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John Moore's Essay on Bourne Castle (1809)

from "Collections for a Topographical, Historical and Descriptive Account of the Hundred of Aveland."

Published at Lincoln in 1809.

This document is one of several dealing with Bourne Castle.

It was transcribed from a book lent by the Willoughby Memorial Library, to the trustees of which I offer my thanks.

It is presented here as an historical document so the credibility of what it says should be assessed. The reliability of old essays on history is usually best on points to do with the writer's own time. Moore was assembling a larger, commercial work so it is possible that this material is based on someone else's research. Similarities between this and Marrat's slightly later publication can certainly be detected. In later works, one or other of these is usually given as a reference for the quotation of Peak's description.

The castelle of Brunne (says Peak)¹ ys a verrye ancyent portlie castelle scytewate neare Peterspoole, it contains thre principal wardes. On the north side ys ye porter's lodge² wch ys now reuinoose, and in decay by reasone ye floores of ye upper house ys decayed and very necessarie to be repayred. ³

The dungeon ys sett of a little moat⁴ made with, men's handes, and for the most part as yt were square⁵. It ys a fare and prattie⁶ buildinge with IV square toures, Rounde about ye same dungeon upon ye rooffe of ye said toures ys tryme walkes and a fare prospect of the fennes. And in ye said dungeon ys ye halle, chamberes, and all other manner of houses of offices for ye lorde and his traine. The southe syde thereof servethe for ye lordes and ladies lodgeinges, and underneighe them ys ye prisone and wyne cellar wth ye shollorie.⁷

Over ye moat yt surrounds ye castelle ys a drawe bridge, ye moat is verie fresh and deiye.⁸ Ther is also a fare parke belonging ye castelle.⁹ This castle is said to have been built by one of the Wake family.

But in this both Camden, Stukeley, Salmon, and the author of *Magna Britannia* were mistaken; for a castle appears to have existed here as early as the year 1062,* before the Wakes possessed the manor. 10

Leland observed, that in his time “there appeared grete ditches, and the dungeon hill at the West end of the priory¹¹, also much service of the Wake’s fee was done to it; and that every feodary knew his Station and place of service.”[‡]

In the records belonging to this parish is the following memorandum, 12 __ “October 11th, 1645, Charles I. ye garrison at Burn castle began.” It appears from the above, that the castle was not demolished, until the time of the Commonwealth. The inhabitants have a tradition, that it was destroyed by the parliamentary forces under Cromwell, for adhering to Charles I. 13 It is however certain, that, from this period, no mention is made of it; neither are there any records of the time of its demolition. The building, however, is entirely destroyed; but the foundation walls on the west side are left nearly entire. 14

The area within the outer ditch contains about eight acres, the inner about one¹⁵, not like a keep, but flat and covered by a rampart within the ditch. 16 Very large irregular works are still remaining on the north and west sides between the two ditches; the earth is raised about twenty yards in length and ten in breadth and a ditch between every one of those points to the grand moat.** 17 Altogether they look like a piece of ground drained, and are said to have supported Oliver Cromwell’s batteries against the town. 18

In the inner ditch was the gate-house. It consisted of a round tower thirty feet in height, embattled on the top, and ascended by a flight of stone steps. In the walls, (which were upwards of six feet thick) were several niches; and the door of entrance was through a circular arch, apparently Saxon, in height about eight feet, closed with a massy door. It was taken down by order of lord Exeter, to build a barn and repair the roofs. The situation of this lodge was at the north end of what is now called the castle barns. At the south end of which, on a mount of earth "caste up wth mene’s hands," stood the castle. 19

* See Ingulphus’s *History of Crowland*, folio 898, who, after mentioning several benefactors of the abbey of Crowland, says Leofric, lord of the castle of Brunne, a famous and valiant soldier, kinsman to the great count of Hereford Ranulf or Radin, gave many possessions to this abbey, and assisted the monks with his counsel. 10

[‡] Itinerary, vol I folio 28.

** Whether this was a device for the defence of the place or owing to the approaches of besiegers, I cannot say, having never seen similar elsewhere. Salmon's New Survey, vol I, page 250. 17

Commentary.

1. ↑ Peak seems to have written a manuscript to which early nineteenth century writers had access but which now appears to be lost. Its date is vague but seems to be somewhere about 1500. Just possibly, he was Samuel Pecke though, if he was, his English style was very old-fashioned for his time. Also, Pecke flourished in the 1640s and Peake's description seems to show the castle to have been in a more complete state in his time, than is indicated by Leland's report of the 1540s.

2. This is quite clear: the porter's lodge was on the north side. The main gatehouse, doubtless with its guard room was in the north-east corner of the outer wall of the castle, facing straight along North Street. A couple of hundred years before Peak's likely time, the castle had been demilitarized so that the guard will have been replaced by the porter. Portly means stately, magnificent, fine (OED).

3. It is interesting to find the floors mentioned rather than the roof. It seems that the place had simply been neglected rather than cannibalized. Cannibalisation was clearly in mind around 1500 when the scrap value of the drawbridge chains was estimated (Jacob paragraph 9) but the lead or tiles seem not to have been taken before Peak was there at broadly, the same period.

4. This use of the word dungeon is the French one. A donjon is a castle keep rather than an underground prison. This moat is still discernible though it has no more than a trace of its former depth. It more or less links to the former lake on the south-east side of the motte and

runs towards a link with the inner bailey moat to the west, as far as the line of the twelfth century curtain but between there and the late thirteenth century replacement wall, it seems to have been blocked to provide easier access to the keep, when the castle was converted into a grand residence. This strip is part of that interpreted by Hibbitt as a 'possible trackway' (Hibbitt fig. 6). This ground will have been made by filling the part of the inner bailey moat which lay between the earlier and newer walls (ca. 1280), at the same time as the little, late thirteenth century gatehouse was built.

5. Though this reads as though the squareness applies to the moat, it is clear enough that it was the keep which was 'as it were square'.

6. ↑ Prattie is a form of the modern word, pretty but its modern meaning has evolved since Peak used it. He meant craftily or artfully contrived or designed (OED pretty). One of Hereward's colleagues was called Leofwine Prat.

7. It had four towers which will have been one at each corner so confirming the squareness of the keep. These turrets were themselves square so in keeping with a twelfth century design. The layout described indicates that it was designed with its hall to the north so that it was naturally entered from the inner bailey to the north, into the hall with entry to all else, including the prison, wine cellar and scullery, from there. For security, there would be no direct entry to this lower level from outside. The privy accommodation, the solar was to the warmer, south side, overlooking the defensive lake for a quick exit were the garrison to mutiny.

8. ↑ The water supply was from the Wellhead and was indeed, very fresh. How deep it was would be interesting to discover. Taking sample cores of the soil to answer this question would be a fairly small job.

9. ↑ The park belonging to the castle seems to have been that which later belonged to the Red Hall, though there is a fairly large element of surmise in that statement. Given that it existed, it had to be somewhere. It probably derives from the period of the castle's redevelopment as a residence, late in the thirteenth century. Certainly the Red Hall park included former arable land as it had very clear ridge and furrow in it (RJP1). It will have been sold off and the Red Hall built on it in about 1620. This was more than a hundred years after Peake will have been describing it.

10. Since 1809, it has become clear that the Ingulph document is unreliable. It seems to have been forged in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, at some time before 1415 and long enough after the building of the castle for its origins to have been forgotten. Forgery may be a harsh

word to use since monasteries sometimes lost their documents giving title to property, in a fire and were left with little option but to try to reconstruct them. Computer owners will know of the wisdom of backing documents up - before disaster strikes. The reality in Bourne is that the evidence indicates the establishment of the castle as part of the scheme in which the Abbey was founded. There is no reliable evidence that either was on its present site before about 1140. A more exact date hinges on the abbey charter of 1138 but clearly, the work of planning and building took more than the one year to complete (RJP3). The castle entered the Wake family by 1166, through the marriage of Hugh Wake with Emma, daughter of Baldwin fitz Gilbert de Clare, its builder (Birkbeck p.11).

11. ↑ Leland made his tours of England and Wales, in the course of which he visited Bourne, during the 1540s (DNB John Leland c1503-1552). His description of what he found as given here, by Moore, implies that all the buildings of note in the castle had by then, gone.

12. According to Foster (p. x), what the entry actually said was 'Memorandum that the Garryson at Bourne Castle began vppon the 11th of October Anno Dom. 1645.' (Folio 191 d.)

13. The decay of the castle had begun well before the Civil War and the position and layout of the works, facing across the West Field and along the road down the hill from the west, make it clear that the work was intended to be defensive of the town. It will have been sensible to have put another gloss on events after the Restoration in order to place the town on the ultimately winning side.

14. The mention of lack of more recent reference to the castle is not entirely true. The name 'Castle Farm' was retained into the twentieth century. The farmhouse is now called 'Wellhead Cottage'. It is not clear to what 'the west side' relates. In terms of modern parch marks, the clearest masonry remains are those in the south-west corner of the inner bailey, which might be said to be on the west side of the motte. This seems to have been some of the most massive masonry at the original ground level, that the castle ever boasted and a lighter part of it, the inner bailey gatehouse seems to have persisted just into the nineteenth century.

15. This information might be used to estimate the extent to which the site had been levelled. Eight acres is 32,375m². By counting ten metre squares drawn on an Ordnance Survey 25 inch map, it is possible to estimate the area of the combined outer (East) and middle baileys. That is the area between the outer edge of the middle bailey moat and the inside of the outer/middle bailey curtain wall. This can not be done with complete accuracy as some of the space was occupied by the curtain wall and the core of this will have been used to make the moat narrower, so that in parts, it is hard to know where to place the edges. However the estimated area comes to about 19,300 m². So the eight acres seem to represent the whole area within the outer curtain

wall and bounded by the Motte and lake to the south. It includes the inner bailey and its moat so the figure is not as informative as might have been hoped.

On the face of it, a similar argument in relation to the inner bailey makes the one acre look like a serious under-estimate. One acre is 4,047 m² and an estimate of the area within the inner bailey curtain makes it about 7,000-7,400 m². It could be that the moat around the north and east sides of the motte was significantly wider than it now appears. In Hibbitt's plans, there is a strip of relatively high resistance which might mark the northern and eastern side of the moat, beginning east of the gatehouse which might mark a wall along its margin on the inner bailey side (Hibbitt figs. 4, 5 & 6).

One thing we can do is place the site and plan dimensions of the curtain wall exactly at two points, as it is visible in the section drawn by Cope-Faulkner (his contexts 070, 082/005, 006 & 032 and robber trench cuts 034 & 039). This allows us to calculate that the inner bailey moat was close to 34 metres wide.

16. ↑ It is clear from Cope-Faulkner's observation that the inner bailey curtain at least, was composed of a pisé core faced with stone (Cope-Faulkner's contexts 082/005 & 032 faced with 070 & 006 and the former contents of cuts 034 & 039 RJP2). The use of the term 'rampart' here seems to imply that in Moore's time (1809), the stone facings had gone but the weathered core remained in situ. In Cope-Faulkner's section, the washed-out pisé appears as contexts 081 & 069. The demolition deposit from robbing the facing appears as contexts 083 & 027. The corresponding demolition deposits outside the wall will be below the depth to which the section was taken and in the south-western case, perhaps removed by the seventeenth century re-fortification works of October 1645 (Foster and RJP2), depending on whether the stone-robbing had been done at that stage.

The weathered core had clearly been moved into the moat by the time the Exeter and Bourne Abbots estate maps (1826 & 1827) had been drawn, as the inner bailey moat had been much reduced from its original width as indicated by Cope-Faulkner's observations (RJP2).

17. These works are now partially destroyed and partially buried by the formation of the Horse Pool and the new leat in around 1870-80. They are platforms designed for mounting artillery as part of a defence of Bourne against a Royalist threat from the direction of Belvoir. The work was undertaken in October 1645 but the form taken by what remains makes it clear that it was never finished. While the Newark garrison blocked the Great North Road to Parliamentary traffic, the road now known as the A15 became its replacement. While there was a threat that Bourne would be taken, so blocking this route, the need to fortify the town was clear but once the king had headed north from Newark and away from Bourne, the threat was past.

18. ↑ The design of the works is clearly one of defence of the town rather than use in attacking it. After the Restoration in 1660, it was no doubt sensible to interpret them as indicating Bourne's position on the by then, winning side.

19. The demolition of the gatehouse clearly happened before 1809 but Moore refers to lord Exeter rather than to the late or old lord Exeter. This implies that the work was done under Brownlow Cecil, 2nd Marquis of Exeter, who inherited the title and estate in 1804. New ownership is a likely impetus for such 'improvements'. However, the text also refers to its materials' having been used in a barn. The stone loopholes feature today, in the building known as the Shippon Barn but this name goes back no further than the 1960s. It is part of the yard formerly called the Castle Barns. The middle of the yard is at TF 09500 20055. This does not appear in the Exeter Estate book map (1826), which is not surprising as the detailed plan of the relevant area is missing and we have to rely on a general one. That omits several buildings which appear in details elsewhere. However, the Bourne Abbots estate map (1825) does not show them either, even in the inset detail of the town. But the Castle Barns were of less interest to the owner of the Bourne Abbots Estate as they belonged to that of Lord Exeter. Moore's exact words might imply an intention to build rather than an action already achieved but an eighteen year delay seems a long one and not only is the relevant barn not shown but the Castle Barns complex, mentioned by Moore is absent too. We must take Moore's word for its presence in 1809.

He refers to 'this lodge' but it may be better to read it as 'the Lodge' since he places the lodge at the north end of the Castle Barns. This is clearly inconsistent with its being the gatehouse 'in the inner ditch'. It is possible that 'the lodge' was the middle bailey gatehouse, of which we know only by remote implication. The bailey just inside the outer gate of the castle, which in general terms, was the outer bailey, was known as the East Bailey. But the combined middle and outer baileys lie on the east, north and west sides of the inner bailey so a middle bailey is implied by the East bailey nomenclature. In any case, we were told at the outset that there were 'three principal wardes'. The division is likely to have been somewhere about the Castle Barns site. The lie of the ground hints at a site just to the west.

Alternatively and more likely, the 'Lodge' was the main, outer gatehouse, of which the site is in the corner of South Street car park, behind both Boot's and the Masons' Arms (TF 0955 2000) (RJP3).

It is hard to reconcile Moore's detailed description with the inner bailey gatehouse. A plan of the latter is shown with dimensions, in Fowler's drawing. This is entirely consistent with a parch mark which recurs in suitable conditions, at TF 094 193. As castle gatehouses go, it is very small and of a pattern appropriate to the late thirteenth century. It is consistent with the small loops in the barn wall, illustrated by Fowler (his Figs 2 & 3). The building is too small

for its walls to have been six feet thick and appears to be part of a late thirteenth century revamp of the approach to the keep, in a manner suited to a conversion from fortress to grand residence. The impression we carry away from this paragraph is that the notes from which Moore was working confused the inner bailey gatehouse and the main gatehouse which may have been of the dimensions and pattern he describes. The site of the main gatehouse has never been archaeologically investigated and is under a hardened surface. The only indication we have of its size is the 13s.4d. worth of chain, which presumably worked its drawbridge or portcullis (Jacob paragraph 9). Around 1500, this was an appreciable sum, so implying that it was quite hefty.

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