tuesday 23rd January showed that during the final quarter of 1922 there had been 14 in-patients and 11 outpatients and 13 operations had been performed. For the ten months ending 31st December 1922, 84 patients had been treated in the hospital and 31 in their own homes. The committee expressed the hope that the ever-growing needs of the facility would be met by the continuance of income that was currently £585 19s. 9d. a year, including subscriptions of £212. 1s. 8d., donations of £93 13s. 10d., interest on investments £111 17s. 2d. and payments from patients amounting to £115 3s. 10d. Maintenance during that period had cost £450 while the total expenditure was £500 and therefore the Butterfield was keeping its head above water.

Many members of the house committee which ran the hospital occupied influential positions in the town and they were not reluctant to use their powers for the good of patients. At their quarterly meeting on Tuesday 3rd July 1923, under the chairmanship of Mr A E K Wherry, the committee considered complaints about the noise of motor cycles passing on the road outside which they considered to be prejudicial to the condition of patients in a serious state. They therefore wrote to the secretary of the Bourne Motor Cycle Club asking members to drive quietly past the hospital and also to the Automobile Association requesting that notice boards be erected on the highway bearing a similar wording.

The Buildings of Bourne

By 1965, the hospital was maintaining 12 beds in three wards, one male, one female and one private. There were five full time nursing staff and four part time with a further four employed on night time duty and there were also four kitchen staff and a porter. Minor surgery was performed in the operating theatre and the hospital also had a busy casualty department while weekly clinics were held by visiting consultants. In that year, on February 13th, a patient, Miss Sarah Saunders, celebrated her 100th birthday and received a telegram of congratulations from the Queen together with a visit from council leaders who presented her with a bouquet. She was also sprightly enough to receive a television reporter and camera crew and the film of her interview appeared that evening on Anglia TV.

The Butterfield continued to provide a valuable medical service for the town and public opinion helped it survive several attempts at closure, particularly in October 1982 when nurses and members of the public turned out in force to protest and 6,000 people signed a petition demanding that it remain open. But financial restraints and a streamlining of National Health Service resources eventually sounded the death knell and it closed in 1983. Officers from Age Concern in Bourne, supported by local councillors, persuaded Lincolnshire County Council to buy the building from the Peterborough Area Health Authority for £26,000 for use as a day centre by old people and this has been its role since 1985.

The Butterfield Hospital occupies a dominant position in the town at the corner of Meadow Close and North Road and is pictured here before the bushes and hedges at the front were removed in the summer of 2002.



It is known as the Butterfield Day Care Centre, now a registered charity which is self-financing but assisted with grants from local authorities. In 1989, the facility was catering for 300 people with day care provision for a further 120, the average age of members being 77, and its operation was seen as a means of keeping the elderly out of sheltered accommodation by allowing them to stay in their own homes and remain active in the community. By 2001, it was open only on four days a week, catering for around 30 people a day with an average age of 84.

By 2002 there were 90 elderly visitors a week and the centre was offering meals and social activities together with bathing facilities, hairdressing, chiropody, a library, a domestic service offering help in 80 homes and gardens and, most importantly, a place where the elderly can meet and talk, knowing that they will be picked up and returned home in the centre's minibus. This is a large building in a commanding location and other local organisations also meet here, such as the Family History Society.