

Greensand Country's large number of country estates have shaped the area's landscape and its buildings.



The Monasteries, which predated the historic estates, were dissolved in the 1500s. Following their dissolution, Greensand Country land, which had not been intensively settled, was given to major landowners. These landowners shaped the landscape and architecture as they established their own stately homes and gardens, deer parks and estate villages.

Towns such as Woburn, Old Warden and Ampthill contain distinctive styles of architecture characteristic of the area's historic estates. For example: Old Warden estate houses are built in an elaborate 'English Garden' style, with thatched roofs, dormer windows, painted render walls and timber porches; whilst the Duke of Bedford estate buildings in Woburn are generally built of brick in a Georgian style.

The 8th Duke of Bedford in the mid-19th century was part of the agricultural revolution and restructured his lands to take full advantage of modern farming methods, including the steam plough. He also built a large number of "model farms" which have a very distinctive E-shaped ground plan



Woburn Abbey

People Say:

"I love visiting historical sites like Houghton House or Woburn Abbey with its vast grounds and deer park."

"The stewards at Woburn Abbey are incredibly knowledgeable about the history of the house, its contents and the Russell family. They are so genuinely enthusiastic too. It was such a pleasure to be able to chat with them at our leisure."

Action Points:



Share the history of the local area with visitors. Make a note of local historical influences and discover how they fit in the Greensand Country story.



Visit Bedfordshire Local History Association, local libraries or parish council websites to find out more about your local history.



Provide reference material if you have some – for example, books on historical families (ask for recommended books at your local library). This works especially well if you're an accommodation provider or café – your guests will appreciate having some reading material that is relevant to their visit.



Publicise grand houses open to the public such as Woburn Abbey or the ruin of Houghton House.

Info and Resources:

Amphill History:

<http://www.amphill.info/page10.htm>

Clophill History:

www.clophillhistory.mooncarrot.org.uk

Woburn Village History:

www.woburnvillage.co.uk/history.html

Bedfordshire Local History Association:

www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk