

# INTRODUCTION

**F**inancial restraints in recent years have put many of our old buildings under threat and although the more historic are protected by the government and cannot be demolished without special permission, there is often a shortage of cash to restore them, especially if they are in public ownership. This protection comes through a procedure known as listing maintained by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on the advice of English Heritage which provides various resources for architectural conservation. There are around 370,000 listed buildings in England divided into categories I and II. Grade I buildings are defined as being of "exceptional interest" and constitute fewer than 2% of entries on the list while the majority are Grade II.

The listing system incorporates all pre-1700 buildings that have not been substantially altered and almost all those built between 1700 and 1840. Grade I and II buildings may be eligible for English Heritage grants for urgent major repairs while many other conservation organisations offer help and financial advice.

Listed buildings in the parish of Bourne were originally identified during a survey conducted by South Kesteven District Council on 21st July 1977, the majority of them in the Conservation Area that was designated at the same time. This area includes most of the town's main features, including South Street and the Wellhead Gardens, Abbey Road and the Abbey Lawn, much of the town centre and North Road as far as Burghley Street and West Street as far as St Peter's Road. It also includes an ancient monument, namely the supposed site of the castle marked by the grassy mounds in the Wellhead Gardens.

There are now 71 listed buildings within the parish of Bourne. There were originally 75, fifty-one of them in the Conservation Area although two of these in North Street, both dating back to the 17th century and built of red brick with Welsh slate roofs, were demolished in 1988 to make way for the Burghley Arcade development. They included a fine example of a Victorian chemists' shop and a second containing a classic bow display window. The other 24 were outside, in Eastgate, Cawthorpe and Dyke, but four of these have also been pulled down. Two more, the chapel and the Ostler Memorial, both in the town cemetery in South Road, which were probably missed during the original survey because they were so far out of town, were listed in 2007 by the DCMS after an investigation by English Heritage decided that both were at risk. Only the Abbey Church, built in 1138, is Grade I listed while all of the others are Grade II which means that they are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them.

There are others at risk, notably the Old Grammar School which stands in the graveyard at the Abbey Church. This is particularly important because of its associations with education, built in 1678 with money from a bequest by local landowner William Trollope, although the present building is thought to have been erected on the site of another where the monk Robert Manning (1264-1340) may have taught. The pupils came from wealthy families in the town and its closure as a school in 1904 eventually led to the establishment of the present Bourne Grammar School in 1921 and is therefore a

reminder of the establishment of secondary education in this town. The building is currently administered by the Bourne Educational Foundation and is closed to the public because of structural problems and awaiting a buyer but with restricted access and limited use possibilities, the future looks bleak.

Other Grade II listed buildings that have been at risk are being put to good use such as the early 17th century Red Hall, threatened with demolition until acquired by Bourne United Charities in 1962 and now used as offices and function rooms, Baldock's Mill in South Street, built in 1800, leased to the Civic Society since 1981 and now used as the town's Heritage Centre while Wake House in North Street, an early 19th century residence and birthplace of the international fashion designer Charles Worth (1825-95), is now a centre for many activities run by the Bourne Arts and Community Trust.

The Town Hall, built in 1821, is regularly maintained by the local authorities as our centre of public affairs while the churches have also fared much better because all depend upon the charity of their congregations and so have survived and the structures improved. These include the Baptist Church in West Street, built in 1835, the Methodist Church in Abbey Road (1841) and the United Reformed Church in Eastgate (1846). Those buildings in private ownership have also been well protected because homes are invariably improved, such as Bourne Eau House in South Street, while commercial properties need to be maintained to remain viable. These include the 18th century Angel Hotel and the Burghley Arms, both licensed premises in the town centre, the Golden Lion in West Street, the Anchor Inn in Eastgate and the old New Inn in Spalding Road, now a private house.

We may find listed buildings in Bourne in the most unlikely places, a newspaper shop in North Street, a fish and chip shop in West Street, an iron bridge in Church Walk and even a stretch of wall in South Street, part of the Red Hall gatehouse, all of which are similarly protected as Grade II.

My own survey of our listed buildings is based on the 1977 report and includes photographs of all of the buildings that remain. It was originally compiled for the Golden Jubilee Exhibition at the Bourne Heritage Centre in June 2002 and a copy may be seen there and in the reference section of the public library in South Street. A copy has also gone to the newly formed Bourne Preservation Society which is hoping to save the cemetery chapel before taking a fresh look at all of our listed buildings and ways of improving the Conservation Area.

**Bourne  
March 2010**

**Rex Needle**