

1 _____

2 _____

3 Quinn Alexander

4 Mrs Bell

5 Matthew Bell



BOURNE PARK, NEAR CANTERBURY, KENT. This Grade I house was bought this year by trustee clients of Humberts, to house the art collection of the 8th Earl Fitzwilliam, who died in 1948





**1925/26 Bourne Park workers
(widowed Mrs. Bell in centre)**

Mansion is sold again

Bourne Park, the Queen Anne mansion at Bishopsbourne, has changed hands again. The house and outbuildings, set in beautiful parkland, was originally on the market for about £45,000.

Messrs Strutt and Parker, the property agents who now have an office in Rose Lane, Canterbury, said this week that they have negotiated the sale of the house for a price in the region of £100,000.

The house, built in 1701, was last used as a private home by Sir John Prestige and later monks of the Benedictine Order hoped to set up a preparatory school there.

It has now been bought by County Residential Estates, of Eastbourne, who plan to convert it into 19 luxury suites, each with private bathrooms and central heating.

A spokesman for Strutt and Parker told the Kentish Gazette: "The object of the company is two-fold. First to preserve for the benefit of the nation houses and gardens of fine standing, of both historical and architectural

interest, not to create shell-like museums but properly balanced living houses playing the role in society for which they were originally built.

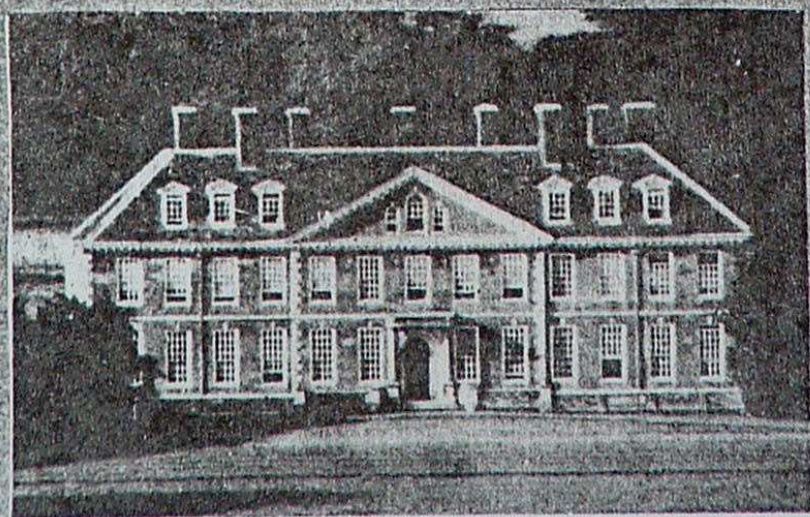
"Second, to offer to selected applicants a style of gracious living which would otherwise be economically impossible to attain in England today."

The company has decided in converting Bourne Park to inject luxury into the scheme with comforts of a high standard. Residents will be expected to furnish their own private suites and supply a small dining table for their own use in the dining room.

Some ground floor rooms will be available at all times for the use of residents and their guests, including two large lounges and a dining hall.

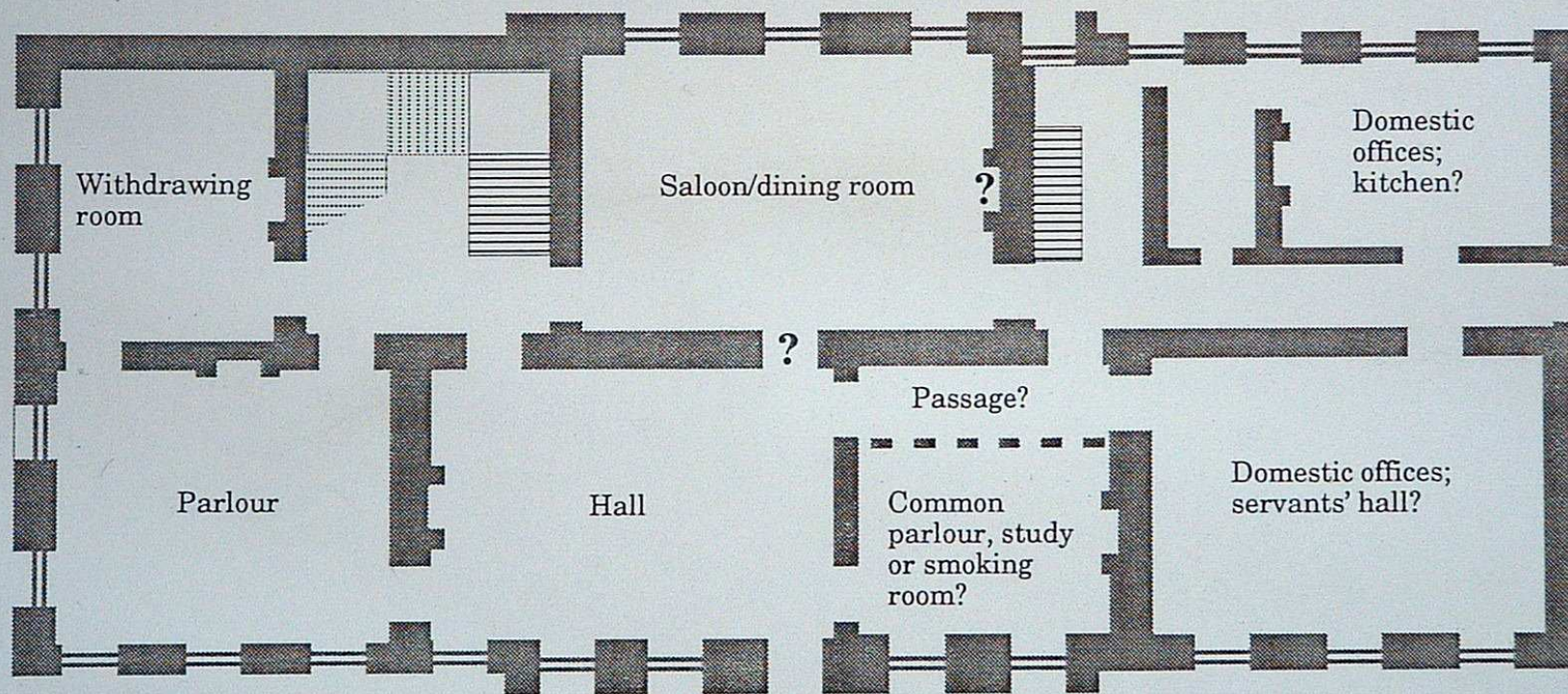
Cost of the suites will range from £6,000 to £15,000 and there will be a weekly service charge for all meals, heating, lighting and cleaning, repairs and the general maintenance of the house and grounds.

The outbuildings, including a stable block, solarium and two garden stores, have been retained by the vendor. They are being converted into homes and will probably be offered for sale in the summer.



Sold again — Bourne Park, the Queen Anne mansion at Bishopsbourne.

BOURNE PLACE, KENT RECONSTRUCTION OF GROUND FLOOR, c. 1701





BOURNE PARK, NEAR CANTERBURY, KENT. This Grade I house clients of Humberts, to house the art collection of the 8th Earl Fitz

BOURNE PARK

by COL. G. ELLIOTT

It is pleasant to hear that Bourne Park, which has stood empty for so many years, may again be occupied. It is being converted into Flats for retired folk.

The present mansion was constructed in 1701, on the site of an older building, by Dame Elizabeth Aucher, a descendant of Sir Anthony Aucher, who acquired Bourne in AD 1545. Sir Anthony was a man of many parts. Descended from the first Earl of Kent, who fought the Danes in Thanet in 853 AD, he was employed by Henry VIII as Master of the Jewels, and on the defences of Dover. He was killed at Calais in 1558, defending his last English stronghold in France against the French.

In 1756 Bourne passed to Stephen Beckingham who married an Aucher daughter. The Beckinghams also held lands in Wiltshire and in Essex. One of their tenants at Bourne, Sir Horace Mann organised a cricket match between Kent and Surrey in 1773, Kent lost. The ground is still in use.

In 1845 Bourne was purchased by Matthew Bell, who had been living at Oswalds. Bell at once started major alterations. For the Park he engaged Andrew Nesfield, an ex-Penninsular Army Officer, who had, on retirement, taken up landscape painting and landscape gardening. Nesfield is responsible for the Park more or less as we see it today, with its fine shades of beeches, elms, and other trees. He dammed the Nailbourne to form the ornamental lake (alas, now dry!) spanned at its outlet by the ornamental bridge. The fine sward of grassland was ploughed up by order during the Second World War. Elm disease and felling have taken their toll of the plantation and individual trees, but overall effect is still outstanding.

After the death of the last of the Bells (a Colonel in the Rifle Brigade), the house was purchased by the late Sir John Prestige in 1927. After the latter's death in 1962 the house was purchased by the Monastery of St. Augustine, for a School, and the parkland by the Bourne (Porteriot) Estates for farming.

The plan for the school was eventually abandoned about 12 years ago and after several changes of ownership, the house and outbuildings are now being altered for flats (1974). Although the interior may be very different, the fine facade and exterior is to remain the same; as a graded building it is protected against alteration and will long continue as one of the foremost examples of Kent's fine historic houses.

Former owners of Bourne were closely connected and concerned with Bishopsbourne Church. Let us hope that the new occupants will also be interested.

They will be very welcome.

To the right of the hall, the smaller room may have been a study or smoking room, or the family parlour, conveniently close to the secondary stairs rising from basement to attics. Beyond this, to the north, domestic offices may have included the kitchen - although this may equally have been in a separate building. It does not ever appear to have been in the basement of the main house. For a discussion of the arrangements swept away in 1848, see *Country Life*, 13th May 1922.

It was quite advanced for a house of this date to have a separate dining room in addition to the best parlour - more usually, there would be one or the other. It would have been odd for this principal room to be approached circuitously via the staircase hall, as it is now. It seems likely that, originally, it was entered formally from the hall (where there is now a false door), through an opening where a fireplace has since been installed. This would have provided a fashionable 'visto' through the house from the front entrance, and a sense of centrality despite the offset hall.

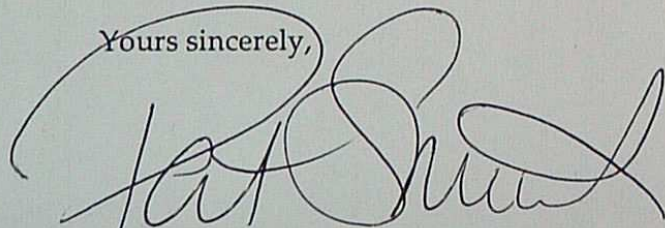
With ground floor ceiling heights of less than 13 feet, and first floor heights of less than 12 feet, Bourne was not a lofty house for its size and date. The hall ceiling is not original - is it possible that this room was originally two storeys high? There would still be generous bedroom provision. Such fancies aside, all the first floor rooms appear to have been bedchambers, well provided with dressing rooms or closets. Presumably the best or state bedchamber was over the parlour, immediately at the top of the great stair.

Many changes have been made to the house over the years, so I am quite pleased to have unravelled things so far. But there are many uncertainties, I am not an archaeologist and ideally we would need a full measured survey, inside and out, to get a clearer picture. So don't take anything as gospel! I will send a copy of this note to Lady Juliet; perhaps you could let Linda Farrington and anyone else you think would be interested have sight of it.

Again, many thanks indeed.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Pat Smith', written in dark ink. The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a large loop at the end.

Pat Smith

**Letter from Pat Smith & Richard Anderson
doing a Treatise on late 16th Century, Early 17th Century
houses after their visit to Bourne Park**

22nd August, 2000

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for spending so much time with me and Richard Anderson when we came to measure the rooms at Bourne House earlier this month. I enclose a plan of how I think the house was arranged immediately after its construction in c. 1701.

The house is notable for its long, narrow plan. The fenestration is densely packed - 13 bays in less than 120 feet (11 would be more typical for this frontage). The house appears to sit very low on the ground because its basement is concealed. This was probably not always so.

Some features of the house are strongly suggestive of an earlier building on the site, or considerable revisions during construction. Notably, the fenestration in the central room on the west front is, unforgivably, asymmetrical! The massive wall at the northern end of this room has been cut away on the other side, to make space for one of the windows lighting the secondary stair case. If there were any supporting evidence at all, I would say that this was the great hall of an earlier house incorporated into a new one.

In the front range, too, there are two surprisingly thick E-W walls, one of which interrupts the fenestration. Again, this doesn't feel like a new build. Nor does the offset hall, which by 1700 was rare in brand new houses. It had perfect modern proportions of 20' by 30' - was its position constrained by pre-existing structures?

In general terms, Bourne conforms to a classic late seventeenth or early eighteenth century formula for a compact (if rather elongated) modern house. It is of double pile construction (two ranges deep), with a 'high' or state end (facing favourably south) and a 'low' (family and service) end to the north.

The house has the characteristic configuration of the great stair lying behind, and a best parlour to one side of, the hall. The withdrawing room was in its usual position behind the parlour. There must have been doors directly connecting this sequence of rooms; finally, a door led out of the withdrawing room back to the great stair, completing the typical circuit of entertaining rooms at the state end of the house.

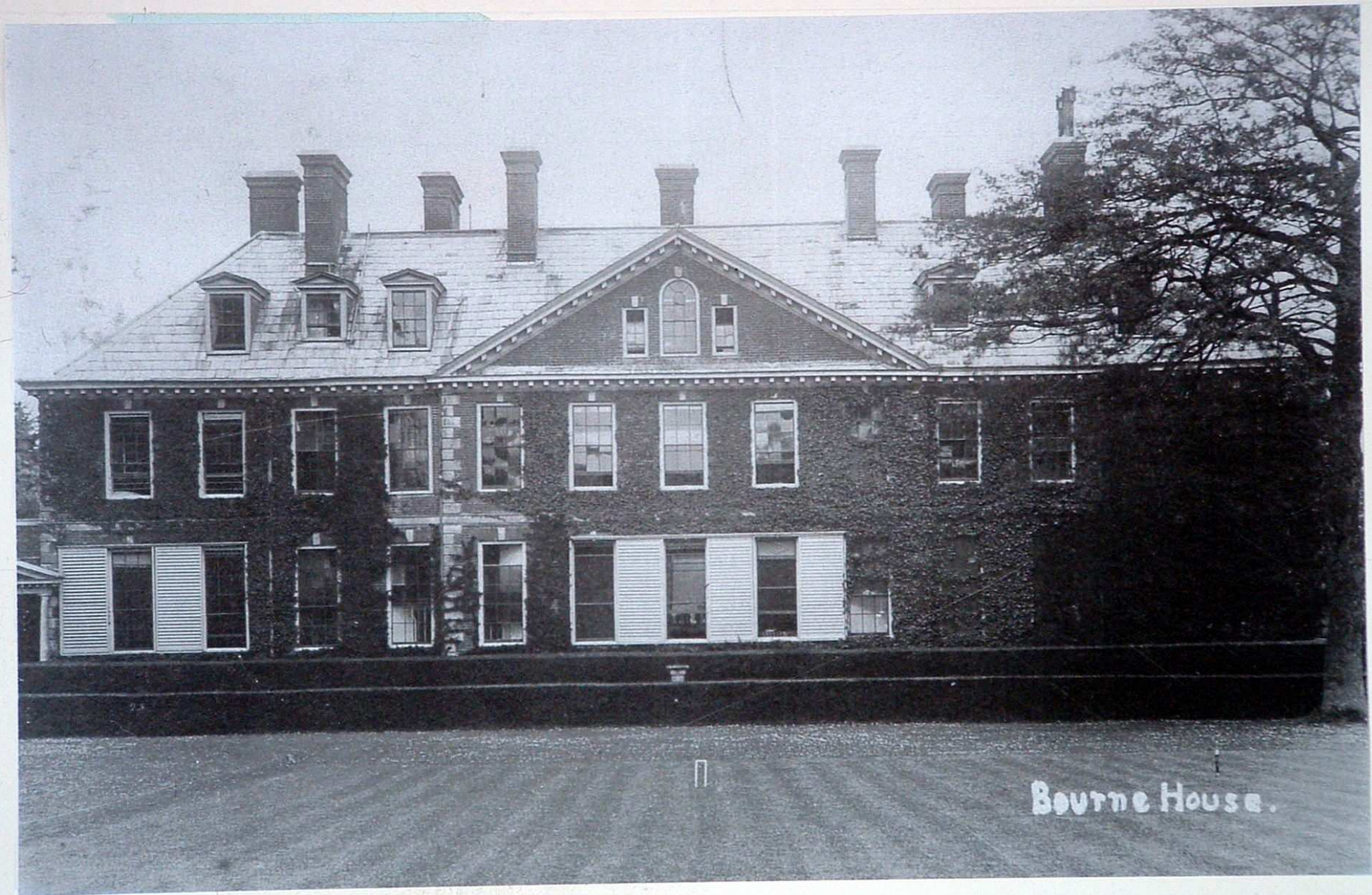




Bourne Park House.

Bourne Park



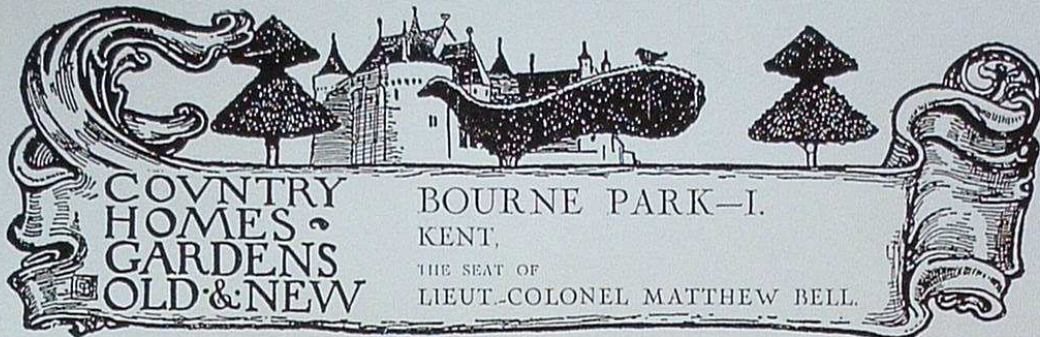


Rear View





Nailbourne in full spate



COUNTRY
HOMES
& GARDENS
OLD & NEW

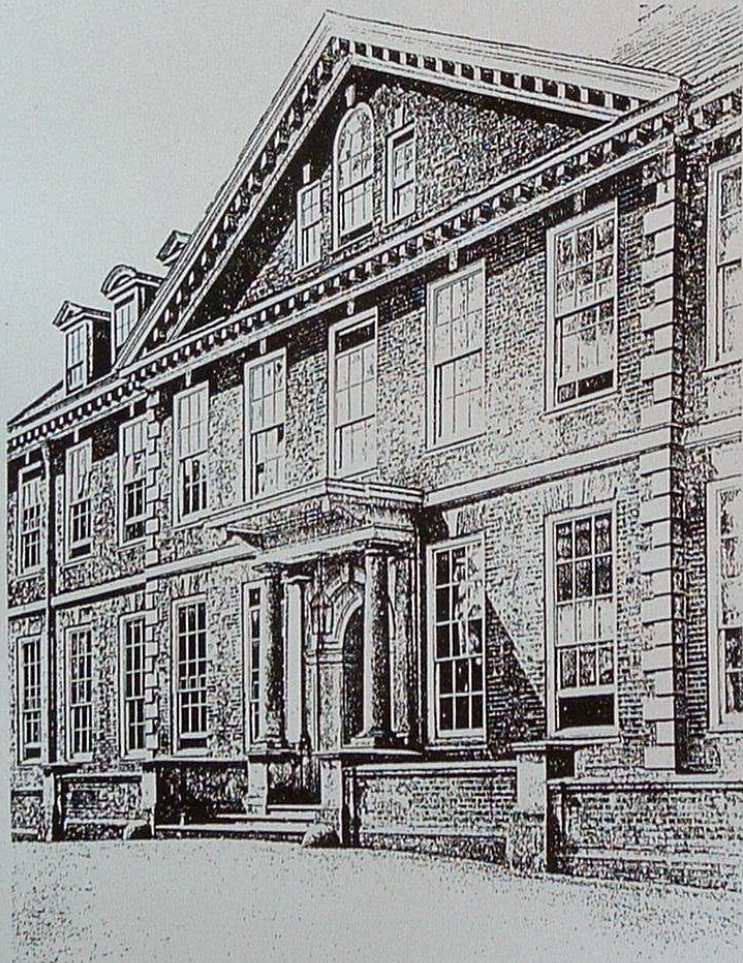
BOURNE PARK—I.
KENT.

THE SEAT OF
LIEUT.-COLONEL MATTHEW BELL.

BOURNE PARK—or Bourne Place as it used to be called—lies by the waters of the Little Stour, some six miles south of Canterbury, and the estate was purchased under Henry VIII by a neighbour and fellow courtier of Sir Edward Wotton of Boughton Malherbe, whose doings were related last week. Sir Anthony Aucher inherited from his father the manor of Otterden, lying eastward, as Boughton Malherbe lies westward of Lenham. Like Sir Edward, Anthony Aucher served our Tudor sovereigns both in civil and military capacities, for he was Master of the Jewels to Henry VIII and was killed when Calais was recaptured by the French in January, 1558. But if he was engaged in public concerns he was also able to give ample attention to private

business and set himself to become a person of large local influence and acres. He evidently seized every opportunity of obtaining estates to be retained like Bourne or sold again as soon as a profit could be made, as in other cases shortly to be mentioned.

He lived in an age when new men began to pay attention to pedigrees and when much inventiveness entered into their composition. This was especially true of Kentish and Sussex families who scorned a mere Conquest ancestry and ignored the dispossession and obliteration of Saxon landowners by William the Norman. Thus the Ashburnhams traced a direct descent and continued ownership of acres from a son of the Saxon who held Dover against the Conqueror. Surrenden, a little south of Otterden, was held by the Derings who traced themselves from the ancestor of "Dering, filius Siredi," who was slain at Senlac. The Auchers did better still, and Hasted tells us they "derived their origin from *Ealcher* or *Aucher*, the first Earl of Kent," who fought in Thanet against the Danes in 853 A.D. From him we jump two centuries to "his descendant *Walter FitzAucher*, a noble Briton" in William I's time, and then a century and a half more to Thomas FitzAucher who in the days of King John held Losenham manor in the parish of Newenden on the Sussex border of Kent. Certainly we find Auchers seated at Losenham from the thirteenth century until the reign of Henry VII, when Henry Aucher's only daughter Anne carried the estate to Walter Colepeper of Bedgebury. But this Henry's grandfather had taken, as his second wife, Joan St. Leger of Otterden, and the issue of the marriage became seated there. Thus when James Aucher died in 1508 he was "buried at his father's feet" in Otterden Church. This James was father to Anthony, who thus owned the Otterden manor under four Tudor sovereigns. It was a long time, however, before the opportunity of adding acre to acre presented itself, as we hear of no dealings in real estate until the last decade of Henry VIII's reign, and several occur under his successor. Nearly all have this in common, that they were the outcome of the transfer of Church lands to the Crown. Thus in 1542 the Preceptory of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem at Swinfield, near Folkestone, was granted to him, as was, in the following year, the Priory of the Friars of the Order of the Holy Trinity at



Copyright. 1.—THE CENTRE OF THE EAST OR ENTRANCE FRONT. "COUNTRY LIFE"













**Bourne House – owner Mrs Matthew Bell later
Sir John Prestige**

1911 ? Thomas Whale standing right of stage



Bourne Park



