

INTRODUCTION



A town 'tween fen and uplands

Bourne is an historic market town looking eastward to the flat and fertile fens and westward to the delightful wooded uplands and it has a remarkable place in history. The Romans built a road known as King Street through here on the way to Sleaford and the Car Dyke, one of the greatest construction feats carried out in Britain by the engineers of the mighty Roman Empire, to carry food and supplies for their advancing armies. It began its existence as a cluster of dwellings on the Car Dyke and subsequently became a Roman station, a Saxon stronghold and reputedly the site of a Norman castle, no mean achievement in the long pageant of British history.

The town has always been associated with water and we have to look to the Wellhead or St Peter's Pool for its origins because the name indicates that this is a place near to the source of a spring or stream and it is the course of the ensuing waterway that gives the town its name. The Old English word *burna*, common in the early Anglo-Saxon period and found in modern form as *burn*, especially in Scotland, means stream and also spring although this particular Bourne was recorded in a document of about 960 as *Brunne*. Over the years, this became Bourn and then in 1893, following a public meeting at the Town Hall, it was changed to Bourne to avoid confusion with other places of similar name, particularly Bourn in Cambridgeshire that had already caused difficulties with the postal and railway services.

The water from the Wellhead springs runs into the Bourne Eau, a name that has also puzzled many people who have decided that the word *eau* comes from the French, meaning water, but that is not so. It actually derives from *eä*, a pure Old English word that was erroneously given by cartographers on their maps as *eau* and few examples of this spelling occur in documents before the 18th century. Although the modern tendency is to go for a French sound when pronouncing *eau*, this does appear to be a very recent practice. *Eä* is a dialectical survival in its own right meaning drain and far more accurate than the French when relating to a Lincolnshire watercourse and older people in many parts of the county still say Eddick rather than Eaudyke. Nevertheless, the water

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connection is correct and it seems quite probable that the early settlement which later grew into the town of Bourne originated around the Wellhead, a natural feature reputed to be replenished by seven springs that would have provided an abundant supply of water for the early settlers. In fact the water here has been so productive in past years that Willingham Franklin Rawnsley in his informative book *Highways & Byways of Lincolnshire* published in 1914 wrote that "near the castle hill is a strong spring called Peter's Pool or Bourne Wellhead, the water of which runs through the town and is copious enough to furnish a water supply for Spalding". Today, the water is extracted by Anglian Water for supply to a much larger catchment area.

Beyond St Peter's Pool you can see the tower of the Abbey Church, founded by the Lord of the Manor, Baldwin Fitzgilbert, in the 12th century, probably around 1138, originally as a monastic house for an Augustinian order of canons. The present church, dedicated to St Peter and St Paul, has been extensively altered over the years and is the town's only Grade I listed building. There is evidence that it was to be built to cathedral-like proportions but the scheme was thwarted by the Black Death which claimed the lives of many working masons and did not therefore come to fruition while a second tower envisaged in the original plans was never built.



The Abbey Church, the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church

The nave as far as the clerestory is a beautiful example of Norman work and the lower part of the tower also shows traces of the period while examples of other periods can be found throughout. There has been a continual programme of restoration over the centuries, particularly during the Victorian era which was marked by extensive building activity, and in recent times a project costing £100,000 was launched in 2006, as yet incomplete.

This is one of seven churches in Bourne. The others include the Baptist Church in West Street which dates from 1835 with extra galleries erected in 1868 and a new organ, organ gallery and vestries in 1876 and a major refurbishment scheme was undertaken towards the end of 2005 and completed in January the following year, the biggest project of its kind in over a century. There is also a small Baptist chapel at Dyke which is within the parish, opened in 1879 and also used as the village school for 70 years. Methodism has been active in Bourne since 1800 and a chapel was opened in 1812 but replaced by the present building in Abbey Road in 1842 and a gallery was added in 1867. Disaster was averted in 1988 when the building was deemed to be unsafe but permission to demolish it was refused by the local authorities because it was Grade II listed and the chapel was subsequently repaired and refurbished at a cost of £300,000 and remains in use. One of the busiest religious buildings in Bourne is the United Reformed Church in Eastgate that is used for a variety of community activities as well as services. It opened in 1846 and a

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schoolroom which was added in 1900 remains in use by the community to this day. The Roman Catholic Church in St Gilbert's Road opened in 1976, designed for a dual purpose function under one sweep of roof, the sanctuary being at one end that can be closed off while the rest of the floor space is used as a hall for social purposes. The Salvation Army citadel in Manning Road also has a busy community role since it opened in 1990 although the movement did have a presence in Bourne from the late 19th century, meeting in makeshift or temporary premises. The latest church to open in the town is the Kingdom Hall in Victor Way, built by the Jehovah's Witnesses in record time with an army of 250 workers and craftsmen and opened in 2004.

There is some evidence of a castle in Bourne but its existence has never been firmly established. Tradition however decrees that the hills and hollows that can be seen in the Wellhead Gardens are the site of this building although it may have been nothing more than a large manor house. The gardens themselves are a delight in springtime when the cherry blossom is in bloom. White and pink flowering cherry trees that line the main path form a colourful avenue for lunchtime strollers and many visitors walk the path and then, enchanted by the sight, retrace their steps to take another look. Nearby is the Red Hall, undoubtedly the jewel in the town's architectural crown, built in 1605 by a London grocer, Gilbert Fisher, who spent so much money on the project that it ruined him financially. His loss was our gain and this charming Elizabethan property has a useful life today as the headquarters of Bourne United Charities and as a meeting place for many organisations as well as being an attraction for visitors to the town.

Few buildings, however, predate the 1600s because two fires in the 17th century devastated the town although it still has a lot of old and interesting architecture and there are currently a total of 71 listed properties. When the town's Conservation Area was designated in July 1977, there were 75 listed buildings in the parish of Bourne, 51 of them within the area but two have since been demolished and two more added during 2007, the Victorian chapel and the Ostler memorial fountain, both in the town cemetery. The other 24 were outside the area, in Eastgate, Cawthorpe and Dyke, but four of these have also been pulled down.

Many of those that remain are unusual. One of the most interesting is Baldock's Mill, built in 1800 and now used as a Heritage Centre. If you want a guided walk of the town, then call here first and collect a booklet that details the best route and the places of interest along the way. In the town centre you will find the Town Hall, built by the architect Bryan Browning in 1821 and financed by public subscription, and the Angel Hotel, an old coaching inn, largely untouched from the 19th century and still retaining much of its original splendour. There are also almshouses in South Street and West Street and many other stone and red brick houses of note including the New Inn in Spalding Road, the Old Bakehouse in the Austerby, Cavalry House in South Street, Monkstone House and the former Bourne Institute in West Street, the Vestry Hall in North Street and the Corn Exchange in Abbey Road.

There have been four hospitals in Bourne but all have now closed. The earliest was a fever hospital established in two empty cottages in Manor Lane to accommodate cases during a smallpox outbreak in 1885 and continued in use until 1913 when Bourne Urban

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District Council began work on a new hospital in South Road which was opened in the summer of 1915. This was originally intended for patients suffering from infectious diseases such as scarlet fever, diphtheria and typhoid but in 1918, cases of tuberculosis were also admitted. By 1965, it was being run as a medical and surgical unit with 53 beds and a full range of services but was shut despite a vigorous protest campaign by local people who raised a petition containing 8,000 names to keep it open. The battle was eventually lost in 1998 and the premises were left standing empty for the next five years before being demolished and the land has since been sold for housing. St Peter's Hospital for mental patients was established in 1930 in the former workhouse premises in St Peter's Road but patients moved out under the government's policy of care in the community and although the buildings stood empty for several years, the entire complex was bought in 1997 by the printing firm Warners Midlands plc and demolished in 2001 to make way for a new press hall and bindery.



Bourne Hospital, St Peter's Hospital and the Butterfield Hospital

The Butterfield Hospital was opened in 1910 in a converted private house in North Road which was bequeathed to the community and soon became a valued medical amenity for the town and district. The building was enlarged in 1920 and continued in use with 12 beds in three wards and a full range of medical services until 1982 when it was shut down despite public protest. 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, now known as the Butterfield Day Care Centre, a registered charity which is self-financing but assisted with grants from local authorities.

A market has been held in Bourne for more than 700 years under a royal charter granted to the Lord of the Manor of Bourne, Baldwin Wake, by King Edward I in 1279, giving permission for a market on a Saturday and this tradition has continued to the present day although a Thursday market was later added. The manorial rights were subsequently acquired by the Cecil family and this entitled their descendants, the Marquesses of Exeter, to receive the market rents. The rights subsequently passed to Bourne Urban District Council in 1961 and then to South Kesteven District Council in 1974 during the re-organisation of local government and this authority now collects the market tolls and is responsible for its administration. The market was held on the streets until December 1991 when it was moved to a new paved area behind the Town Hall because of the danger to shoppers from increasing traffic flows and although there have been doubts about its survival, it continues as a popular amenity on Thursdays and with fewer stalls on Saturdays. The sale and purchase of livestock at a purpose built cattle market was a feature of the commercial life in Bourne for more than a century but it was forced to close in 1981 because of increasingly restrictive regulations that were introduced through EEC

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legislation. The site slowly became derelict with disuse and was eventually replaced by the Burghley Arcade development that was opened between 1988-90. The part that the cattle market had played in the history of Bourne is remembered with a commemorative plaque on a side wall saying: "On this site for some 120 years stood Bourne cattle market until its closure in 1981. Removed from the market place where it had operated under charter from mediaeval days, it remained the hub of local business on market days and on four annual fair days it also served as a centre for a wide flung agricultural community, bringing to this town and to those trading therein much in the way of commerce, social and professional benefit."

Farming has been at the centre of Bourne's industrial life with corn and root vegetables the main products and during the 19th and early 20th centuries, Thomas Mays and Co Limited became one of the biggest employers producing wool, skins and fertiliser from their premises alongside the Bourne Eau in Eastgate. There was also an active trade in fallen stock from their factory at the Slipe where carcasses of livestock such as horses, cattle and sheep were brought in by cart and it was the firm's proud boast in a tradesmen's catalogue of 1909 that "every atom of the carcasses reaching these works would be turned to some commercial account", including the production of large amounts of glue.

Brick making was a major industry during the late 19th century to meet the demand created by a boom in house building from yards on the north and west side of Bourne, the largest of these being the South Lincolnshire Brick and Tile Company Limited which opened in West Road after test bores revealed that the land contained a suitable clay for their manufacture and soon they were supplying the railway company which was extending the line into Bourne and subsequently provided one million of the bricks needed to line the interior walls of the 330-yard long Toft Tunnel. But the industry did not last and the company went into liquidation in 1907.

The town was also a major supplier of water cress, the first beds being established on land to the south of the Wellhead by Edwin Nathaniel Moody in 1896 and soon sending regular supplies by rail to markets in London and Leicester and by 1911, the business had sunk its own borehole to boost supplies of water needed in the production process. The cress beds were eventually closed in 1974.

Today, agriculture is slowly giving way to other industries with printing among the most important, Warners Midlands plc having grown from a small newsagents business established by the late Lorenzo Warner to a major producer of magazines employing some 400 people. Others that have thrived in recent years cover a wide range of activities including the preparing and storage of frozen foods, pre-packed vegetables, salads and fruit, herbs, laundry services and dry cleaning, light engineering, the servicing of electrical goods, telecommunications, joinery, security services, plastic moulding, memorial stones and another traditional to Bourne, the design and construction of racing cars.

Bourne's reputation in the world of motor racing began with the development of the ERA and later the BRM by Raymond Mays (1899-1980), international driver and designer, with the BRM becoming the first all British car to win the world championships in 1962

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with Graham Hill at the wheel. The achievement was marked by a civic reception at the Corn Exchange in March 1963 organised by the old Bourne Urban District Council when Hill was presented with a silver salver for his achievement while Mays himself was honoured in 1978 with a CBE for his services to motor racing. There is also a memorial tablet in South Street erected in 2003 to commemorate the link between Bourne and this chapter in motor racing history.

The main sporting venue is the Abbey Lawn, originally part of the grounds of Bourne Abbey but used for its present purpose for at least 200 years and since 1931 has been under the administration of Bourne United Charities. The Outdoor Swimming Pool occupies part of the site which is also home to Bourne Town Football Club, formed in 1883, Bourne Cricket Club which has been active since the 19th century, Bourne Tennis Club, which formerly played on courts in Burghley Street until the land was sold in 1958, Bourne Town Bowls Club, which occupies land on the far corner of the site and dates back to 1953, and Bourne Petanque Club, devoted to a type of boules played especially in France and a game that has gained popularity since the town became twinned with Doudeville in Normandy in October 1989.



Bourne Town Football Club ground

There are no established places of entertainment in Bourne and most events now take place at the Corn Exchange. A small theatre opened in 1805 on the edge of the old cattle market site just off Abbey Road, now a car park, and continued in use throughout the century until taken over by Lea and Green Ltd, manufacturers of aerated mineral waters, and was still known as The Old Theatre. The Tudor Cinema enjoyed popularity during its lifetime, opening in North Street in 1929 and often playing to packed houses but the popularity did not last and in 1963, bingo was introduced to supplement the film shows but apart from a few Saturday matinees, they were finally phased out in 1974. The projection equipment was bought by local enthusiasts who in a valiant attempt to keep the cinema alive, opened the Bourne Film Theatre and although this was a much loved amenity, there was rarely a full house and that too closed in 1990. In the meantime, bingo too had lost its appeal and the Tudor Cinema was subsequently sold and reopened in its present role as a Chinese restaurant in 1991.

One of the most attractive places in Bourne is the Wellhead Gardens, just a short step from the town centre, but a place of peace and tranquillity favoured by walkers and office workers enjoying a sandwich lunch. The park was established on 21 acres of meadow developed in the years following the Second World War as parkland open to the public

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under the terms of a bequest from Alderman Thomas Whyment Atkinson (1874-1954) who left property to provide income for this purpose, together with the Garden of Remembrance and the War Memorial. The town also has a popular recreation ground which was opened in June 1911 to celebrate the coronation of King George V.

The town now has a population of around 15,000 with 5,500 homes (2008 estimate) and is administered by three local authorities. Lincolnshire County Council is in overall control of roads, schools and libraries, the police and fire brigade. The spending budget is currently £1 billion (2008-9) and the council, based in Lincoln, has 77 elected members, all of whom are paid through a system of allowances, and has a workforce of more than 12,000 people making it the biggest employer in the county. The town is represented by two councillors, one each for the Bourne Abbey and Bourne Castle wards.

South Kesteven District Council is responsible for housing, waste, leisure and recreation, land use and planning applications. The spending budget is currently £15.7 million (2008-09) and the council, based in Grantham, has 58 elected members, all of whom are paid through a system of allowances, and employs more than 700 people. The town is represented by six councillors, three each for the Bourne East and Bourne West wards.



The Town Hall at Bourne

Bourne Town Council has limited powers, confined to the Christmas lights, the town cemetery, street names and similar parochial issues, but does have an input into all planning matters affecting the town and its members are usually the first to be approached by anyone with a problem or a complaint. The spending budget is currently £100,000 and the authority employs five people. The council, which meets in the Town Hall, has 15 elected councillors, eight representing the Bourne West Ward and seven the Bourne East Ward, none of whom are paid. The town is part of the Grantham and Stamford parliamentary constituency and is represented in the House of Commons by Quentin Davies (Labour).

There are five schools in Bourne, the oldest being the Abbey Church of England Primary School in Abbey Road. This started life in 1877 as the Star Lane Board School for boys

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and girls, achieving grant maintained status in 1991 and changing from a foundation primary school to one with a Church of England character from September 2008. The other primary is the Westfield County Primary School which was opened in September 1975 to serve the other side of an expanding town while the Willoughby Special School in South Road which opened in 1980 and caters for pupils with learning difficulties.

The Robert Manning College is our largest educational establishment, evolving through several stages since its earliest days in 1877 as part of the Star Lane Board School but operating from a split site in Queen's Road from 1946 and when new extensions were added in July 1958, the school became totally separated from the one in Abbey Road and became known as the Bourne County Secondary School. In 1987, the name was changed to the Robert Manning School and in September 2007 it was given a new title as the Robert Manning College specialising in Technology and Vocational Training. Bourne Grammar School in South Road enjoys a reputation as one of the best in Lincolnshire and places are much sought after. A grammar school had existed in Bourne since the 14th century but closed in 1904 and was revived with charitable grants and financial help from Kesteven County Council. It began in September 1920 in temporary premises at the Vestry Hall in North Street and the following summer the new grammar school was officially opened on the present site, originally in old army huts that acted as temporary classrooms, but a continued programme of expansion has resulted in its present status as one of the most modern and progressive in the country.



Scenes from Bourne Wood

Bourne is fortunate in its rural environment. On the outskirts of the town you will find Bourne Wood, our most beautiful natural amenity, 400 acres of forest that are open to the public at all times. There has probably been continuous tree cover on this site for the last 8,000 years and the present species are a mixture of broadleaf and conifer of all ages and their diversity has created ideal conditions for a wide range of wildlife. The wood is now managed for conservation as well as recreation and timber production and it is full of secluded paths and tracks rarely used except by the animals that live here, including fallow deer that you will see if you are lucky because they are shy and reclusive.

The surrounding villages also have a rural charm that is typical of South Lincolnshire, making it a rewarding occupation for anyone with time to spare, to stop and stare, to turn off the main highways and see for themselves, because they will find mills and manors, churches and coaching inns, old cottages and houses, dykes and rivers bordered by ancient woodlands, for this area is the nearest you will get to finding an unwrecked England.