

18 – The Vestry Hall



The Vestry Hall was built by voluntary subscription as a Victorian chapel by the Calvinist Baptist movement that had a presence in Bourne during the mid-19th century. The money came from the congregation who also raised sufficient funds to provide a resident minister. Calvinism is based on the beliefs of the religious reformer John Calvin (1509-64). The sect is particularly distinguished by its dogma of predestination which says that God has chosen certain souls for salvation, others for damnation, and that these decrees are unalterable. To the elect, sufficient grace is sure to be given and also the gift of perseverance. Immense emphasis is placed on the bible as the supreme authority for Christians and on the exaltation of faith and the divine initiative in the process of human salvation. The Calvinist teaching and practice has affected the Anglican, Baptist and Methodist traditions while some Roman Catholic theologians have also recognised its value.

The Calvinist Baptists became established in Bourne around the mid-19th century, using premises in West Street but these soon became too small for an expanding congregation and on many occasions the chapel became so crowded that some of them had to stand on the stairs. A building fund was therefore opened to finance the erection of a new chapel. Mr Charles Eldred, a brick and tile manufacturer, who lived at North Lodge in North Road, gave a piece of land in North Street for this purpose and building work began in 1867, the foundation stone being laid on 27th November. The Stamford Mercury reported the following week:

The weather was very favourable. At two o'clock, the Rev J J Irving of Melton Mowbray, commenced the proceedings by giving out a few verses of a hymn and engaging in prayer. The Rev W H Smith, the pastor, briefly stated the reasons for the undertaking, one of which he said was the want of better accommodation than was afforded by the present place in West Street. The Rev J Spurgeon, brother

of the celebrated preacher of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, then delivered, in an agreeable manner, an appropriate address at the conclusion of which he performed the ceremony of laying the foundation stone and placed upon it a cheque for £20 towards the building fund. Twelve persons then laid a brick each, placing upon it a sum of money. At three o'clock, Mr Spurgeon preached an eloquent sermon in the Independent chapel, Eastgate, which had been lent for the occasion. At five o'clock, a public tea took place of which about 300 partook. At seven o'clock, there was a public meeting, the chair being very ably filled by the Rev J A Spurgeon and addresses were delivered by the Rev D Horscraft, W Dexter of Peterborough, J J Irving of Melton Mowbray, J Smith of Billingborough, W H Smith of Bourn and Mr Charles Eldred. The latter gentleman, in the course of his remarks, said the trowel with which the ceremony had been performed was the one with which the foundation stone of the Infant School was laid; since then, it had been put by, and had got somewhat rusty, but they had had it ground and polished, and he was reminded by the circumstance that a similar process might be useful to himself and other friends in connection with the object they had undertaken. After the addresses, the Rev W Orton concluded by offering up a fervent prayer for the divine blessing to rest upon the undertaking.

The new Calvinistic Baptist chapel had room for 300 people and opened the following year, having cost £300 of which £100 had already been raised by the time the foundation stone was laid. Building work was eventually completed by the following summer and the chapel opened for services in August 1868 as reported by the Stamford Mercury:

The opening services of the new Baptist Tabernacle, North-street, Bourn, were held on the 1st and 2nd. inst. At 3 o'clock on Wednesday, Mr Henry Varley of London preached an excellent sermon from Phillippians 1st chap., 21st verse. At 5 o'clock, about 300 persons partook of tea in a tent erected in Mr W Palmer's field, kindly lent for the occasion. At 7 o'clock, there was a large congregation in the tent and barn adjoining, when Mr Varley, in an agreeable style of address, spoke from the 10th chapter of Romans, 9th and 10th v. On Thursday afternoon, Mr Varley delivered an address to parents and children; and at 5, about 130 sat down to tea. At 7 o'clock, the tent and barn were again filled when the same gentleman spoke from Matthew 12 c., 43, 44, and 45 verses, and while graphically describing the state of mind of many persons whose hearts are found empty, swept and garnished, and whose last state is worse than the first, many were moved to tears under Mr Varley's earnest and homely appeal. On Sunday the 5th, the Rev David Gravey (classical tutor to the Rev C H Spurgeon's College) preached two sermons, in the morning from Matthew I c., 23 v., and in the evening from Hebrew 6 c., 19 v. On the same afternoon at 3 o'clock, there was a large congregation to witness the ceremony of baptising eight persons, the ceremony being conducted by Mr W H Smith, the pastor of the church. The collections after the service and the bazaar realised about £40, leaving a debt upon the chapel of about £160. The chapel, which is a very neat and convenient one, is to accommodate about 300. The seats are all uniform and plain and arranged in two rows, with one aisle down the middle.

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But the initial enthusiasm did not last. The chapel remained in debt and despite many fund raising activities, was unable to survive and by 1890 had been forced to close. The building stood empty and disused for several years and in April 1894, it was restored and made available for public functions such as concerts and meetings and in 1899, it was bought by H Company, the 2nd Battalion, the Lincolnshire Regiment, for use as a drill hall, gymnasium and clubroom. The unit remained in occupation until early in 1914 when they vacated the premises and in July that year, the building was sold at public auction for £340 to the trustees of the late Thomas Carlton, a former draper of North Street, on behalf of the Abbey Church to be used as a church hall for vestry meetings and other social activities. From that date, the building became known as the Vestry Hall, a name that survives to this day.

The Great War broke out in August 1914 and in November, the hall was commandeered and turned into Bourne Military Hospital for casualties from the front, administered by the Red Cross. The first soldiers arrived in December 1914 and the hospital remained in use until the end of the war during which time almost 950 wounded servicemen were cared for. When the hospital closed on 1st January 1919, the remaining patients were sent to Lincoln General Hospital and the hall returned to its original use. The Vestry Hall also had a medical role during the Second World War when it became a first aid post and members of the Red Cross maintained day and night duty here from 1939 to 1945. Part of it was also used by the Home Guard as their headquarters. Since then, the building has had a chequered history and used as a frequent venue for concerts and drama productions staged by local groups and sporting activities such as badminton. It has also been used for scholastic purposes, as a school clinic, for physical training lessons and to house overspill classes from other schools in the town.

In 1959, the building was almost lost to the town when fire broke out in an adjoining storeroom in the early hours of October 23rd but a householder living in nearby Meadowgate who was awoken by the smell of smoke raised the alarm and so avoided a major disaster. He got up and looked out of the bedroom window to see flames coming through the roof of the lean-to at the back of the hall and about to spread to the main building and called the fire brigade which arrived with a pump and water tender under the command of Station Officer Jack Moody. His men managed to isolate the outbreak and the hall and ancillary rooms were saved. The store building was gutted and the contents, including a quantity of coke, shelving and some tables, were destroyed. The cause was not known but may have been connected with a social that had been held by the Abbey Church the previous evening although the building had been locked up when it finished around 10 p.m. Fortunately, the outbreak did not affect the use of the hall for subsequent functions.

The hall was sold by the parochial church council in 1961 for an undisclosed sum to Bourne United Charities who leased it out for various social activities. In 1977, the Hereward Youth Club used it as a meeting place but the building was in such poor condition that sufficient money was raised to add a kitchen, an outside area to sit and toilets to end the practice of members using those in the bus station across the road. The club moved to Queen's Road in 1986 and soon afterwards the hall was declared unsuitable for public functions and in 1996, it was sold to local shopkeeper Tony Selby and his wife Gail who owned the retail premises nearby at No 58 North Street but during their

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ownership, the hall remained closed and unused. Then, in January 2003, the property was again offered for sale, this time as a large workshop and store together with the shop premises and was sold the following year to Caroline Glithero and her husband Paul Nicholson who spent the next five years turning it into a dream home.

The result is that a building that might have been lost to the town has been transformed into a main residence on two floors accessed by staircases at each end with five bedrooms, four bathrooms, a lounge, dining room, study, gymnasium, kitchen and sun balcony with a self-contained, fully equipped annexe for holiday letting. But despite the major alterations that have been made, the Victorian chapel remains outwardly unchanged while many of the interior features have been retained.



Caroline and Paul were mindful of the chapel's history and anxious from the start to ensure that it was not forgotten in their plans. "We felt it imperative not to spoil the character of the building, especially the frontage, and although this presented many small challenges, I think we have managed to achieve that objective", said Caroline. "To all appearances, this is still the Vestry Hall and it is only when you step inside that you realise it is no longer used for services but for modern day to day living."

The property deal also included No 58 North Street, the retail shop and office premises at the front of the hall, the downstairs being used as offices for Caroline's accountancy business while the couple lived in the flat upstairs as the conversion work proceeded. "This has been very much a hands on project", said Caroline, "and I found myself being consulted by the contractors at all hours, sometimes even making snap decisions while in my dressing gown. But the final result has far outweighed any inconveniences and we have both discovered that conversion is the cheapest and most effective way of getting a lovely home."

No expense was spared in buying the materials and hiring the craftsmen for the refurbishment and Caroline and Paul used local tradesmen and suppliers whenever possible but also sought out bargains from several sources which produced remarkable deals that now have pride of place in their home. The most notable of these was the purchase of fourteen solid mahogany doors from a large house in Surrey which were bought on eBay, the Internet auction web site, and a complete bedroom suite of furniture from Richardsons, the auction salerooms here in Bourne. Another excellent buy were a number of pews which came from a church in Hampshire, also on eBay, which provided the mahogany for the staircase aprons and window sills. The traditional red bricks used to

build the hall were most probably made by Charles Eldred, a local brick and tile manufacturer, who lived at North Lodge, Bourne, and was also a member of the original chapel congregation who donated the land, and they were saved whenever alterations were made to the walls and then incorporated into those sections around new windows and doors to blend in with the originals. Another feature that has been preserved is part of the parquet floor that survived the tramp of feet from countless generations, finished in a herringbone pattern of pine blocks which were lifted one by one and a large section re-laid as a bedroom floor. "This part of the renovation was a particular problem and Paul spent around two months on cleaning, sanding, smoothing and sealing the wood blocks", said Caroline, "but seeing the final appearance it was well worth it."

Restoration work also revealed the baptismal pool underneath the floor of the chapel, used for total immersion during services by the Calvinists in the 19th century, and rather than destroy it the couple decided to cover it over, so preserving another part of the chapel's history. The bronze plaque recording the hall's use as a military hospital during the Great War which was removed for safe keeping by Bourne United Charities has also been returned by the trustees to the new owners of the Vestry Hall who have given it pride of place over the front door in the entrance foyer, a fitting touch to a most worthy restoration project.

19 – Wake House



The large house on the west side of North Street was the birthplace of Charles Frederick Worth, son of a local solicitor, who founded the famous Paris fashion house and a blue plaque tells us that he was born here on 13th October 1825. The house dates back to the early 19th century and was built on the site of the old Waggon and Horses public house that was pulled down as part of the development. Wake House is now a Grade II listed building and from 1974 to 1993 was used as the local offices of South Kesteven District Council but after standing empty for several years, a voluntary organisation, the Bourne Arts and Community Trust, was given a three-year lease of the premises in 1997 for a

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peppercorn rent of £5 a year and fund-raising began to turn it into an arts, crafts and community centre that was officially opened in September 2000 by Baroness Willoughby de Eresby, who lives at nearby Grimsthorpe Castle. Memorabilia associated with the house and with Charles Worth are displayed in the Baxter Room, formerly the council chamber. The centre is now used for a variety of activities and one of the ground floor rooms at the front has become a computer skills centre offering drop-in opportunities for local people of all ages who wish to gain hands on experience in the very latest computing technology, surf the Internet and even gain a qualification.

The trust has been negotiating with South Kesteven District Council in recent years to purchase Wake House but has been reluctant to take on a long term loan because of the economic climate and now hopes to continue on a leasehold basis although an increased rental is likely. Since taking over the building in 1997, maintenance and repairs costing £100,000 have been carried out and the centre has become home to more than 20 clubs and organisations and used by hundreds of people each week. Part of the car park at the rear is likely to be lost to the centre after being earmarked for inclusion in the core development area for Bourne's new town centre plan although this project is still undecided. Trust chairman, Mrs Jean Joyce, said in an interview with the Stamford Mercury published on Friday 20th March 2009, that a long term lease was the best way to secure the future of the building as a community centre. "Buying it would not be viable at the present time", she said, "but we do want to give our tenants security. This is a very expensive building to run and there is much work needed to be done on the front and elsewhere but we do want to secure its use for the future."

20 - Wellhead Cottage & Shippon Barn



The picturesque stone cottage in the Wellhead Gardens at Bourne is one of the town's listed buildings which means that it is protected and cannot be altered or pulled down without government approval. There was once a farmstead here known as Castle Farm, built on the site of the Norman castle or Saxon manor house that existed in past times but is reputed to have been destroyed in a prolonged bombardment by the artillery of Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentary army during the English civil war of 1642-51.

The present property, known as the Wellhead Cottage, dates from the early 18th century, perhaps even before, and is one of 51 listed buildings in Bourne that were identified as being worthy of preservation. The frontage can be seen although the rear of the property is

obscured by high hedges. The cottage is owned by Bourne United Charities and let to a suitable tenant, being currently occupied by the park manager responsible for the upkeep of the Wellhead Gardens and Abbey Lawn.

Grassy mounds in the Wellhead Gardens are all that remain of the successive Saxon and Norman castles which are reputed to be among the earliest traces of a settlement in Bourne. Tradition has it that the castle was the birthplace of Hereward the Wake, leader of the English resistance to William the Conqueror, but there is no firm historical evidence for such an assumption. Materials salvaged from the fortifications of Bourne's old castle that was finally destroyed in mediaeval times are thought to have been used in the construction of the nearby barn. The report of an archaeological excavation of the site in 1861 said that certain stones that had been incorporated in the end of the building were the exterior sections of the cross-bow slits that had once been part of the castle walls.

These stones can still be seen in the Shippon barn as it is known today that stands close to the modern footpath across the Wellhead Gardens. The barn has been converted for community use in recent years and has been a meeting place for the local scouts and guides since June 1977. The name Shippon comes from the word shippen, derived from the Old English and meaning a cattle shed or cowhouse and is mentioned by Charles Dickens in *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-37): "Bessy would either do fieldwork, or attend to the cows, the shippon, or churn, or make cheese." The term is still known in some parts of the country where it is used for rural hotels and houses created from barn conversions, particularly in Cheshire.

21 – Roman Catholic Church

Roman Catholicism is one of the main divisions of the Christian religion, separate from the Eastern Orthodox Church since 1054, and headed by the pope. Membership is reckoned to be about 600 million worldwide, but concentrated mainly in the poorer regions of Southern Europe, Latin America and the Philippines. The Protestant churches separated from the Catholic with the Reformation in the 16th century and in order to perpetuate the newly established religion, an act of 1559 prescribed a fine of one shilling for every absence from church on a Sunday without lawful or reasonable cause with failure to pay fines followed by committal to prison.

Despite such draconian laws, the Roman Catholics continued to flourish in certain areas and the influence of the gentry was particularly strong and they soon comprised the largest group of persistent non-attenders in the Kesteven area of South Lincolnshire, along with Quakers, Ana Baptists, Presbyterians and independents. The centre was at Irnham where 56 recusants were recorded in 1676 and others at Corby Glen, Lound, Haconby and Stainfield. It was estimated that over 40% of the population of Irnham were Roman Catholic at this time and that John Leyburn, a bishop of that church who visited in 1687, found no fewer than 105 persons to confirm.

In 1911, Mary Ann Duffy, born at Montrose, Scotland, moved to Bourne, and married a non-Catholic, Mr W H Scotney. She became the only Catholic in the town but there was no priest, no church and their two children, Bernard and Oliver, were baptised into the faith

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at Spalding. By the 1920s, the number had increased to ten worshippers and mass was being said at one of their homes in Albion Terrace, a row of small cottages in North Street, Bourne. The meetings later moved to a studio at the rear of a newspaper shop at No 13 West Street but this became too small and the congregation then rented the long room at the Angel Hotel. Services lapsed for two years because there was no visiting priest and a hired bus was subsequently arranged to take worshippers to the Church of Our Lady at Mount Carmel at Corby Glen.

Services then began in the chapel at the Ministry of Labour's Instructional Centre off West Road and afterwards in the social room of the Co-operative Society premises at No 17 North Street, rented for 2s. 6d. a week (12½p) with services being conducted by Father James Power who travelled over by taxi every Sunday from Deeping St James, where he had recently been appointed chaplain, at a cost of 2s. 6d which included waiting time. More space was needed during the Second World War of 1939-45 because of the influx of servicemen into the area and so the Corn Exchange was hired for services, and the first Roman Catholic centre for Bourne was established in 1950 on a site in Exeter Street bought for £100 provided by Ernest Orbell and where a wooden hut was erected for a further £100 (later to be used as a scout hut). The temporary church was officially opened in January 1950 as the Church of the Sacred Heart.



The church had an expected life span of ten years although it was subsequently used until the present building was completed in the autumn of 1976, the first permanent Roman Catholic centre in the town since the Reformation. The circular shape excited great interest and even surprise when the design was announced and Father Patrick Peppard, priest for Bourne, the Deepings and Corby Glen, commissioned a model of the building from Mr Thomas Wilson of Oakham which went on public display in the church at Deeping St James. "It will be a dual purpose church", explained Father Peppard. "We will be able to close off the sanctuary at one end and use the rest of the building as a hall with the usual ancillary facilities provided."

Much of the credit for this development was due to an organisation known as the Altar Society, formed in 1949 by the early pioneers of the faith in Bourne who were confident

that a building of this stature would eventually be realised. It is interesting to note that the committee behind this organisation consisted entirely of ladies who were married to non-Catholic husbands, a total of twelve members in all. In January 1957, the Catholics of Deeping, Bourne and Corby Glen became a parish that existed until 1984 when the district was re-organised. Corby Glen was transferred to Grantham and a new parish known as Bourne and Deeping was formed with Father James O'Hanlon as the first parish priest. The new arrangements were celebrated with a mass at the Church of Our Lady and St Guthlac at Deeping St James when thanks were offered for the work done in the previous 29 years.

Today, the Catholics do not have a significant presence in Bourne where the living is still shared with that at Deeping St James. St Gilbert's Church, named after St Gilbert of Sempringham, is therefore a modest buildings and one of the first to be completed as part of the St Gilbert's Road development. It stands immediately next to the bus station that was built at the same time, an unfortunate position for despite being separated by a low wall, by virtue of its shape and size it has been known to be mistaken as a cafeteria by visiting bus passengers.

The church, or centre as it was known, can seat 200 worshippers. It was 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 building was dedicated in December 1976 by the Bishop of Nottingham, the Rt Rev James McGuinness. It had cost £70,000 although more than half of that had been raised by the time it was opened and the bishop appealed for further funds towards the project. "The people in the parish have made sacrifices and have worked hard so that the centre could be built", he said. "They have been helped by the parishes of Corby Glen and the Deepings and now the centre has become a focal point where people can look to for happiness and where Christians of various denominations can meet and enjoy themselves. I hope that this building will really do good things for the community in general".

22 – Kingdom Hall

The sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses has become a target of ridicule and even abuse because of their habit of unannounced doorstep calling, usually in pairs, and an insistence on reading long extracts of the bible to support their beliefs. Their activities in Bourne have been both widespread and regular in recent years and this method of proselytising has made them extremely unpopular with many people. All members are expected to participate in this house to house calling and there are no clergy.

The movement originated in the United States in 1872 under Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916), attaching great importance to Christ's second coming which he predicted would occur in 1914 and which Witnesses still believe is imminent. Members believe that after the second coming, the ensuing Armageddon and Last Judgement, which would entail the destruction of all except the faithful, will give way to the Theocratic Kingdom. Earth will continue to exist as the home of humanity, apart from 144,000 chosen believers who will reign with Christ in heaven. Witnesses also believe that they should not become involved

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in the affairs of this world and their tenets, involving rejection of obligations such as military service, have often brought them into conflict with authority.

The sect has maintained a presence in Bourne since 1933 but was then part of the congregations at Stamford, Peterborough and Spalding. The first meetings of the independent Bourne congregation were held in 1950 at the old Co-operative Hall on the upper floor of No 17 North Street [now occupied by the Paper Chain newsagents and the Nationwide Building Society] where they remained for eight years and then for a further spell at the Bourne Institute in West Street, moving to find more space each time the congregation expanded. In 1982, they moved into a late 18th century converted barn in a yard off Burghley Street at the rear of No 35 North Street that was once used as a pig sty and which they renamed the Kingdom Hall, the traditional name for all meeting places used by the Witnesses.

They leased the red brick and tiled property for 20 years but in 2002 it became apparent that more space was again needed when the congregation of around 50 began to grow and this made meetings in the old barn rather cramped. Members therefore decided that it was time to build their own Kingdom Hall and land in Victor Way was purchased and plans drawn up although when the planning application was submitted to South Kesteven District Council it was simply described as "a Christian meeting hall" because of fears that identifying the sect would influence the planning decision, an acceptance by them that they do not enjoy a widespread popularity.



The total cost of £150,000 was daunting but the members raised £70,000 themselves while donations came from other congregations sympathetic to the cause as Bourne was one of only ten in England without its own Kingdom Hall. The speed with which the hall was built was surprising because it was erected from flat slab to roof by 250 workers including bricklayers, plasterers, carpenters, electricians and labourers, from the town and around the country, a remarkable achievement. Work on clearing the site began in December 2002 with people of all ages digging the foundations to bring them up to the damp course stage. Then during the summer of 2004, the qualified tradesmen moved in to finish the building work during two weekends of concerted voluntary effort and the final building has air

conditioning and central heating with facilities for the disabled and a mother's room and a block-paved car park with 42 spaces while the design provides a maximum capacity of around 150 people, compared with fewer than a hundred at the previous premises.

Simon Hall, one of the five members on the project committee, could not conceal his pleasure when the building work was completed. "We have swapped a pig sty for a palace", he said. "It means a great deal to the congregation because for the first time in their history, the Witnesses in Bourne have their very own place of worship. The congregation has worked hard for this day and they have proved what people can achieve when they pull together." He added: "People imagine that there are just a few of us in Bourne but there are currently more than 70 members in the congregation and it is growing all the time with attendances at meetings regularly reaching over 100." But what of the financial considerations? "It is something we think about but it is not a major problem", said Ken Walker, another member of the project committee. "Not only do our own congregation give freely and willingly but members of other congregations do so too and that is our strength."

23 – The Believers



An insignificant building of red brick and blue slate in Burghley Street has for 60 years been one of the town's smallest churches, originally the meeting place of the Plymouth Brethren and later The Believers, a non-conformist breakaway sect.

The building was originally used as a storehouse and dates back to the early part of the 19th century. It was previously used as a garage for lorries owned by the local nursery firm of E N Moody and Sons Ltd, which later became Nursery Supplies, until bought in 1945 by the Plymouth Brethren, the fundamentalist Christian Protestant sect founded in Dublin in 1827. The name comes from the first assembly that was held in Plymouth in 1831 to celebrate its arrival in England. It is not known exactly when the Brethren arrived in Bourne but there is evidence that they were here in 1930 and active in the streets, handing out tracts to passengers at the railway station. Meetings were probably held in rented halls or even the homes of members. The congregation in the town was always a small one but in later years, members voted to leave the Plymouth Brethren and operate independently as they do now from their present premises.

24 – The Old Grammar School



A grammar school has existed in Bourne since the Middle Ages and there are a number of references to the names of headmasters after 1580, either in the bishop's or the parish registers. One of these who was given permission to teach scholars within the parish of Bourne in 1625 was Edmund Lolley M A of Magdalene College, Oxford, who had already been Vicar of Bourne for 12 years. He died in 1632 and his will directed that his books and clothes should be sold for the benefit of his only son, also called Edmund, "to bring him up at the school".

There was a rapid turnover in staff about this time and the names of seven different schoolmasters appear in the records during the first 30 years of the 17th century. Among them is Thomas Gibson who was appointed on 8th May 1629 and died a fortnight later on May 23rd but nevertheless received a tribute in the parish register saying that he was "as worthy a schoolmaster as ever taught in Bourne" and so he may have been engaged in some form of teaching in the town before being officially licensed by the bishop.

A new and important phase in the arrangements for education in Bourne began in the early 17th century when William Trollope, a local landowner, left a bequest which provided for an endowment of £30 a year to maintain "an honest, learned, and godly schoolmaster" in a free grammar school incorporated by royal charter and built by himself. The school was sited next to the Abbey Church where it still stands although the premises have been rebuilt since his day. His will, dated 16th November 1636, stipulated that it should be called "The Free Grammar School of King Charles in the town of Bourne and County of Lincoln, of the foundation of William Trollope, gentleman".

The present building, erected in 1678, has a brick superstructure over a solid stone foundation but it is not certain whether this stonework is from Trollope's original school or whether it dates even further back to the days when the monastery existed. Repairs and

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alterations were carried out from time to time, in 1858 and particularly in 1876 when new outbuildings and two new end windows were added, mainly through the generosity of Lord Kesteven, a noted landowner in the locality at that time. The Stamford Mercury reported on Friday 25th August 1876:

Lord Kesteven visited Bourne recently for the purpose of inspecting the grammar school. He decided on putting the building in thorough repair, and replacing the fittings with new desks, &c., of an improved pattern, some of the wood work, of massive oak, having been in use nearly 200 years. The alterations, which are now in progress, are to be completed by the end of the present vacation. The plot of ground belonging to the school, and adjoining it on the east, which has for many years been used as a garden, has had the fruit trees removed, the fish pond filled up and the ground levelled, and is now devoted to a play-ground for the scholars.

The work was finished by the following year when the newspaper reported on Friday 19th January 1877:

Through the liberality of Lord Kesteven, the Bourne Grammar School has been thoroughly repaired and various portions of the windows, &c., restored: new and improved desks and fittings have been introduced, the alterations having been successfully carried out under the superintendence of Mr Henry Osborn. The piece of ground east of the school, which had for several years been used as a garden, has been cleared and is used as a playground for the scholars.

Five years later, a new stove chimney was erected and repairs carried out to the floor, dado boarding was fitted and when the ceiling was removed, the oak roof became visible.

Today, it is a Grade II listed building within the Bourne conservation area, having been scheduled in July 1977 and the official description reads as follows:

1678. Single storey building in red and vitrified brick. Moulded stone plinth. Moulded stone cornice. Two buttresses on the west side. Tall brick chimney. Stone pinnacles to gable ends. Roof of old slates. South elevation has a repaired six-light mullioned window with two transoms and a stone cornice, extending across the whole building and damaged at one end. Side elevations have two 19th century windows, segmental arches in red and black brick. Door in centre of west side, with moulded stone, rectangular surround and moulded four-centred arch, at present hidden by a modern porch.

The school appeared to have a more stable staff than in earlier years and in 1638, Exuperius Spencer RA was appointed schoolmaster and between then and the end of the century, there were only four successors. By the 19th century, the duties of schoolmaster were carried out by the vicars of Bourne until the Rev Joseph Dodsworth was appointed in 1842 when he delegated the actual work of teaching and administration to his curates until 1858 when William Webber was appointed under-master with a salary of £30 a year, as provided in the original endowment. Webber was an energetic and conscientious teacher who pressed hard for improvements to the building and it was his influence that provided

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the boys with a playground on a small area of land adjoining the school on the east side. Scholars had been playing in the churchyard among the tombstones and several had been damaged and there had also been complaints about them roaming the streets between lessons but the annual Vestry Meeting in April 1861 recommended that this small strip of land in the ownership of the church be converted for recreational use by the pupils. Webber was also probably responsible for the alterations of 1876 that included new seating to accommodate 32 boys, although he had hoped that the facilities could have been extended to cope with 40. Many of his pupils were successful in their studies, going on to Oxford and Cambridge Universities, but he became frustrated with the slow response to his repeated requests for improvements and he resigned in 1881 after 23 years of teaching and moved to a school at Tunbridge Wells. "We shall be sorry to lose his services as he is a clever and genial man", commented Mr Osborn, the agent for Sir John Trollope, in a letter to Lord Kesteven.

Webber's successor was to be the last schoolmaster, the Rev Henry R F Canham, a curate from Barrowby, near Grantham, who secured a similar appointment at Dowsby church as well as teacher. By this time, the popularity of the school had begun to decline and Canham tried valiantly to revive its ebbing fortunes by increasing the number of pupils who attended and spending a lot of his own money in the process. At one time, he had an Oxford graduate to assist him - "a thorough gentleman in every respect, and one of the best football players I have ever seen".

Despite his efforts, the future of the school was now in doubt and the 21 pupils in attendance in 1889 had dwindled to just nine by 1897 and soon it was removed from the list of those officially recognised by Kesteven District Council. Canham refused to accept the inevitable and in the autumn of 1903, he departed for Scarborough with the key of the school in his pocket but after much correspondence and discussion, he finally agreed to resign at the end of 1904, thus officially confirming the closure of the school. His later reminiscences gave an indication of life there in the final years for he said: "The boys, now men, who were with me in the eighties, have not forgotten how I used to join them in their games, to say nothing of supplying them with materials in the way of bats, balls etc and paying for broken windows."

There were several attempts to revive the school in subsequent years, notably in 1910 when a local businessman and councillor, Mr Thomas Baxter, wrote to Lord Kesteven: "The old school wants a little attention, the roof is not rainproof, and the mischievous young Bournites have broken a good many panes of glass in the windows." But there was insufficient interest to give it a new lease of life and it stood empty and dilapidated until 1918 when the Charity Trustees handed it over to the church for their own use for a period of five years provided they were responsible for the necessary maintenance and repairs needed to keep the building in good order. The church decided to use it as a Sunday School and the formal opening took place on Tuesday 13th February 1918. The Stamford Mercury reported the following Friday:

The room presented a cosy appearance. The Vicar, the Rev Harry Cotton Smith, presided at the ceremony and expressed thanks to those who had assisted in obtaining the necessary funds and carrying out the work of renovation. A grammar school meant teaching the best prose and poetry and no better prose or poetry

could be imagined than the religion taught in a Sunday School. Mr J T Holmes, in formally declaring the room open, said the use to which it was proposed to devote the building was of the highest as he could conceive of no better object than the training of children in religious matters. Mr T M Baxter proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Holmes which was seconded by Mr C E Andrew and heartily accorded. After the opening ceremony, a lantern lecture was given by the Vicar, the subject being "Jerusalem". A collection was taken at the close of the lecture on behalf of the fund for the purchase of a new organ for the church.

But the school was never re-opened for its original purpose and it was eventually replaced by a secondary school that became the present grammar school in 1921. Two years later, in January 1923, the school was sold by the trustees for a nominal sum of £100 to the secondary school and the board of governors has administered the building ever since. The building has largely been unused during that time although in the Second World War, the premises became an ambulance station and a meeting place for the Girl Guides and in later years it was used for a time as headquarters for the local troops of cubs and boy scouts. The building is currently administered by the Bourne Educational Foundation but has again been badly neglected in recent years and in April 2003, it was condemned as unsafe and all entry forbidden. The roof was leaking and repairs were costed at £20,000. In February 2005, it was put up for sale at an undisclosed price, although potential buyers were warned that there is no vehicular access and the only approach is by way of a footpath through the churchyard. Nevertheless, sale to a private developer is seen as the only chance it has to survive.

25 – The Abbey Primary School



Education available to all is a comparatively recent innovation in England and it was not until the Education Act of 1870 that elementary schools were built and run by the state and local school boards appointed to supervise their running and empowered to levy a rate for this purpose. This was a major social change that has evolved into what we know today as the state education system although conditions have drastically changed since Victorian times. In December 1874, a board of five members was created in Bourne

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consisting of John Roberts, the Rev William Orton (Baptist), Thomas Mays (for the dissenters), Charles Glover, Stephen Andrews and John Bell, clerk, and its first task was to begin the construction of a new elementary school. The board purchased an orchard in Star Lane [now Abbey Road] from Mrs Matilda Arnold at a cost of £125 per rood for the building of a school and a master's residence. Thirteen architects submitted designs for consideration but the contract was awarded to Mr Charles Bell of 4 Union Court, Old Broad Street, London, and the construction was carried out by Messrs Priest of Grantham at a cost of £3,727. It opened in 1877 as the Star Lane Board School with room for 480 children, both boys and girls, and the building still operates today as the Abbey Primary School, although greatly modernised and extended. It became the main centre for elementary education in the town, superseding the old National School in North Street although these premises were used for a period to provide technical education for selected pupils supervised by a local committee working in conjunction with the county council. The staff were Mr John Derry, headmaster of the boys' school at a salary of £80 a year, and Miss Readwin, headmistress of the girls' and infants' school.

It is worth noting that the village school at Twenty, four miles east of Bourne, was built in 1876 at a cost of £1,174 with room for 60 pupils, by the same architect and builder who also used similar distinctive yellow bricks and blue slate popular for institutional buildings during the mid-19th century. The average attendance at the new Board School, as it was known, during the ensuing years was 350 but numbers steadily increased to 500 by the turn of the century and the premises were enlarged to accommodate the additional children in 1892 and again in 1894. There was a further extension in 1901 with the aim of eventually providing classroom space for 700 children although this turned out to be an optimistic forecast.

During this period in the school's history, a logbook was kept by head teachers, providing a wealth of information about elementary schooling in Victorian and Edwardian times and giving a glimpse of life as it was before the outbreak of the First World War. The entries concerning the daily attendance of pupils for instance, an important part of school administration during these early days of state education, reflect the history of the times, the bad weather and recurrent illnesses that kept boys and girls away from their lessons. During one week in January 1878, stormy weather caused fluctuating attendances and a year later, heavy snowfalls resulted in only 55 girls turning up out of a total of 120 while in July 1901, continuous rain flooded the streets and closed the school and pupils were taken home in vans. There were similar occurrences of wet weather disrupting the school's activities in 1910, 1911 and 1912, causing serious flooding in the surrounding fenland.

Illness and epidemics were also a common cause of children staying away. Influenza closed the school for three weeks in 1891 and it was shut again for a fortnight in 1897 because of an outbreak of measles. Mumps and whooping cough were also prevalent illnesses of the time together with other diseases that have become quite rare such as diphtheria, scarlet fever and smallpox that was mentioned in the log book of March 1893 when it was given as the reason why a number of children from the workhouse were absent although the local Medical Officer of Health did not confirm the diagnosis. Many of the fathers of children attending the school were agricultural labourers and so busy periods in the farming year were also a major cause of absenteeism.

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Attendance fell in October 1879 because girls were out gleaning and six years later, the headmistress reported: "Attendance irregular - some of the girls are absent getting the potatoes up." While in July 1901, girls stayed away for half-days while taking dinner and tea to the hay fields. The authorities were well aware that schooling in a farming area was likely to be affected in this way and tried to minimise the difficulties by arranging holidays to coincide with busy times on the land. In the final decades of the 19th century, the summer holiday of five or six weeks' duration became known as the harvest holiday and a log book entry of November 1918 states: "School opened this morning after a closure of four weeks for potato picking".

There were many other reasons for a fall in attendances during the school year including the arrival of a circus in the town, ice skating in severely cold weather, cheap day rail trips to surrounding towns, the October Fair, church picnics and national holidays such as the coronations of 1902 and 1911. But despite these interruptions to the daily routine, attendances slowly improved and had reached 90% by 1907 while inspectors spoke highly of the standards achieved.

Today, the Abbey Primary is a large, mixed nursery, infant and junior school although the original buildings of 1877 can still be seen with separate entrance doors marked Boys and Girls while the stone tablet bearing the crest and the motto *Vigila et ora* or Watch and Pray remains on the front wall. The premises however have been extensively modernised over the years with new extensions built during the early 1960s and mid 1980s and a further addition of three infant and two junior classes and a technology room was completed in the 1990s. Apart from the well equipped classrooms, there are two large halls used for assemblies, physical education and drama lessons, concerts and musical presentations while the school also has an active Kindergarten and extensive hard and grassed areas for play and outdoor games. The current IT provision is among the best in Lincolnshire with an interactive DVD as part of the school's prospectus and pupils have their own web site on the Internet of a very high quality, well designed and easy to read and navigate and additional pages are being added showing the work of each year group and community links.

There was a landmark in the history of the school in June 1991 when it was named as the first primary in Britain to become grant maintained and pupils and staff received a surprise visit from the then Secretary of State for Education Kenneth Clarke to mark the occasion, and has since become a foundation school, a far cry from those Board School days of a century ago.

In December 2007, the highest accolade possible was received from Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education), the government body responsible for the regular checks on the nation's schools. Inspectors had visited the Abbey Primary School the previous month and their report gave it a top grading of "outstanding" in all departments. For a large primary school with 620 pupils to achieve such a glowing report was regarded as an incredible achievement and a reflection not only on the tremendous job by school staff, but also on the boys and girls who attend as well as the governors who were also singled out for similar praise. The school was one of only twelve in Lincolnshire to receive an "outstanding" rating and the inspection report was a catalogue of compliments to staff, governors and pupils. The grading was also regarded locally as a welcome development,

not only for the school but also for Bourne, a reflection on the quality of life and another very good reason why so many couples with young families would wish to move there and live in such large numbers.

In 2008, the school changed its name and status to the Bourne Abbey Church of England Primary School.

26 – The National School



The building of elementary schools was left entirely to voluntary bodies before the Education Act of 1870, principally churches, and the National Society for Education which was an Anglican organisation, started planning a National School on a site in North Street in the early part of the 19th century. One of the principal organisers was the Rev Joseph Dodsworth, then curate and later vicar of the Abbey Church, and he was present at the stone laying ceremony in 1829.

The new school was financed by subscription and money raising events and an annual ball was held at the Town Hall to help maintain the flow of funds for its upkeep. These dances became one of the town's big social events of the year and tickets were much sought after, especially by mothers seeking husbands for their daughters. A guest list from one of these dances survives and it not only provides a glimpse of the pecking order in Victorian society, but also illustrates how young girls were paraded at such events in the hope that they might catch the eye of a prospective marriage partner. This report is from the Stamford Mercury for 21st January 1842, and is reminiscent of a scene from a novel by Charles Dickens or Jane Austen.

Bourne National School Ball. - This ball was, as usual, well attended, not less than 170 having complimented the charity by their presence. The absence of the patroness (Lady Caroline Turner) created much disappointment. The dancing did not commence until 10 o'clock. A handsome apology, and liberal contribution to the funds, has since been received from C Turner Esq., MP, and Lady C Turner.

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Such was the importance of the occasion that the newspaper even printed a list of all of the guests.

During the Great War of 1914-16, the building was adapted for use as part of the temporary Red Cross hospital based at the Vestry Hall next door where soldiers were brought to convalesce after being wounded in France and a covered walkway was built to join them together. After the war, the building was again used for educational purposes but was eventually superseded by the county primary school in Abbey Road and since March 1987, the building has been the constituency headquarters of the Grantham and Stamford Conservative Association. The South Lincolnshire Conservative Club also opened on the premises in November that year when the Mayor of Bourne, Councillor John Wright, pulled the first pint, but it closed down ten years later because of continuing financial problems.