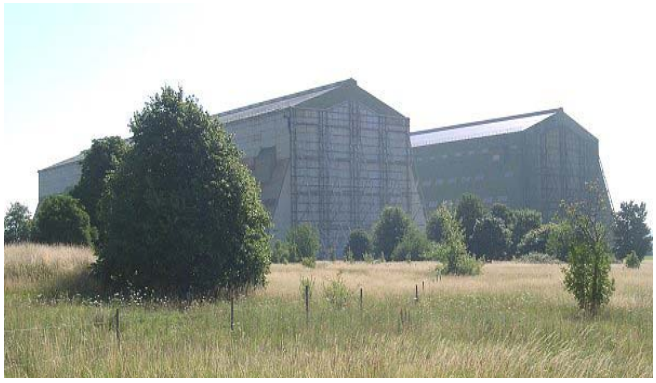
Bedford Borough Council

Central Bedfordshire

Bedfordshire Historic Buildings and Monuments



Updated April 2014

Introduction

Historic architecture is all around us and Bedfordshire - although a small county - has much to offer from grand mansions to eccentric gatehouses.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but rather a selection of some of the important, beautiful and quirky buildings that Bedfordshire has to offer.

It is hoped that this guide will inspire you to visit some of the places described and discover more about the architectural heritage of the county.

Contents

Miscellaneous

Almshouses

Almshouses for the shelter of the poor were first set up in the Middle Ages. There was a great increase in their formation after the dissolution of the monasteries (1536-1540) and such establishments were a common act of 18th century charity.

Ampthill, Feoffee Almshouses

These picturesque timber-fronted almshouses in Church Square were first built in 1450, remodelled in the nineteenth century and most recently renovated in 1998. They cater for independent elderly people who have local connections in the area. A feoffee is a charitable trust funded by a piece of land.

Bedford, Dame Alice Street Almshouses

Seventy-two cottages in Bedford were destroyed in the great fire of 1802. The local charity The Harpur Trust raised funds and part of Dovehouse Close was acquired by the Duke of Bedford. It was agreed to build 26 cottages, not as Almshouses but to rent to the industrious poor. In 1815 it was decided to add a further 20 cottages making a continuous run of 46 between the Gaol and St Peter's Green. It was not until the following year (1816) that the Harpur Trust declared that they would all become almshouses. In 1835 the road was renamed Dame Alice Street, after the first wife of Sir William Harpur who was the original benefactor of the Harpur TruSt Between 1882 and 1895 the almshouses were overhauled and given mock-Tudor fronts. In 1965/6 the eastern section of houses were modernised and in 1970 the almshouses west of the Harpur Street extension were demolished, the accommodation being transferred to modern flats in Cardington Road. In 2001 these Grade 2 listed almshouses were purchased from the Harpur Trust for £1 million with a view to being modernised and then rented but many were sold.

Broom, Fordham Almshouses

The picturesque village of Broom in mid Bedfordshire, about two miles from Biggleswade, is home to equally picturesque almshouses in the High Street. Rupert Fordham - who lived at Broom Hall - built them in 1913 in memory of his wife Janet who was killed in a hunting accident. The Fordham Almshouses are of eye-opening design – the curved roofs, windows, and porches are very unusual and the whole of the structure is covered in stonework that resembles crazy paving! All in all it is a little piece of Gaudi set in Bedfordshire. They were given Grade II listed building status in 1979. Still used as accommodation for the elderly, the houses were refurbished in the 1980s and given utilities such as new kitchens and bathrooms.

Clifton, Widows Cottages

The almshouse that stands in Shefford Road, Clifton is a completely different type from its Broom counterpart, but equally interesting. The structure was originally two houses, which is remarkable when you consider that the building as a whole was very small with only one central window. The two

houses were known as *The Gleaner and Sower*. The names derive from Baptist Minister Septimus Sears who edited the monthly magazines *The Little Gleaner for the Young* and *The Sower,* and it was money raised from these magazines that enabled Sears to construct the almshouses for widows of the parish in 1871. During the Second World War the buildings were used to house Jewish refugees. They are Grade II listed buildings.

Leighton Buzzard

The Leighton Buzzard almshouses are to be found on North Street and were originally built in 1630 by Edward Wilkes to honour his father and for the use of the deserving poor. Originally for eight occupants, the houses were rebuilt in 1857 and were extended to include two more houses in 1873.
The houses are characterised by several plaques above the front doors inscribed with a number of sayings and mottos of a religious nature, many concerned with the poor, befitting the nature of the buildings themselves.
Edward Wilkes's son Matthew provided funds for an annual ceremony to take place at the almshouses every year. Known as the "Beating of the Bounds", the ceremony still continues to this day – as it does in some other places in England - and has its origins in the perambulation of the parish boundaries. Often younger members of the parish were taken along, and at key points, "beaten" so they would remember where the boundaries lay. In Leighton Buzzard a choirboys, in a surplice, is turned upside down at each key spot, so that those watching will remember the defining points along the traditional boundary.

Woburn

The Almshouses in Woburn stand at the north-western end of the village and are crafted in a distinctive yellow brick. Their stepped gables resemble the Renaissance architectural style of Dutch houses in the 17th century, which gained a revival in the 19th and influenced architecture across Europe. The Duke of Bedford, using money left to the poor in the will of Sir Francis Staunton in 1635, built the buildings in 1792. The sum of £40.00 was left to "purchase estates for the benefit of the poor". Originally intended to house twelve poor families, modernisation and refurbishment took place in 1850 and in 1968 when they were modernised and converted into flats for fewer pensioners. The Almshouses have since been renamed Staunton House in honour of their original benefactor.

Bridges

The need to cross the River Ouse has been a necessity since the early beginnings of Bedfordshire. As a result numerous bridges have been constructed, modernised and refurbished, as the times have demanded. Bridge building thus has a rich and varied heritage in the county, a heritage that continues to this day as modern constructions nestle alongside their older counterparts.

Barford Bridge

Sometimes known as Great Barford Bridge, this structure connects Blunham to Great Barford and is a long narrow bridge consisting of 17 arches. Erected as a result of a bequest in the will of Sir Gerard Braybroke of Colmworth in the 15th century, the bridge at first consisted of eight arches and was built using a variety of materials such as sandstone and rubble limestone. Throughout its history the bridge has undergone repair and refurbishment, much of it paid for via bequests left in the wills of local notables such as John Canon in 1501 and Richard Wylshire in 1534, who donated a quarter of malt to the repairs.

The late 17th and early 18th century saw five more arches added on the south side, again with a mixture of sand and limestone. Further expansion followed with another arch at the north and a further two at the south end. 1781 saw major repairs by John Wing who also built Bedford Gaol and Bedford Town Bridge. Widening was also required to keep up with modern transport, utilising wood in 1818 and brick several years later in 1874.

The bridge is a Grade 1 Listed Building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Bedford Town Bridge

Steeped in history, the main bridge over the River great Ouse at Bedford has been rebuilt over the centuries. It is likely that a wooden bridge was erected over an earlier ford in Saxon times. St Mary's Gardens lies on the south bank and the Swan Hotel and the Embankment on the north. The bridge leads directly into the heart of the town, the High Street, the Market Square and St Paul's Church.

The first stone bridge is said to have dated from 1224 and was constructed using stone from Bedford Castle. The bridge was 330 feet long and 13 and a half-foot wide with a gatehouse at the end of each centre arch. The lower part of the northern-most gatehouse was used as the town's lock-up gaol. Contrary to what it says on a plaque at the town-end of the bridge, it was not where John Bunyan was imprisoned. [That was the county gaol in Silver Street.]

Due to the onslaught of time and weather the bridge was gradually damaged, the worst being after a severe flood in 1671. Because of this, in 1675, repair work was ordered. Such methods failed to halt the continuing erosion wrought by the passing of the years and in 1803, having been found to be unsound, an Act of Parliament prepared the way for the entire bridge to be rebuilt.

The new bridge was designed by architect and former Mayor of Bedford John Wing and was completed in 1813. The new structure was built using stone from Bramley Fell in Yorkshire and the arches built from Portland stone.
The bridge was erected with the help of a public subscription and measured 300 feet in length and 30 feet wide, thus making it considerably wider than the original.

A plaque – to commemorate the opening in 1813 – can still be seen today.
With the development of modern transport the bridge has had to be strengthened and widened on several occasions. The major enlargement took place in 1938-1939, when the carriage way was doubled to four lanes. There was further work in 1984 when the bridge was declared to be under stress. A weight limit was imposed in 1990, and 1992 saw the bridge once again strengthened.

Bedford Butterfly Bridge

A noteworthy modern addition to Bedford bridges is the popularly-known Butterfly Bridge, so called because of its distinctive wing-like struts. This striking addition stretches majestically across the River Great Ouse at the far end of Bedford's Embankment.
It was built following an open design competition by Bedford Borough Council run in conjunction with the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1995. The competition asked for designs for a pedestrian footbridge and requested that designers "build a bridge which would mark the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st" as part of the Renaissance project.
Out of the 79 entries, the double-arched design by Wilkinson Eyre was selected and completed in November 1997. Weighing 22 tonnes and stretching 34 metres, this graceful contemporary bridge has gained praise both from the people of Bedford and the international architectural community. The bridge was officially named and opened by Prince Charles in June 1998.

Bedford Suspension Bridge

The so-called 'suspension' bridge over the River Great Ouse, situated east of the town centre, was the first such bridge to be built in the county and is technically a bow string lattice girder bridge. A previous bridge had existed on the same site but was for agricultural use. John J. Webster built the present structure in 1888 as part of the Embankment landscaping scheme, since a bridge was needed to link the Embankment with the Mill Meadows across the river, purchased by the Borough to enable a leisure use by the public. The bridge curves in an elaborate bowstring with a lattice design, lined with girders and the deck is concrete laid over iron plates. The structure is 6ft wide with a span of 100ft.

Bromham Bridge

Known as Biddenham Bridge until the 17th century, the four-arch bridge was first mentioned in records of 1224 when repairs were needed, thus suggesting that the bridge had already been in place for some time prior to this date.
Robert Salmon in 1814 constructed the 26-arch causeway leading up to the bridge, which was widened by Bedfordshire County Council in 1902.

Harrold Bridge

The ancient bridge at Harrold is split into three distinct parts – a causeway on the south bank, nine arches and then a foot causeway of twenty arches – and has been a vital link between the villages of Carlton and Harrold during periods of flooding.

A bridge has been on the site for centuries. Although first mentioned in documents from 1136 -1146, the exact date of its construction is unknown. Due to the variety of people responsible for the maintenance of the bridge throughout its history – from individuals to governing bodies – a variety of styles from different periods are visible in its architecture.

An extensive Bedfordshire County Council restoration project on the bridge began in 1992 and was completed a year later to a cost of £135,000. Restoration included the replacement of eroded stone and walls as well as the repair of two arches.

Such care has assured a long future for this historically-rich structure.

Sutton Pack Horse Bridge

Between the church and the main village, the Sutton Packhorse Bridge is a small two-arch construction crafted from local sandstone sometime in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. The bridge is believed to be the only surviving bridge of its type in the county. Originally only pedestrians and packhorses had the right of way but over time this was extended to include cyclists. The bridge was part of one of the most frequented packhorse routes from the south to the north, and was also situated on an important trade route to wool towns such as Dunstable and Bedford. A survey in 1985 resulted in a restoration project by the County Council, a project that culminated in Bedfordshire County Council receiving an award from the Civic Trust in 1988.

Churches, Places of Worship and Religious Buildings

Churches, places of worship and religious buildings come in all shapes and sizes; they are often united by superb architecture employed in homage to the deities and beliefs worshipped within.
Bedfordshire has its fair share of interesting religious buildings from Churches, Mosques and Sikh temples.

Bunyan Meeting House, Bedford

This particular religious building has a long history with the current church being the third meeting house to have stood on the site.
After being released form prison, John Bunyan needed to find – as Pastor of the Independent Congregation – a permanent meeting place. 1672 saw Bunyan's friend Josiah Ruffhead pay £50.00 for a barn and an orchard in Bedford's Mill Street, this he converted into a Meeting House with Bunyan as Pastor.
A proper purpose-built church was constructed on the site in 1707; the Meeting House that stands today replaced this in 1850.
A rectangular, red brick structure, the Meeting House features bronze doors that were crafted by Frederick Thrupp and were presented to the building in 1876 by the Duke of Bedford. The doors are decorated with ten beautiful panels depicting scenes from *The Pilgrim's Progress.* Framing these doors is a porch featuring ornate stone columns that serve as a portal into the heart of the structure.
Renovations were carried out on the church in the mid 1970s as the timbers were riddled with woodworm, the walls were incredibly dirty and little light was getting into the church. These problems were remedied via sandblasting and by adding a new roof. The improvements meant that the church is now incredibly spacious and light.
The interior of the church also features stained glass windows from the 20th and 21st century, including the famous image of John Bunyan in gaol that inspired Terry Waite in the bleak hours of his being held hostage in Lebanon.

Bushmead Priory

What remains of Bushmead Priory can be found between the villages of Little Staughton and Colmsworth. It was founded in c1195 and became an Augustinian order of monks in c1215.
Following Henry VIII's decision to dissolve the monasteries in 1537 the building passed through a number of hands but eventually to the Gery family with William Gery converting and altering the Priory into a private mansion in 1562.
Nothing survives of the Priory church. The 13th century refectory and part of the kitchen are all that remain of the Priory. Worthy of note is the very fine Crown Post timber-framed roof, which is the oldest feature of the structure, carbon dated to 1280. The building is now in the hands of English Heritage.

Chicksands Priory

Chicksands Priory was built in 1139 by the Gilbertine Order, where they remained until the dissolution of the monastery in 1538.

The building then passed into the property of the Crown until 1539 when John Osborne took possession and in whose family it remained until 1936 when it returned, once again, to the Crown.
Chicksands Priory's historic links with the military began in 1939, becoming RAF Chicksands Priory in 1940.
During World War Two Chicksands acted as a listening post intercepting coded messages from the Germans and relaying them to the master code breakers at nearby Bletchley Park.
With the ending of hostilities Chicksands remained an important military installation – this time as part of the United States Air Force. In 1960 a vast network of antennae, needed to intercept radio traffic during the Cold War, was constructed around the location earning the nickname "the elephant cage".
With the thawing of the Cold War, Chicksands reverted back to the ownership of the Royal Air Force.
Today Chicksands is under the aegis of the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre.
The oldest part of the building is the western side, yet most of the building dates from the 15th century. The priory walls and outbuildings are Grade 1 listed, and the entire structure is Grade 2 listed. The priory is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Guru Nanak Gurdwara Sikh Temple, Bedford

Designed as the focal point for the Bedford Sikh population, the Guru Nanak Gurdwara on Ford End Road is a unique addition to the religious buildings in Bedfordshire.
Modelled on a traditional Sikh Gurdwara – meaning the door to the guru – the temple's exterior was carved in India using granite and marble and features distinctive onion shaped domes.
The project was planned in 1997 and in 2002 the project received a grant of £934,122 from the Millennium Commission. Further money for the £3.4 million temple was secured by the Guru Nanak Gurdwara Bedford Trust.
Construction began in 2002 and the temple was officially opened in 2007.

Jamia Masjid Gulshani Mosque, Bedford

The Jamia Masjid Gulshani Mosque on Bedford's Westbourne Road is a true community project as the £400,000 needed to build it all came from money raised by the local Muslim community.
Previously the Muslim community had had to worship in two temples improvised in upstairs rooms of houses.
The vast redbrick structure was based on Islamic architecture from Saudi Arabia and features arched windows and beautiful green domes.
The Mosque, which had been twenty years in the making, was finally completed in 2001 and stands as a testament to the vision of Bedford's Muslim population.

Roxton Congregational Chapel

This particular church in the village of Roxton was originally a barn before the Lord of the Manor Charles James Metcalfe – no fan of the established church – converted it into a chapel in 1808.

The building became a Congregational Chapel in 1822.
That the chapel looks like a rustic cottage is no accident as the Congregationalists didn't intend their places of worship to resemble standard established churches; also Metcalfe constructed the chapel within his grounds so he wanted a picturesque structure in keeping with the surroundings.
The chapel is T-shaped and sports a thatched roof which was originally timber and Norfolk thatching in character. In 1825 the chapel was enlarged and given a tree trunk veranda.
The pastoral nature of the outside is reflected in an interior that features simple benches and Gothic windows. In 1941 the Rev. David Protheroe donated a stained glass window depicting the biblical story of The Good Samaritan, in memory of his son.

St Francesca Cabrini RC Church, Bedford

The large Italian community that migrated to Bedford - as a result of employment opportunities in the mid Bedfordshire brickyards - needed their own church in which to worship.
A church was built in 1965 on Woburn Road and dedicated to Saint Francesca Cabrini, a saint who worked tirelessly for immigrants.
Funds to build the church came from both Bedford's Italian community and from donations from the shrine devoted to Saint Francesca in the USA – she was the first American citizen ever to be canonized by the Roman Catholic Church.
The church itself is a modern design, a large rectangular building with a row of pillars at the front and a cross towering above. The church also features a nursery and a hall and has become an important focal point for the Italian community holding weddings and events.
The interior of the church features statues of Saints held dear by a variety of Italian villages, thus creating a shared sense of religious feeling.

St Cuthbert's Church, Bedford

Bedford's Church of St Cuthbert can be found on Mill Street and stands on an ancient site that had previously housed three other churches over the centuries.
The first is said to have been founded by King Offa in 772 (in honour of St Cuthbert of Durham, a popular figure at that time). This was burnt down in 1010 to be replaced by a second church which was destroyed in 1224 – its stones being used to fortify Bedford Castle during the siege of that year.
The church was rebuilt – ironically using stones from the sacked castle - and this church survived until 1845 when it was taken down due to its inadequacy for the size of the parish.
The foundations of the new church (the one that stands today) were laid on February 14th 1846. The church, a stone construction in the Anglo-Norman style, was completed in 1847.
As befits its tumultuous history, the present Church of St Cuthbert underwent several improvements and extensions throughout the latter 1800s and beyond, including the addition of the North and South Aisles in 1865, new organ chambers in 1877 and 1886, a new porch in 1907, and repairs on the tower in 1940.

In 1974 the church was no longer needed by the Church of England and was purchased by the Harpur Trust who gave it to Bedford's burgeoning Polish community.
The church is now known as The Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Saint Cuthbert and is popularly known as the Polish church.

St Paul's Church, Bedford

St Paul's is an important building both in terms of its history and location.
The church serves as both a parish church and as the Civic and County Church of Bedfordshire. The building itself also serves as a focal point for the town.
The church's architecture is a mixture of the modern and medieval, constructed from stone. There was a church on the site in 1066, the present building was erected in the 13th century.
St Paul's is a "Hall Church", that is, a church whose aisles rise to the same height as the nave creating a wide-open space in the interior.
The majestic spire that can be seen towering over the Bedford skyline was originally built in the 14th century. In 1865 -1868 the tower and spire were rebuilt – the tower was modified and enlarged and the old spire placed on top.
The modern history of the building has been one of renovation. Major restoration works - both inside and out - have taken place in 1979, 1986, and 2002, when urgent structural work on the roof was required.
The church has been the location for notable preachers such as the founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley.

Turvey Abbey

Despite the name, Turvey Abbey was not actually occupied by a religious community until Benedictine monks and nuns from North London moved there in 1979.
The abbey dates from the Jacobean period and was built in the 17th century to be used as a mansion. The name Turvey Abbey originated from the lands in Turvey being owned by the Abbey of St James at Northampton. The mansion itself was the family seat of the Mordaunt family.
The appearance of the abbey today is mainly due to the Higgins family who inherited the abbey in 1792. John Higgins remodelled and added to the existing buildings and created – in 1801 – the abbey park and also replanted and redeveloped the abbey garden.
In 1979 an order of Benedictine monks bought the abbey to celebrate the 1,500th anniversary of the birth of their founder St Benedict.
Turvey Abbey, which is a Grade 2 listed building, has become a popular location for spiritual retreats.

Council Buildings

The architecture of Council buildings is often overlooked. Ancient or modern, the architecture that frames the corridors of local power is worth closer examination.

Bedford Old Town Hall

The old Town Hall – situated in St Paul's Square – was once the former Grammar School endowed by Sir William Harpur and his wife Dame Alice in 1566.
The stone building was re-fronted in 1767 and a niche – featuring a monument to William Harpur (see *Statues and Monuments* section for further information*)* – was added.
The Grammar School moved to the present Bedford School site in 1892, and the Bedford Corporation, who used it to create Bedford's first Town Hall since the demolition of the medieval guildhall in 1802, purchased the building.
The building was later used as the town's Tourist Information Centre, and the new unitary authority's offices are now at Borough Hall (originally built as County Hall).

Borough Hall, Bedford

Former home of Bedfordshire County Council until 1 April 2009 - when Bedford Borough became a unitary authority and the County Council ceased to exist -this modern 20th century municipal building has become a local landmark. Designed by Bedfordshire architect John Barker and built by Rushden firm Arthur Sanders Ltd, planning was approved in 1963 and building commenced in 1965.
The building's history has been riddled with controversy. Halfway through its construction the building had to be demolished due to the discovery of design faults, and in the 1990s a repair bill of £2.4 million accrued when it was revealed that the steel cables within the building had eroded.
The architecture itself has received both praise and ridicule. At its unveiling the building was viewed by representatives from the building world and private industry and praised as the way forward in terms of municipal buildings, yet at the same time many people objected to the stark appearance of the 100 foot concrete office block dominating the skyline.
Though the currently-named Borough Hall clearly divides the taste of the populace its place is assured in the history of the town and its architecture.

Central Bedfordshire Council Offices, Priory House, Chicksands

Central Bedfordshire Council was established as a unitary authority on 1 April 2009, by the amalgamation of South Bedfordshire- and Mid-Bedfordshire District Councils, which had previously operated from separate buildings in Dunstable, Ampthill and Biggleswade. In 2001 it was decided to centralize operations and house the council under one roof. Chicksands was decided on, a ten-acre site which had previously been a former US military intelligence base at RAF Chicksands.
Opened in August 2006, the two-storey building – named Priory House after the 1150 monastery whose remains lie close by – features high glass walls

and modern open-plan offices providing light and space for its council employees. Queen Elizabeth II officially opened the building on the 13th November 2006.

Luton Town Hall

Luton's grand Town Hall stands proudly on the junction between Manchester Street and Upper George Street. Crafted from grey Portland Stone and featuring Doric – the simplest of the three ancient Greek architectural orders – columns framing the entrance, the Town Hall presents an imposing sight. The building was erected as a result of a competition for designs in 1930 for a replacement to the original Town Hall that had been destroyed by fire following the so-called Peace Riots of 1919. Out of the 86 entries the chosen winners were the Bolton architectural firm Bradshaw, Grass and Hope. Work began in 1935 and was completed within a year, the building was officially unveiled by the Duke of Kent in October 1936. The Hall also features a magnificent clock tower that was cleaned and restored in 2003. During the Second World War, because of its size and the whiteness of its stone cladding, it had to be camouflaged with netting. The Town Hall as a whole was given Grade 2 listed status in 1998 having been recognised as a building of special architectural and historical interest.

Dovecotes

Throughout history pigeons and doves have been an important food source, so important that dovecotes were erected to house the birds.
The birds were kept for their eggs and their meat, the possession of a dovecote was seen as a sign of privilege – hence the reason why many stately homes and manor houses have dovecotes on their lands.
Dovecotes can be square or circular, standing alone or built into a barn or the end of a house.

Ickwell

Ickwell Bury – a neo-Georgian house south of the village of Northill – is home to a dovecote that survived the fire that burnt down the original mansion.
Built in the 17th century from red brick, the hexagonal dovecote has a tiled pyramid roof and features 768 brick nesting boxes from which birds were collected and eaten.
The dovecote is also renowned for its revolving mechanism that allowed ease of access to the nests.

Willington

The vast dovecote at Willington is noteworthy for both for its size and preservation.
Built in the 16th century by Sir John Gostwick, the Tudor structure is all that remains – apart from the stables – of Gostwick's famed manor and estates.
The rectangular building is characterized by its stepped gables and a stepped roof, features more in keeping with dovecotes found in France and Scotland.
There are two rooms with space for 1,500 nesting birds that would have provided about 20,000 chicks each year. The dovecote is said to have been built with stone from Newnham Priory.
The structure was saved from destruction by the Bedfordshire Archaeological Society in 1850 and passed to the National Trust in 1914.
The building is also famous for allegedly sporting graffiti from the hand of Bedford visionary John Bunyan, declaring "J B 1650".

Lock-Ups

Courts and gaols were often situated in towns and cities so a form of detention was needed for miscreants in rural areas. Lock-ups were designed to imprison local troublemakers temporarily before bringing them in front of a magistrate.
The lock-ups dotted across England and Wales - around 200 are currently recorded – are characterised by either their round or polygon shape and contain a single or a double cell. The structure is usually capped with a dome or spire.
A key usage for lock-ups was for the detention of village drunks who were usually released the next day after sleeping off their indulgences. The buildings also gained a variety of nicknames over the years, including “Clink”, “Bonehouse”, “Cage” and “Jug”.
Although no longer in use a number of fine lock-ups still exist in Bedfordshire today and include:

Clophill

The lock-up in Clophill is listed as a building of special and historic intereSt Built in the 19th century and situated beside the village green, the structure is noteworthy for two reasons; it differs from the usual design characteristics of a lock-up, it is square as opposed to round and it doesn’t feature the distinctive domed roof. Secondly, the lock-up also has a pound attached to it. The pound is a walled enclosure and stray animals would be held there until their owners retrieved them. It seems that even animals were not immune to unique brands of village justice.

Harrold

The lock-up in Harrold is one of the finest of its type in the country and is regarded as the best remaining example in Bedfordshire.
Featuring the common round shape and spire in its design, the structure was built in 1824. A major refurbishment was undertaken in the 1990s after it was revealed that the stones, mortar and woodwork had all deteriorated.
Despite the nature of the building as a place of incarceration, there is a humorous side to the lock-up. In 1967 a local man won a bet after being locked inside the cramped, dark interior. The bet started as a result of a discussion in the Odell pub The Bell, where drinkers argued that people today would never survive a night in such squalid conditions. George Knight, a local window cleaner, believed that they could and proved his opinion by spending 48 hours and one second in the lockup.

Silsoe

Hexagon shaped and crafted from sandstone with an oak door, Silsoe’s lock-up dates from 1796.
Standing sturdy, yet quite compact, with only a small window and a slit to ventilate it, this particular lock-up would not have been the most comfortable of prisons.

Prisons

Bedford Prison

Plans for the current prison that now stands on St Loyes Street were originally mooted by prison reformer John Howard. They were finally enacted in 1797 when Bedford builder John Wing was given the go-ahead to build a new gaol to replace the crumbling and decrepit edifice on the junction of High Street and Silver Street.

Howard has left us an interesting picture of the old prison, particularly in comparison to the prison of today, he wrote:

“In this prison there is on the first floor, a day-room for debtors, which is used as a chapel, and four lodging rooms; for felons, on the ground floor, two day-rooms, one for men, and the other for women, without fire places, and two cells for the condemned. The rooms are 8 ½ feet high; two dungeons, down eleven steps, one of them dark; the window of the other 18 inches by 12” (Howard).

The new prison was completed in 1801 and parts of this original structure can still be seen today – as can the extension work of 1848-1849, which featured work on the perimeter walls and the main entrance.

The current prison is a lot larger than its Victorian counterpart. In 1992 – when Bedford Prison had a reputation as one of the most overcrowded prisons in England – a major extension was completed. The new modernised prison – which became operational in September 1992 - featured a new visiting centre and entrance gate, further housing for 100 inmates and new hospital facilities.

Pumps and Pump Houses

Wells were once the only source of water for villages and towns so it became necessary for pumps to be constructed to draw the water up out of the wells for the use of the inhabitants.
The architecture of these pumps, and the pump houses that occasionally surrounded their mechanisms, have produced some unique Bedfordshire buildings.

Ampthill

The water pump in Ampthill stands in the centre of the town and was a source of water for the populace for over two centuries.
The pump, an obelisk in stone, was designed by Sir William Chambers and erected by Earl Ossory – an inscription denoting this can be found carved on the pump itself.
The pump also serves as a signpost giving the names and distances of important towns in each direction – London, Bedford, Woburn and Dunstable.
Also among the pump's roles was that of street lamp, a lantern being positioned on the top. In 1999 it was agreed that a tidy-up of the pump should be a key feature of the town centre enhancement plan.

Haynes

A more ornate pump, housed underneath a wooden structure, can be found at Church End in the village of Haynes.
Built in 1867 by Lord John Thynne, the pump stood outside the entrance to Hawnes Park, which was Thynnes's country house at that time and later became Clarendon School.
The pump features a leering medieval gargoyle as the spout, and also sports a carved wooden case.
The structure surrounding the pump is a wooden platform with four posts and a tiled roof.

Heath and Reach

The village green in Heath and Reach is home to a pump house that looks more like a miniature church complete with clock, spire and weather vane.
The brick structure was built in 1873 using funds gained via subscription, although Baroness Coutts and Baroness de Rothschild, whose generosity is remembered by the inscriptions on the building, paid for the clock.
The charming structure houses a pump above a 120 foot well, which was at one time the main water source for the village. The pump handle system was replaced in 1924 with a new set of mechanisms.
Looking through the iron railings that stretch along the side archway you can still see the four-foot diameter wheel that was used to draw the water.

Stately Homes and Manor Houses

A variety of stately homes and manor houses remain in the county, offering a glimpse of the romance and the splendour that characterised the lives of the wealthy.

Ampthill Park House

Set in the open expanses of Ampthill Park – part of the Greensand Ridge – Ampthill Park House was built in 1686 - 1688 for the Dowager Countess of Ailesbury and Elgin.
The Cambridge architect Robert Grumbold was employed to design and build the house and the house is seen as his greatest work outside his home county. For the design Grumbold chose the then fashionable "double pile" plan which consisted of a rectangular building two rooms thick.
When the house was sold to the First Lord Ashburnham in 1690, changes were made – namely the addition of the north front in 1705-1707 by the architect John Lumley.
Further improvements were made during the period of 1769 - 1771 when Sir William Chambers redecorated the house and included elaborate ceilings.
Ampthill Park house had been used as a Cheshire Home for the elderly until the organization moved to premises in Woburn Road.

Goldington Hall, Bedford

Goldington Hall in Bedford was built in 1650 and has had a variety of occupants. The first recorded occupier of the house was Nicholas Luke who moved into the Hall in 1671, before him there were two previous tenants who have been lost to the vagaries of local history. Sir Thomas Allein was the owner in 1860 before the Polhill family bought the house in 1874.
The Polhill family engaged in restoration work on the house during 1874 - 1877, when the Hall was practically rebuilt with the only remaining original features being the North Wall, a room on the West Wing on the first floor, and three lead rain water pipes dating from 1650.
In the mid-twentieth century the Bedford Corporation purchased the house and renovated it as a set of flats. In 1972 the Hall was then used as a rented property until the brewers Charrington's bought the structure in 1972, turning it into The Falstaff pub. Today is once again a private residence, having been completely restored.

Hinwick Hall and Hinwick House

Hinwick, a hamlet on the Bedfordshire/Northamptonshire border, has two country houses – Hinwick Hall and Hinwick House.
Hinwick House, now a private residence, was built for Richard Orlebar in 1710 and is situated in a 32 acre park.
The house has three stories with a flat roof and is entirely stone built of local stone. Northamptonshire stone from the quarry of Weldon and Ketton was used for pavements and door mountings as well as for the fine depiction of the mythological huntress Diana that is carved on a triangular pediment on the front of the house. This depiction was a compliment to Orlebar's wife who was named Diana.

Hinwick Hall was built in the middle of the 16th century. Extensive alterations were made in the early 18th century; the east front of the house was entirely rebuilt.
By 1834 the house was dilapidated and William Orlebar undertook to partially restore the property. A more thorough restoration project took place in 1908, when the west front was remodelled and the north of the house was extended.
In 1942 the house was purchased by the Shaftesbury Society to home a group of severely disabled young boys. Such work is continued to this day, as the house is now a college of further education for young people with disabilities.

Houghton House, Ampthill

Now a ruin, Houghton House – standing outside Ampthill, to the north – was once a majestic dwelling overlooking the Vale of Bedford.
Built in 1615 for Countess of Pembroke Mary Sydney, the Italian-influenced Jacobean mansion is believed to have been the inspiration for "the House Beautiful" in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress.*
The house was a solid rectangle in design, 120 feet by 75, brick built with stone facings, featuring high stone towers at the four corners. Though originally designed by John Thorpe, it is widely held that famed architect Inigo Jones completed the project.
In 1738 the house was bought by the Duke of Bedford, but when his son and heir died as a result of a hunting accident, the Duke lost any love for the place and ordered it to be unroofed and dismantled.
Thus the once glorious house was reduced to a ruin.
English Heritage now owns the ruins, aiming to preserve the ruins, with the aim of preserving the character of the building for future generations.

Luton Hoo

Several houses existed on the Luton Hoo site on the edge of Luton. A family called de Hoo occupied a house on the grounds for four centuries.
The architect Robert Adam built the first version of the present mansion for the third Earl of Bute, the Bute family having bought the estate in 1762. While Adam was building the house, landscaping visionary Capability Brown was redesigning and extending the grounds and gardens, increasing the acreage from 300 to 1,200.
Adam's design was re-worked around 1830 by Robert Smirke at the request of the new occupier the second Marquess of Bute. Smirke's design featured a classical influence that married well with the original – Adam had also been influenced by Neo-classical ideas. One of Smirkes's achievements was the building of a vast portico entrance with six towering columns.
Following a fire in 1843 when much of the house was destroyed, new owner John Leigh rebuilt the shell drawing on Smirke's ideas.
The 20th century saw the house come under the ownership of Sir Julius Wernher who remodelled much of the interior of the house in a lavish, French influenced style.
Luton Hoo is now transformed into a luxury hotel, completed in 2007 after a complete renovation by Elite Hotels.

Moggerhanger House

The mid-Bedfordshire village of Moggerhanger is home to the famed building Moggerhanger House.

Although a house had existed on the site since the 15th century, it is the existing house and its association with the Thornton family that has garnered most interest.

The Thornton family occupied a house in Moggerhanger from 1777-1857.

The current house was built in 1791 at the request of the then Governor of the Bank of England Godfrey Thornton.

The famed architect Sir John Soane was recruited for the task and Moggerhanger House is the most complete surviving example of his work.

The house was also the building Soane most returned to throughout his career, beginning work in 1791, returning in 1797, enlarging the house in 1805 and transforming it in 1812.

After Thornton's death the house passed through a number of different owners until 1919 when it was acquired by Bedfordshire County Council for use as a sanatorium and then as an orthopaedic hospital – when it was known as Park Hospital until it ceased in this capacity in 1987.

1997 saw the house acquired by the Moggerhanger House Preservation Trust who has overseen recent restoration work.

Now Grade 1 listed, the house is now much as Soane originally designed it.

Warden Abbey, Old Warden

The curious remnant structure of Warden Abbey in Old Warden is a jigsaw puzzle of past histories. A Cistercian Abbey, founded in 1135 was built on the site, it was dissolved in 1537 and the abbey was knocked down. The Gostwick family then built a large house on the land.

Nothing now remains of the house or the abbey except a curious fragment – a small rectangular house, with a prominent chimney – that stands near a large farm.

This building is believed to be part of the Gostwick's house but it also consists of parts of the abbey – a restoration team found a fourteenth century tile there.

Warden Abbey as it now stands consists of a ground floor, a first floor – which is occupied by a single room – and an attic floor.

The building is owned by the Landmark Trust and is available to rent as a holiday let [as are the Keeper's Cottage (p33) and Queen Anne's Summerhouse (p34), both on the nearby Shuttleworth estate at Old Warden].

Woburn Abbey

Home to the Russell family for over 400 years, Woburn Abbey is the seat of the Duke of Bedford and one of Bedfordshire's most popular tourist attractions.

Hugh de Bolebec, of the Cistercian order, founded the Abbey in 1145.

However, in 1538 the then Abbot Robert Hobbes was found guilty of treason and hung from an oak tree in the grounds. As a result of the Abbot's perceived treachery, the King confiscated the abbey.

In 1574 Edward VI gave Woburn Abbey to Sir John Russell in recognition for his service to the crown. The Abbey became the official home of the Russell family in 1619.

Under the aegis of architect Henry Flitcroft – whose work is still visible today – the house was largely rebuilt. The landscaping of the park commenced in 1802.
After World War Two dry rot was discovered and half of the Abbey was subsequently demolished.
It was the idea of the 13th Duke of Bedford to open his home to the public, and since it's unveiling as an attraction in 1955 Woburn Abbey has attracted scores of visitors with its famed safari parks and renowned golf club. Woburn is also notable for its 3,000-acre deer park where ten different species of deer roam free.
The house itself contains one of the most important private collections of furniture, porcelain, paintings and silver in the country. Some of the gems include works by Reynolds, Rembrandt, Gainsborough and 24 paintings by Venetian master Canaletto.
The Abbey was mainly built from local stone known as Totternhoe Clunch. This particular material is very soft and has meant that the Abbey has had to have periodical restoration and refurbishment.
Andrew, 15th Duke of Bedford currently runs the estate.

Wrest Park, Silsoe

Situated midway between Bedford and Luton, in Silsoe, Wrest Park House and gardens are a magnificent example of Bedfordshire architecture.
Two previous houses existed on the site before the present building was erected. The first was situated on rising ground to the east, the second – made of stone – was built where the foundations of the present house now reside, and was of Tudor construction.
The land itself had been in the possession of the De Grey family for 600 years, it was Henry De Grey (Duke of Kent) who improved the grounds including vast alterations of the gardens and the erection of the Pavilion at the end of the Grand Canal.
Thomas Philip Weddel, Earl De Grey, demolished the old house in 1830 and set about constructing the current edifice, completing it in 1836. The house is a resplendent example of French architectural influence, indeed, at the time of its construction the New House was compared to the palace at Versailles.
Wrest now remains with much the same appearance as the second Earl De Grey left it in 1857 on his death. The house was used as a military hospital during the First World War, and in 1947 the Ministry of Public Buildings acquired the estate as a national monument.
The ministry leased the building to the National Institute of Agricultural Engineering which remained there to until 2006.
The 90-acre gardens sport a variety of architecture from follies, fountains and statues, some of which are scheduled as ancient monuments and listed buildings in their own right. It is now managed by English Heritage and the gardens are being restored so as to show the history of gardening in England over many centuries.

The Archer Pavilion at Wrest Park is a sumptuous Baroque influenced design that is worthy of further note. Architect Thomas Archer designed the domed pavilion in 1709 for the purpose of the pleasure of the De Grey family who used the building for entertaining. The pavilion's main chamber contains a

selection of paintings by the French artist Louis Hauduroy. The paintings, depicting coats of arms and mythological figures, are the only public examples of Hauduroy's work in this country.
Vital repairs to the roof timbers and the paintings were undertaken in 2002 as part of a conservation and research project on the Archer Pavilion.

Statues and Monuments

Statues and commemorative monuments are a key feature of any town and add historical and architectural interest to many high streets.

John Bunyan (1628-1688)
The sturdy form of Bedford's most famous son – John Bunyan, a non-conformist Christian preacher and writer – can be found at the crossroads of St Peter's Street, High Street, The Broadway and Dame Alice Street, Bedford. The statue was created by Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm and was a gift to the town by the 9th Duke of Bedford. The unveiling took place on the 10th June 1874 by Lady Augusta Stanley to much interest and publicity, with an estimated 10,000 people attending.
The statue itself was crafted from bronze that was derived from a melted-down cannon taken in the Opium Wars with China. Standing nearly nine feet tall and weighing about two and a half tons, the statue stands on a plinth which also displays three bas-relief scenes depicting scenes from Bunyan's most famous story, *The Pilgrim's Progress.*

John Howard (1726-1790)
Also in Bedford stands the imposing statue of prison reformer John Howard, deep in thought. The statue was commissioned by Bedford Borough Council to celebrate the centenary, in 1890, of Howard's death, but was not finally completed and unveiled until 28th March 1894.
Sir Alfred Gilbert, the sculptor, also created the famous statue popularly known as Eros in Piccadilly Circus, London. The Howard statue was made in eight bronze parts and, in 2006 underwent a major restoration, as the bronze had become corroded over time, giving it a green hue. Now it has the eye-catching conker-brown shade it was originally. The base to the statue has many unusual Art Nouveau features including grotesque masks in each corner, which, if one looks carefully, reveal, inside the eye sockets, angelic cherubs peering out. An earlier fountain on this site was removed to make way for the Howard Statue.

Sir William Harpur (1496-1574)
Unlike the ostentatious Bunyan and Howard statues, the effigy (supposedly) of Sir William Harpur, a wealthy London businessman and philanthropist who grew up in Bedford, is harder to spot. It stands, at first floor level, in a niche over the entrance to the stone-clad building in St Paul's Square, which was once Bedford's Grammar School – founded by Sir William – later used as the Town Hall, then the Tourist Information Centre.
The statue, by Benjamin Palmer, was Bedford's first public sculpture to adorn its streets. No known image of Sir William Harpur survives so this effigy is not a true likeness and, in addition, is wrongly clad in the clothes of an eighteenth century alderman, of the time in which it was created. He ought to have been shown in Elizabethan clothes.

Archbishop Trevor Huddleston (1913-1998)
The bust of Archbishop Trevor Huddleston stands in Silver Street, Bedford. Renowned twentieth-century sculptor, Ian Walters, sculpted the visage of the English anti-Apartheid campaigner priest who served for many years in the poorest areas in South Africa.
Below the bust, the plinth bears a quotation from Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first black President, who visited Bedford on 7 April 2000 to re-dedicate the sculpture, which was first unveiled in October 1999. The inscription reads: "No white man has done more for South Africa than Trevor Huddleston. The bust, which is a copy of the original in South Africa House in London, was purchased through a donation by the then High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Christopher Kilroy, and public subscription, initiated by Bedford Anti-Apartheid Group.

First World War Memorial, Bedford
This war memorial, which also commemorates the Second World War (1939-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953), sited on the Embankment of the River Great Ouse, opposite Rothsay Road, was erected on 20 July 1922, following a public subscription. Sculpted by Charles S Jagger, it features a statue representing the figure of Justice Armed, with a dragon at its feet, representing evil vanquished. The unusual feature is that the crusader figure is actually female (look for her long plaits and soft face).

Boer (South Africa) War Memorial, Bedford
This earlier war memorial, outside the Swan Hotel on the High Street, near the town bridge, was unveiled on 2nd June 1904, and funded by public subscription from throughout the county. It features the figure of a British soldier in khaki uniform and a pith helmet, standing with his rifle, looking out into the far distance. He represents those who took part in the Anglo-Boer (or South African) War of 1899-1902. On the plinth below, bronze plaques list the names of some 237 men from Bedfordshire who fought and died there. It was sculpted by a French sculptor, Leon J Chavalliaud.

R101 Memorial, Cardington
The R-101 airship was built at Cardington by Shorts Brothers and was the largest airship in the world at that time. Its maiden voyage to India in 1930 ended tragically when it crashed into a hillside at Beauvais in France. Out of the 54 people on board, 48 lost their lives. The bodies were brought back to England, where a funeral procession passed through London, then on to Bedford by train. They were buried in a communal grave in the cemetery opposite St Mary's Church in the village of Cardington. A rectangular slab carries the inscribed names of those who dies and bears the inscription "Here lie the bodies of 48 officers and men who perished in the H.M. airship R101 at Beauvais France Oct 5 1930".

De Grey Mausoleum, Flitton
The mausoleum of the De Grey family is to be found in adjoining the parish church and is one of the largest sepulchral chapels in England.

It contains 21 monuments to the De Grey family – affiliated with Bedfordshire since the 13th century – spanning the years 1575 (a brass commemoration to Sir Henry Grey) to 1859 (a stone tribute to Thomas Philip Robinson, Earl De Grey).
The quality of the monuments has been justly praised for their ornate design and exemplary craftsmanship. Classical influence bears strongly on the memorials and is apparent in motifs such as figurines of Greek women and Roman soldiers.
The mausoleum itself came about in the 17th century when Lord Hastings – a member of the De Grey family – desired somewhere to house a monument to himself and his father. In 1705 three other wings were added expanding the building to house future tributes to the family.
One of the more unusual design features of the structure are the spaces created for windows; as such a motif was not befitting a mausoleum, the spaces have been covered.

War Memorial, Kempston

A taste for classical architecture is apparent in the memorial to both the First World War and the Second World War, situated opposite The Keep, the former Kempston Barracks, once home to the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment. Two obelisks – each representing those who fell in various battles of the two world wars of the twentieth century – stand either side, in front of a circular, domed structure complete with two columns. Inside are books of remembrance with the names of those local men who died in the two world wars. The monument was unveiled by Queen Elizabeth (consort of King George VI) on Remembrance Sunday, 1950.

Watermills and Windmills

Watermills are believed to have been introduced into this country by the Romans, and windmills after English soldiers returned from the Crusades in the late 1100s. By 1855 there were four hundred mills in Bedfordshire actually making flour. But by the end of the nineteenth century, with the introduction of large-scale industrial steam-powered roller mills, the end was in sight for local watermills and windmills and their self-employed millers. Deprived of the local farm trade which had sustained them, they steadily ceased working during the first half of the twentieth century. Buildings began to fall into disrepair and have now, with a few exceptions where they have been converted into private dwellings or have been restored as heritage and tourism sites, have disappeared.

Barton Watermill

A watermill was recorded on the Barton site in the Domesday Book.
By 1185 it had two waterwheels. In 1852 the present surviving 16 foot diameter overshot wheel was installed. There were three millstones, one of which was of French burr for flour milling and a flower dressing machine which could produce three grades of flour.
The mill ceased to function in 1926 and it gradually slid into deterioration. It was given listed building (Grade 2) status in the 1970s, after some renovation, but continued to decline. In the 1990s Barton Mill Restoration Ltd began steps to restore the site and turn it into a restaurant and hotel. In September 1995 the mill wheel was rebuilt and mill machinery restored to full working order at the cost of £400,000. Since 2000 it has been, variously, a Plant and Craft centre, Antique Centre and, currently, the Olde Watermill Shopping Village and Tearoom.

Bromham Watermill

There was milling taking place in Bromham in Saxon times, as reported in the Domesday survey of 1086 when two ‘mills’ were recorded. Over the centuries, mills were owned by the lords of the local manor, who had a monopoly of milling. The Trevor family of Bromham Hall took over in 1708 and Bromham Mill, by then at its present site, remained in their hands until 1924, when a local farming family, Quenby (who had leased the mill from 1905), bought the mill from the Trevor family.
The remaining mill buildings are mainly of eighteenth and nineteenth century origin, although on stone foundations of the seventeenth century. The long, three-storey brick building containing the milling equipment appears to have been rebuilt in the nineteenth century (date-stones in that part, recording ‘1695’ and ‘1722’, may refer to either earlier buildings or to high-water marks from times of flood). The stone-built structure at the west end, where visitors enter, is thought to have been from the 1700s (despite the gable-end date-stone ‘1859’ which may indicate some re-building and the addition of the northern wing of buildings).
The firm of Quenby-Price left the mill in 1971 and mill buildings began to become run-down. Although purchased by the County Council in 1973, a fire in 1974, causing considerable damage, threatened the future of the mill. However, a decision was made to restore it, using original materials salvaged

from the fire and in 1983 it was re-opened to the public as a heritage site with restored mill equipment capable of once more producing flour on a small scale for visitors. It is still a tourist attraction, set as it is in a beautiful location by the River Great Ouse.

Stevington Windmill

At one time there were 141 windmills in Bedfordshire and they were almost as common a sight as the parish church. Nineteen survived into the twentieth century and now there is only one in a complete state in the twenty-first century, Stevington Windmill. The windmill at Stevington is believed to have been built between 1765 and 1770, to the same design of post mill which was common in the middle ages. It was still working commercially into the 1930s. The mill has a box-like wooden body, or buck, which rests upon a central post, around which it can revolve so as to be able to meet the wind, the post being supported by a wooden trestle raised above the ground on four stone pillars. In the nineteenth century the base was enclosed, so as to make a useful store room.

It blew over in a storm in 1919 and when it was restored in 1921 the oak body was replaced with pitch pine. It fell into disrepair once it finally ceased to be used but, in 1951, as part of the celebrations for the national Festival of Britain, Bedfordshire County Council bought and restored it to preserve it as a landmark heritage site.

In 1987, the mill (first given listed building status in 1952) was upgraded to that of a Grade 2* status.

In 1996, due to rotting timbers, the back stock holding the sails snapped, causing damage which reduced the mill to a dangerous condition and the sails were removed. Fortunately, it was finally restored in 2004 with a new body and a new set of cloth sails.

Stevington Windmill is thought to have been the last operational common-sail post mill in England and still stands proudly on the outskirts of the village, reminding us of a way of life now passed.

Stotfold Watermill

There has been a watermill on this site on the River Ivel for around 1000 years, one of four in the area recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The wooden structure was burnt to the ground in 1992 but the main milling machinery was repairable and a Grade II listed building status given. The 4.2 metre wide overshot waterwheel is the widest in the country.

The Stotfold Mill Preservation Trust was formed, dedicated to a complete rebuilding. It bought the site in 1998 and set about restoration. In 2006 it won the Conservation Award from the Society of Ancient Buildings when the restored mill was opened. A team of volunteers maintains it and offers guided tours to the public during opening hours and at other times for groups.

Miscellaneous

Not all the architecture of Bedfordshire can be neatly characterised or ordered, some buildings require a place of their own either because of their rarity or uniqueness. Here is a selection.

Bedford Castle

Bedford Castle was built during the reign of William II. At its height the castle would have taken up a quarter of the town north of the River Ouse and was situated to the east of where the High Street is situated.

The castle was a typical Norman Motte and Bailey castle, a design consisting of an earth mound (motte) at the foot of which was an enclosed court (bailey). Part of the castle's function would have been to control the river crossing, as the Ouse was an important line of communication between London and the North of England.

At some point in the 12th century the timbers were replaced with what was believed to be local limestone, thus the castle was strengthened. Such measures did not help save the castle after the siege of 1224, a siege that lasted eight weeks and saw the castle levelled.

All that remains of the castle now is the mound. The site had become neglected but Bedford Borough Council began a restoration project, which saw a six-month clean up of the site commencing in September 2003.

The mound is now capped with a medieval style oak structure and a picturesque garden at its foot features a mosaic of Bedford as it was in past times.

The completion of the project in 2004 saw the mound coming second in the Heritage of Britain Award, an accolade that is granted to the best long-term preservation of a monument or site.

The castle mound is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Bedford Infirmary/County Hospital

Bedford philanthropist Samuel Whitbread, on his death in 1796, left a large sum of money in his will to be put towards the building of an infirmary for the sick of Bedford. His son – also named Samuel – fulfilled his late father's wish with the creation of Bedford Infirmary in 1803.

Designed by John Wing, the building featured a mixture of Totternhoe stone and brick with timber floors.

The middle part of the 19th century saw many improvements to the infirmary – a new roof in 1822, extensions in 1828 and a large library, which by 1831 was home to a collection of over 1000 books. In 1844, the typhus epidemic that was sweeping the country saw the erection of a fever hospital on the site to cope with those infected in the county.

In 1899 a new County Hospital was erected on the site of the old infirmary – which had become obsolete both in terms of size and equipment – in an area of ten acres.

One of the key additions of the new hospital was the creation of a children's ward, which was lined with tile panels depicting nursery rhymes and children's stories. The tiles had been organized by a group of ladies to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee – hence the ward was dubbed Victoria Ward.

During the First and Second World War the County Hospital was used to treat casualties of the two conflicts.
In 1950 County Hospital was renamed South Wing and was merged with St Peter's Hospital (North Wing) to create Bedford General Hospital.

Britannia Ironworks Gatehouse, Bedford

Though the Britannia Ironworks on Kempston Road has been demolished, the extravagant gatehouse that greeted workers still remains.
The works – built by architect Robert Palgrove, later knighted for his work on Buckingham Palace – opened in 1859. At the time the now listed gatehouse was regarded as a curiosity not in keeping with the works themselves, indeed, a newspaper at the time referred to it as: "a portal of some symbolic castle of indolence on some luxurious place of learning, anything indeed but a temple of industry".
The works themselves closed down in 1993, but the gatehouse with its proud arch and clock tower remain as the entrance to a newly-built housing estate.

Bedford Corn Exchange

The original Corn Exchange in Bedford (then called The Floral Hall) was situated on St Paul's Square opposite the location of the present Corn Exchange. It was built in 1849 but demolished a few years later in 1904 in favour of a larger building.
Earl Cowper, assisted by the Duke of Bedford, laid the foundation stone of this new Corn Exchange. The design of the new structure was undertaken by the London architects Ladd and Powell and took two years to build – it was completed in April 1874 – at a cost of £9,000.
As with many historical buildings the Corn Exchange has gone through many renovations and refurbishments in its time. 1926 saw a new dance floor and a new coat of paint on the ceiling and walls. A second refurbishment took place in 1995 with improvements including new air conditioning and seating, redecoration of the Howard Room and the artist's backstage areas. Such improvements ran to a cost of £2.1 million, a far cry from the £341 renovations in 1926. The Corn Exchange is also noteworthy for hosting wartime performances by Band Leader Glenn Miller; his association with the building being commemorated in 1976 with a plaque at the entrance and, in 1994 on the anniversary of his death, a bust of Miller was placed on the front of the building.

Cardington Airship Sheds, Bedford

Looming like vast slugs on the lettuce leaf that is the Bedfordshire countryside, the two airship sheds at Cardington have become local landmarks. The site began its airship-related history in 1916 when the Shorts Brothers Engineering Company gained a contract to build airships there.
The first shed constructed was a 700ft structure – with a width of 270 feet - that enabled the manufacture of two airships, the R31 and R32. This enormous construction became known as Number 1 shed and in order to create space for the now infamous R101, the shed was extended between 1924 and 1926. Alterations included a length increase to 812 feet, and the raising of the roof by 35 feet. The main doors were operated via electrical motors and weighed 940 tons.

A second shed was added to the site in 1928 and was originally from Norfolk but was dismantled and moved to Cardington and rebuilt.
With the R101 crash and subsequent loss of life, Cardington – as well as the Airship industry went into decline (for R101 memorial see pg 26).

Post R101 uses of the site have been varied. During the Second World War, Cardington provided the perfect location from which to train barrage balloon operators. The 1980s saw a company called Airship Industries try to revitalise the airship industry, however their plans met with failure. Also for many years, until 2001, the Building Research Establishment used one of the hangers as a test facility.
The fate of the two sheds and the possibilities regarding their future use have been a hotly debated topic. In more recent years Shed 1 received a new lease of life as a film and television set, beginning with the 2005 film Batman Begins. Shed 2 was re-clad in 2013-2014.

Cranfield University Library

It was Ken Shuttleworth, a partner in the renowned architectural firm of Sir Norman Foster and Partners, who designed the sleek, modern library that can be found at the University of Cranfield.
Completed in 1992 the building – costing £4 million to build – is every bit the "library of the future" described by the University.
The building features a vast arched roof made from curved steelwork and also boasts glass walls that serve to create an interior of light and space.
The design has won countless awards (including the Bedfordshire Design Awards, the British Construction Industry Building Award and Supreme Award, and a commendation award from the Financial Times) and serves as the pinnacle for modern architecture in Bedfordshire.

Elstow Moot Hall, Bedford

Moot Hall, (Moot meaning to argue or plead, a reference to the building's use as a place to hear market related disputes) can be found in the village of Elstow and is situated on the green – hence it once being known as the "Green House".
The nuns of Elstow Abbey, who used it for storage, constructed the building around 1500. Over time it was used primarily as a place to store the stalls and other equipment relating to the local market and village fairs, a use that was reflected in another name given to the building - that of "Market House".
In the 19th century Moot Hall was also used as a schoolroom and a chapel, a chapel John Bunyan is said to have preached in. Bunyan immortalised Moot Hall as "Vanity Fair" in The Pilgrim's Progress.
The building itself is a mixture of brick and timber, the latter consisting of a timber frame design in the Tudor style.
Now a museum dedicated to 17th century life, Moot Hall was restored extensively in the 1950s, although the medieval roof was intact, timbers on the ground and upper floors were badly decayed. The hall was reopened in 1951 by Bedfordshire County Council. The building is now in the care of Bedford Borough Council.

Harpur Shopping Centre, Bedford

The current Harpur Shopping Centre was built on the site occupied by the old Bedford Modern School.

The centre itself was designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd and built during 1974 – 1976. Gibberd's design is noteworthy as it utilizes some of the original school building, namely the breathtaking 1834 facade.

The facade bears the hallmarks of the Gothic Revival complete with clock tower and battlements and was designed by 19th century master architect Edward Blore and crafted in Bath stone.

Blore was given the commission as a result of a competition run in 1829 calling for designs for a new building to combine four separate institutions under the management of the Harpur Trust.

The trustees found Blore's design to be "an ornament to the town inasmuch as it will combine picturesqueness of outline, accuracy of character, and correctness of detail".

The 1970s shopping centre mall was constructed behind the classical Harpur façade of the former Harpur Modern School façade by Blore - a fine example of the new combining with the old.

Linslade Railway Tunnel, Linslade Woods

The northern entrance to the Linslade tunnel, visible from the Leighton Buzzard-Bletchley road, seems more suited to Arthurian Legend than the golden age of railways.

Built as part of the London and Birmingham Railway in 1838, by Robert Stephenson, the tunnel – 272-yard long – has its northern entrance in the shape of a castle complete with turrets, battlements and slits for would be bowmen to shoot from. The original central double bore was added to with further single bores either side in 1858[?] and 1876 to allow four tracks.

Many have remarked on the surreal sight of modern trains emerging out of this medieval facade.

Marston Vale Swan Sculpture, Bedford

A 15-foot high, £230,000 sculpture located on the Marsh Leys Business Park roundabout on the A421, serves as a gateway to the Forest of Marston Vale.

The sculpture, designed by Susannah Oliver, depicts two swans soaring majestically over trees and – most prominently – vast chimneys.

The area where the Forest now stands was traditionally used for brick making, hence the chimneys represented on the sculpture pay tribute to that industry, as does the plinth of the sculpture that was created from 9,000 specially made bricks.

The rest of the sculpture consists of stainless steel, with the two swans and the trees illustrating the environmental use to which the site has been put.

Old Warden Keeper's Cottage

Designed and built by architects Henry Clutton and John Usher in 1877-1878 the Keeper's Cottage on the Shuttleworth Estate was originally built as a cottage for the gamekeeper – the Shuttleworth family were keen hunters so a gamekeeper was an essential member of the estate staff.

After the 1940s, when the estate became the grounds for an educational facility, the cottage fell into disrepair and it wasn't until 2001 – when the estate asked for help from the Landmark Trust – that its fortunes were revived.
The restoration project was faced with a daunting task due to the dilapidated condition of the cottage – timber framing and stonework had to be replaced, the roof was covered with holes, the floorboards were rotten and the windows had been boarded up. However, using traditional crafts and techniques, as well as salvaging much of the original building materials, the cottage was slowly restored to its former glory and was completed in 2007. It is now available as a holiday let.

Queen Anne's Summerhouse, Old Warden

This four-square folly pavilion bears the date stone for 1878 and the clasped gauntlet sign of the Shuttleworth family on whose Old Warden estate it sits. But that is misleading. It is, in fact, from the early eighteenth century. In 1712 Queen Anne knighted the rich draper, Samuel Ongley, who owned the estate at Old Warden. This summerhouse, the four round towers built of fine rubbed brickwork, is clearly a celebration of that event. It has a viewing platform on top.
It stands at the hub of radiating avenues of trees which Sir Samuel planted and gave those who visited it a sight of the mansion (currently obscured by trees). It was restored in 1878, hence the misleading date stone, by Joseph Shuttleworth. The Landmark Trust undertook to restore the pavilion and have let it out to the public as a holiday let since 2012. [It is a short walk from another Landmark Trust historic property, the Old Warden Keeper's Cottage.]

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[Relevant photocopied extracts from The Landmark Trust Handbook or News, 2011,regarding Warden Abbey, Old Warden Keeper's Cottage and Queen Anne's Summerhouse, are in the Local Studies Subject files.]

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