

# Streets of Bournemouth Transport

The main roads of Bournemouth, apart from the so-called Spur Road or Town Centre By-Pass, follow the lines of tracks which became roads at the time of the 1805 Enclosures. The developers of the newly growing town provided roads that wound around the sides of the chines, but later developments tended to have more rectangular patterns. Carriages, then buses, trams and trolley buses, provided a network of routes linking workplaces in the centre with rapidly expanding suburbs.

Railways came to the town from both east and west, their stations located on the edges of the original 1856 town boundary. Named trains such as the Pines Express and the Bournemouth Belle provided links to Manchester and to London. Airfields came early to the town and the first International Aviation meeting took place at Southbourne. The country's first international airport was at Hurn in the 1940s replacing the flying boat links which previously provided the international routes. Aircraft construction at both Hurn and Christchurch employed large numbers of Bournemouth people in the 1950s and 60s.



ABOVE

Tram and cyclist at Lansdowne

LEFT

April 2010 Bus passing Royal Exeter Hotel

Streets of  
Bournemouth



## TRANSPORT

**This Theme includes the following Sub-Themes:**

**Tracks across the heath**

**Railways of Bournemouth**

**Trams Trolleys and Buses**

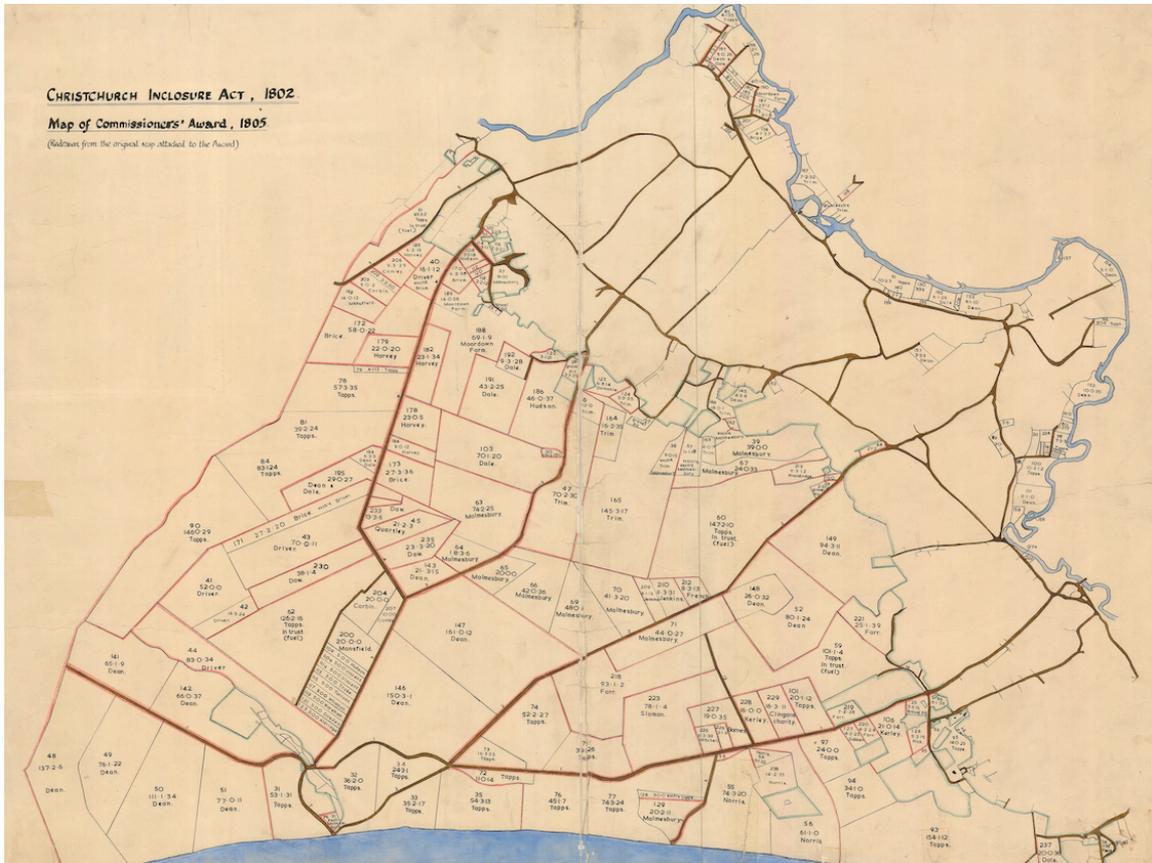
**Bournemouth by air**

### **Tracks across the heath**

If a visitor wanted to come to the new marine village of Bourne they must really have wanted to make the journey. The trip would have to be worthwhile as Bourne was only accessible by an uncomfortable journey on horseback or by horse and carriage. The journey could be made by sea with passengers being brought ashore in a rowing boat and scrambling up the beach, or landing at the first rickety jetty. While canals were being built to transport both the raw ingredients and the finished products of the industrial revolution the people around Bournemouth could make some use of the river and sea links. Later on roads, railways, and long-distance coaches all made the journey so much more effortless if not pleasant. For the people who lived in the town the arrival of trams and trolley buses made the journey to work or for shopping or leisure much easier.

Historic maps of Dorset and Hampshire suggest the location of roads around and across the heath, some following the line of earlier and putative Roman Roads. An 18th century turnpike road went from Romsey via Ringwood to Wimborne and then to Longham. But this was a long way round. There was a coastal route between Poole and Lymington, via Christchurch. It came down Poole Hill, across the Square towards the Lansdowne, along Christchurch Road towards Iford. There were tracks connecting the villages along the Stour around the north of the heath. Following the line of the River Stour was easier than navigating across Poole Heath and with less chance of getting lost. There were also tracks that led from the villages for access to the heath itself.

People would travel on foot, on horseback, horse and cart, or by horse and carriage if the road was passable.



The Christchurch Inclosure Act of 1802 established a pattern of roads that form the framework of the modern road system of Bournemouth. The first section of the Award dealt with the provision of roads. The Act required the Commissioners to lay out roads and arrange for their upkeep. The cost of repairs was the responsibility of the landowner whose property adjoined the road. Gravel pits were allocated to provide gravel for the repair of the roads. Even the profits from cutting the grass growing alongside the gravel pits were sold to assist the upkeep of the roads.

Twenty-five roads were set out in the Award and of these 5 were to be the main thoroughfares.

Road No 1 - Christchurch Road and Poole Road

Road No 2 - Holdenhurst Road and Bath Road

Road No 3 - Richmond Hill, part of Wimborne Road and Charminster Road

Road No 4 – Wimborne Road from Cemetery Junction

Road No 5 – Redhill Lane

These roads were all to be 40ft wide, the lesser roads numbers 7-25 in the Award varied between 20ft and 30ft. All the boundaries which adjoined a public highway had to be fenced by 1st May

1805. The fences were to consist of ditches and banks of at least 5½ feet high. All the remaining allotments were required to be similarly fenced by 1<sup>st</sup> May 1807. The cost of the fencing was to be provided by the new owners of the land. This would prove difficult for some the poorer owners who had been allocated a plot in compensation for loss of common rights.

The improvement in the road network eventually enabled the Southampton to Weymouth coach to pass through Bournemouth which at that time was centred around Westover Road, Exeter Road, the Tregonwell Arms, and a few shops in Commercial Road. As the landowners began to develop their land some of the roads were designed by Christopher Crabbe Creeke, surveyor to the Improvement Commissioners. He enjoyed a good curve and many of his roads were laid out with elegant curves rather than straight lines, such as Horseshoe Common, Dean Park and the Overcliff Drives. His sweeping roads and crescents were much more suited to the gentle pace of horse and carriage, rather than today's horseless carriage.

The town was developing outside the boundary of the Improvement Commissioners' jurisdiction. The roads here followed the more formal pattern of Victorian and Edwardian road building of a rectangular pattern, with roads running at right angles and parallel to the main thoroughfares. This was typical of Winton, Malmesbury Park, Springbourne and Pokesdown. During the 1930s, tree-lined avenues and drives were popular in residential districts. After the Second World War there was a return to curves and on new housing estates such as at West Howe straight roads were noticeable by their absence. Town Planning differentiated between residential and industrial areas and main roads were kept away from residential zones. This was taken to the extreme in 1980s and 1990s housing developments, particularly at Townsend, Muscliff and Littledown, which consisted of numerous short closes and gardens leading off a very curvaceous spine road through each area.

Later road developments were not defined by previous historical connections but to serve the needs of motor transport, although the A338 dual-carriageway was the route of the first railway to serve the town. The A338 Spur Road dual carriageway improved access to the town for visitors, commuters and commercial transport. It follows the western side of the Avon Valley, past Holdenhurst and Littledown. Holdenhurst, the *Mother of Bournemouth*, was left isolated from its former wider landscape hemmed in by the Stour on one side and the new road on the other. The Wessex Way section cut through the residential areas of Springbourne dividing it into two completely separate areas on either side of the dual carriageway. The road passes through the

town centre in cuttings and on viaducts, using part of the former railway line from Bournemouth West Station and ends as a single carriageway at the wonderful County Gates gyratory.



The A338 approaching the  
Cooper Dean interchange 2009

## Railways of Bournemouth

To many people the golden age of the railways was when it was British Rail, one company, one set of regulations, and staff who knew the train timetables like taxi-drivers 'knowledge'. Before that it was funny bits of line, at different gauges, with many different railway companies. People with longer memories like to reminisce about the golden days of steam trains. Bournemouth and railways have had an interesting relationship with each other. The life-cycle of the railway in Bournemouth reflects changes in society and general mobility within the population. So much of Bournemouth's economic well-being has been driven by visitors. The arrival of the railways changed the history of the town. But like many aspiring seaside resorts that only wanted well-behaved visitors, the location of the railway station was critical to avoid day trippers pouring out of the trains straight on to the beach, having consumed a few bebies along the way. Not everyone was in favour of the *Iron Monster*.

The nearest railway line to Bournemouth opened in 1847 but it took a route north of the town via Ringwood and Wimborne. Over the next 40 years the trains came closer and in 1862 a line opened from Ringwood but only as far as Christchurch. Visitors would then travel to Bournemouth by horse-drawn coach. In 1870 the first train steamed into Bournemouth Station still travelling via Ringwood and Christchurch. It wasn't until 1888 that Bournemouth was on a direct line from Waterloo Station in London via Southampton and Brockenhurst. Travellers have enjoyed the journey through the New Forest ever since.

There was a real possibility that the Southampton and Dorchester railway might have taken a route nearer to the coast. The development of Bournemouth would have been very different. The 1880s saw expansion and consolidation. The original East station was replaced by a fine new brick and glass station on the west side of Holdenhurst Road opening on 20th July 1885. The old station was then used for goods traffic. 1888 was a particularly good year as not only did the direct line to London via Brockenhurst open, but on the same day Bournemouth Junction Railway connecting the town's East and West stations opened. Bournemouth East was renamed Bournemouth Central in 1899.

While it was important that Bournemouth should have a direct link to London. There is no doubt that the lines to the west and north made a significant contribution in making Bournemouth accessible to many more visitors. On 1st November 1860 Dorset Central opened its line from Wimborne to Blandford. With yet another change of name it later became part of the Somerset &

Dorset Joint Railway (S&DJR), a through line to Bath connecting with the Midland Railway to the north. Direct links to Dorchester and Weymouth came later in 1893 when the northern side of the Branksome Triangle opened to passenger traffic and the opening of the viaduct across Holes Bay in Poole, known as the 'Holes Bay Curve', opened to passenger traffic and the opening of the viaduct across Holes Bay in Poole, known as the 'Holes Bay Curve'.

Year	Name	Location
1886	Boscombe Station	Christchurch Road
	Pokesdown (Boscombe)	Christchurch Road
1897	Boscombe Station opens	Ashley Road
	Pokesdown	Christchurch Road
1965	Boscombe Station closes	
2009	Pokesdown for Boscombe	Christchurch Road

*Table 1: Pokesdown and Boscombe railway stations.*

The new long-distance routes allowed people to travel to Bournemouth from much further afield but smaller stations were built to serve the needs of the local populace. The first local station was Boscombe in 1886. The station was actually in Pokesdown and underwent various name changes.

Meyrick Park Halt was briefly another place to catch a train. It was a small unstaffed platform on the railway line at the entrance to Meyrick Park. The stop gave access to the golf course and was also the nearest stop to Winton and Talbot Woods. It closed in 1917 as a First World War austerity measure and never re-opened. People who lived in Westbourne could catch trains at Bournemouth West station or just over the border in Poole at Branksome Station.

Passenger numbers increased as the golden years of steam trains took people to and from Bournemouth especially between the introduction of Bank Holidays in 1871 and paid holiday legislation in 1938. Benevolent-minded companies such as the chocolate manufacturer Fry, who had a cocoa works in Bristol, chartered a train to give employees and relatives to have a day in Bournemouth. Over 1,000 employees and their relatives enjoyed a day by the sea, some people went on steamer cruises to Swanage, while others were happy to take a rowing boat out on the sea. Although car ownership continued to rise, few working people owned a car so everyone came either by train or coach to the seaside. A procession of overnight trains brought visitors into the town from



the northern industrial cities, arriving at Bournemouth West station in the very early hours. The *Pines Express* was one of the named passenger trains that ran daily between Manchester and Bournemouth West station between 1910 and 1967.

Travellers from London could choose the *Bournemouth Belle* Pullman service. Pullman trains were noted for their luxurious carriages and first-class service. They had a distinctive brown and cream livery and toilets had distinctive elegant oval windows. Southern Railway introduced an all-Pullman service in the summer of 1931. The train left Waterloo station at 10.30am arriving in Bournemouth Central at 12.39pm, only stopping once at Southampton on the way. It was a genteel way to travel and not for the rush hour commuter.

The third named passenger train the *Bournemouth Limited* was a non-stop service to London. It left about 8.30am reaching London non-stop in two hours. The return train left at 4.30pm, enabling a full day to be spent for work or leisure in London. Many of today's commuters choose to arrive in London by 8.30 but would dream about a non-stop train. After the Second World War this train became known as *The Royal Wessex*, but extra stops meant the journey took longer.

Some of the smaller lines and stations closed as a consequence of the opening of the main line to London, such as the Ringwood to Christchurch line on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1935. The cuts of the mid 1960s had a more lasting influence on the rail network around Bournemouth and the rail beds disappeared underneath new roads or housing developments. In 1964 the Brockenhurst to Hamworthy route via Wimborne, along with the West Moors to Salisbury line, lost its passenger trains. Bournemouth West and Boscombe stations officially closed from 4th October 1965. Finally, the Somerset & Dorset shut from 7th March 1966. The final steam trains ran on 9th July 1967. The steam shed at Bournemouth Central was demolished and covered with tarmac providing an extension to the station car park. What remains of all the early enthusiastic railway construction is the mainline from Southampton to Poole via Brockenhurst.

Freight services lingered on the small lines for a few more years until the tracks were removed. So much freight is carried by road and air today that it is easy to forget the amount of goods carried by train. Cream and milk from local factories were despatched from Shillingstone Station in Dorset for the large Bournemouth hotels. Goods trains still rumble through Bournemouth station linking with Southampton docks or taking sand from Wool to the London suburbs.



On the line from Christchurch to  
Pokesdown

Figures for 2007-8 record that 2.5 million people used Bournemouth station. The extensive glass canopy and end panels at the station became expensive to maintain and the glass from the central sections was removed in the early 1960s. The station buildings were allowed to deteriorate and there were plans to demolish it and replace it with something modern. For a long time Bournemouth Station was wrapped up in scaffolding and protective sheeting but in 2000 the glass roof was refurbished and the station and canopy restored to something of its Victorian splendour. Visitors coming for a day by the sea still have a good walk to get to the sea front.



## **Bournemouth's Cliff Railways**

One of the best views in Bournemouth is from the top of the cliffs looking out to sea beyond the beach below, the beaches in turn are separated from the hubbub of the town by the cliffs. Access to the beach occurs naturally at the mouth of the Bourne and the Chines or by convoluted zig-zig paths. Getting to and from the beach can be very awkward or impossible for some people. The solution for Bournemouth Corporation was to build three cliff railways or funiculars.

The East Cliff Railway is located at the Meyrick Road junction with East Overcliff Drive. It was opened by Lady Meyrick on 16th April 1908 although it has been written that she refused to ride in it. The railway runs for a length 170 feet.

West Cliff Railway is just up the cliff from the Bournemouth International Centre. The second of Bournemouth's cliff railways it opened four months after the East Cliff railway on 1st August 1908. It runs for a length of 145 feet.

The Fisherman's Walk Railway serves Boscombe and Southbourne beaches and is located at the entrance to Fisherman's Walk on the Boscombe Overcliff Drive. It was opened in 1935 by the Borough Engineer, Mr. F P Delamore. It runs for a length of 128 feet. The original passenger cars were all made of wood but have since been replaced by aluminium. As the lifts run on tracks, they are classed as light railways.



## **Trams, Trolleys and Buses**

The bus and coach station in Bournemouth is conveniently situated next to the railway station and has the grand title of Bournemouth Travel Interchange. The first horse-drawn buses brought hotel visitors and passengers from the outlying railway stations before the central station was built. By the end of the 19th century there were around 100 licensed horse buses in the town. The buses were frequently overloaded both with people and luggage, they were not always reliable and there was the occasional fight between rival firms in order to capture a fare. The Bournemouth, Boscombe, and Westbourne Omnibus Company provided a regular service between Boscombe and Westbourne. The offices were in Roumelia Terrace in Boscombe, but the depot and stables were near the Bell Inn opposite the entrance to Pokesdown Station. The Boscombe Park, Pokesdown & Southbourne Omnibus Syndicate Ltd had their stables at Granville Road, Pokesdown.

Progressive members of the council were keen to introduce a tram service between Bournemouth and Poole. Many people thought the tramway was a good idea and certainly more reliable than the horse-drawn buses. Others were less sure believing that tramcars would be detrimental to the ambience of the town. For over 20 years the debate between the two towns was about who should have what, where, and who would run it. As a new town Bournemouth was keen not to give up any of its municipal independence. If anyone was to build and operate a tramway through the town it would be the Council. Poole went ahead with a scheme with the British Electric Traction Company (BETC) and in April 1901 an electric tramway opened between the railway station in Poole and the County Gates boundary. BETC applied to parliament to run a service from Christchurch to the Lansdowne but after serious disagreements, including a visit to the Court of Appeal for judgement, the Corporation gained complete control of the tram network within the Borough in 1902.

The first trams began running in Bournemouth on 23rd July 1902, between the Lansdowne and Pokesdown. By the end of the year, further routes had opened along Holdenhurst Road and out to Westbourne. Bournemouth's tramway system was almost complete by autumn 1905. Tracks radiated out to Winton and Moordown, through Southbourne and on to Christchurch. Of course the next debate was whether trams should be permitted to run on a Sunday. The debate featured in the 1901 local election. Churches and the Sunday Defence League joined in the debate and urged voters to support the candidates who were against Sunday traffic. The final decision was made by a referendum of ratepayers in 1912 who voted in favour of a Sunday service, the 'trammers' had



won. However the trams only ran in the afternoons at first and it was much later in 1926 when Sunday morning services were introduced.

The first Corporation buses appeared in April 1906 linking Boscombe with Boscombe Pier. Other services followed, for instance from Westbourne to Alum Chine which acted as feeders to the main tram network. The hilly roads down to the seafront were not ideal for the petrol buses and further planned routes, such as between the Central Station and Bournemouth Pier down Bath Hill, were abandoned due to the steepness of the roads. The Council could not prevent privately owned bus services opening. In 1916 Bournemouth & District Motor Services was formed and by 1919 it was operating services out of the town to Lymington and Ringwood. It later became the Hants & Dorset company. The Salisbury-based Wilts & Dorset firm also began operating a route into Bournemouth.

One business that survived the change from horse-drawn buses to motor vehicles was Thomas Elliott's Royal Blue company whose stables were in Royal Blue Mews in Avenue Lane. Thomas Elliott was less keen than his sons to change to motorised transport but when he died in 1911, following a bad kick from a horse, his sons took over the business and introduced motor buses. They purchased the first motor char-a-bancs in 1913 and began offering day trips to visitors. A railway strike in 1911 gave the Elliott's an opportunity to start a weekend service from Bournemouth to London.

In 1928 the service to London became a 3 times daily all year round, and had pick-up points at towns along the route. The journey took 5 hours, and cost 12s 6d or £1 return. Express services quickly expanded to include destinations such as Torquay, Plymouth, Ilfracombe, Bristol, Birmingham and Margate and provided reasonably priced travel to places not easily accessed by train. A new bus station opened in 1931 in Exeter Road. It was a two-tier building with Royal Blue coaches using the lower tier and Hants & Dorset buses the upper tier. Elliot Brothers sold out in early 1935 although the Royal Blue name continued. The Royal Blue services were a particular feature of Bournemouth's tourism until they were incorporated into National Express in 1973

As motor transport developed trams came to be seen as old fashioned and uncomfortable. The continued expansion of the Borough to include areas previously in Dorset such as Kinson was beyond the reach of the tramlines. The Corporation introduced a series of express limited-stop bus services in 1930 to its suburbs.

The Bournemouth Corporation Act (1930) gave powers for trolleybuses to operate both the services currently worked by trams and along new routes. Unlike tramcars, trolleybuses did not need tracks,

were clean and quiet and were able to climb the hills. Regular services began in 1934 and the last tramcar made its journey back to the depot from Christchurch on 8th April 1936. Trolleybuses reached parts of the town never previously serviced by public transport. One of the last routes to open was along Castle Lane on 15th October 1951 and a new depot was built at Mallard Road.

A feature of modern railways has been delays caused by 'leaves on the line'. This is not such a new phenomenon. The very cold winter of 1962-63 hit the trolleybus network hard and all services were suspended just before the New Year. Early in 1963 the decision was made to replace the much-loved trolleys with conventional diesel buses. Passenger numbers were declining, fewer trolleys were being made, and trolleys were less adaptable to new road layouts. The end was in sight and the final scheduled services ran on 19th April 1969.

The Transport Act of 1985 effectively privatised bus services around the country.



*Yellow Bus at bottom of Old Christchurch Road April 2010*

The Borough had changed name to Yellow Buses in 1982 and following deregulation it became a private limited company wholly owned by the Council. In 2005 the Council sold Yellow Buses to Transdev, but retained a 10% stake in the business. The two main firms operating buses within Bournemouth are Transdev/Yellow Buses and the Wilts & Dorset. Shamrock Services, based in Poole, run many of the schools service buses.

## **Air travel**

Bournemouth is at the forefront of the British aviation history. Less than six months after Bleriot had crossed the English Channel in 1909 two local businessmen William McArdle and Armstrong Drexel were building their own Bleriot-style aircraft. They put on the town's first flying display at Talbot Village (now the site of Bournemouth University) during Whitsun 1910. The excitement at this event was nothing compared with the week-long Bournemouth International Aviation Meeting at Southbourne held in July as part of the town's centenary celebrations. For Bournemouth's citizens, motor cars were a novelty so air flight must have been a spectacle. It was as a very a prestigious event, with over twenty pilots from Britain and Europe and other aviation pioneers attending. Amongst the stewards at the event were the Earl of Malmesbury, Lord Abinger, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu and Sir George Meyrick. For several years afterwards, flying demonstrations were given from flat green areas around Bournemouth. It is almost impossible to imagine the excitement when Father Christmas arrived by plane to lead the annual Christmas parade to Beale's store in 1912.

The first aerodrome operated in the years 1915-1917 from Talbot Village. It was run by the Bournemouth Aviation Company and was mainly used to train pilots. In 1917 the airfield moved to a new 88-acre location at Ensbury Park and was requisitioned by the Royal Flying Corps for training pilots for the First World War. The son of a former Bournemouth mayor, Second Lieutenant Edward Rebbeck was killed there when his aircraft plunged into the ground. Even though there was a war on 'Joy Flights' were offered to the public. When the Royal Air Force was formed in 1918, the base became known as RAF Winton.

In June 1919 Bournemouth Aviation Company started an 'Aerial Passenger Service' between Bournemouth and Cricklewood where the Handley Page aircraft factory had been based since 1912. The inaugural flight arrived at Ensbury Park at 6pm carrying the Mr. E E Bishop, the Mayor of Bournemouth, Mr. H Ashling the Town Clerk and the former Mayor, Alderman Robson. The uneventful journey took just under two hours but visibility was poor. Attempts to establish regular airline services to Bournemouth were unsuccessful and Ensbury Park was used for air races in the late 1920s. The Bournemouth Summer Aviation Race Meeting was held there in 1926. One of the visiting aviators, a national celebrity, and winner of one of the races, was the female pilot Mrs. Elliott-Lynn. In 1927 the Air Race Meeting was held during the Whitsun Weekend. There were too many fatal accidents at that meeting and it marked the beginning of the end for Ensbury Park. Within two years the site was turned over to housing developers. This left Bournemouth without an aerodrome.

Aviation pioneer and entrepreneur Sir Alan Cobham visited Bournemouth in the spring of 1930 to advise on a suitable location for a municipal airport. Nothing further happened at the time and it was down to neighbouring Christchurch to put Bournemouth back on the airline map. A small airfield at Christchurch was expanded in the spring of 1935 and airline services began to Cardiff, Croydon, Plymouth and Portsmouth. The operators of the airfield declared themselves as 'Bournemouth Airport' and this did not go down well with the people of Christchurch or Bournemouth. A joint project between Bournemouth and Poole councils to open an airport failed due to escalating costs. An aircraft factory was built at Christchurch airfield at the outbreak of the Second World War operated by Airspeed. The Airspeed Oxford, a twin-engine plane used to train most Bomber Command pilots was made there along with *Horsa* military gliders and *Mosquito* fighter-bombers for the RAF. The airfield was also used by a trials unit involved in the early development of aircraft radar.

RAF Hurn opened in August 1941 on land at East Parley which Sir Alan Cobham had recommended as an airport site in 1930. Hurn's main involvement in the war effort was the training of *Horsa* assault glider pilots and paratroops during 1943. It was then the home of a number of fighter-bomber squadrons for D-Day operations. There were six *Typhoon* squadrons and two *Mosquito* squadrons – a total of 150 aircraft. In November 1944, Hurn took on a new role as Britain's Civil Air Terminal with services operated by BOAC to Africa, the Far East and in 1945, to Australia. London Heathrow did not open for civilian use until 1946 so the world's major airlines all flew into Hurn. Services from the United States by American Airlines and Pan American started in October 1945. American Export began passenger services from New York to Hurn stopping at Gander (Newfoundland) and Shannon en route. The one-way journey lasted about 14 hours.

The Airspeed factory at Christchurch continued with the production of the *Ambassador* airliner



and then the *Vampire*, *Venom* and *Sea Vixen* fighters for the RAF and RN. Many of these aircraft were for the export market and work continued until closure of the factory in June 1962. When BOAC moved to London Heathrow, their hangars at Hurn were taken over by Vickers-Armstrong for aircraft production. Nearly all Vickers Viscounts and BAC 1-11s were built at this site between 1963 until 1984. The closure of the BAC site in the 1980s saw the end of Bournemouth's role as a major player in the aircraft construction industry. The former site of the BAC works is now one of Dorset's largest industrial sites, including a base for Cobham plc.

Air services from Bournemouth grew gradually from the 1950s with the name of the airport changing from Hurn Airport to Bournemouth (Hurn) Airport in the spring of 1953. A success story in modern times has been Palmair the airline company of Bournemouth-based travel business Bath Travel founded in 1924. It organises package holidays, day-trips charter, and scheduled flights on behalf of Bath Travel using a single Boeing 737-500. Palmair operated its first holiday flight to Majorca from Hurn Airport in 1958 and adding other destinations. One of the features that made Palmair an award-winning company was the legendary habit of Peter Bath, the owner, waving each flight off personally.

Hurn airport was purchased by Bournemouth and Dorset Councils for £750,000 in April 1969 and renamed Bournemouth Airport, later becoming Bournemouth International Airport. The new owners decided to redevelop the facility as a commercial airport and in 1989 the airport was used by charter airlines such as European Aviation but the company went into administration in December 2008 with the loss of many local jobs.

Bournemouth Airport is currently owned by the Manchester Airports Group who also own Manchester, East Midlands and Humberside airports. In the 1990s low cost airlines Ryanair and Thomson flew from Hurn to popular European holiday spots. The runway was extended in 1996 to cater for the majority of airliners in service at the time. It enabled *Concorde* to visit the airport on a number of occasions, including supersonic flights around the Bay of Biscay and a joint *QE2/Concorde* return trip to New York. Passenger numbers reached one million during 2008 and a much needed new terminal was built during 2009 to cater for the increasing passenger numbers.



## The flying boat service

A popular whodunit radio series in the 1950s written by Francis Durbridge was based around the adventures of an amateur detective Paul Temple and his wife Stevie. In *Paul Temple and the Sullivan Mystery* Paul and Stevie are staying in a hotel in Bournemouth before taking the flying boat from Poole to Egypt, but, they discover a body in the hotel . . .

The Supermarine Aviation Co of Southampton operated the first pleasure flying boat services from Southampton to Bournemouth and the Isle of Wight in 1919. Much later in 1937 Imperial Airways' *Empire Service* began operating from Southampton to South Africa and America. In 1939 the company merged with BOAC, but with the start of the Second World War the services were transferred to Poole. After the war passenger services remained at Poole until April 1948 when they returned to Southampton where operations ceased in 1950.

Edited by Louise Perrin and based, with permission, on original research by Peter Kazmierczak and Mike Phipp

### **Additional reading**

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Popplewell, Lawrence *Bournemouth's Railway History* 1974

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