

# *The Exchange Coach House Inn*

A brief extract taken from a report by Keith Miller: Historic Building Researcher

Built around 1760 “The Exchange”, as it is known locally, is the most stylish house of this period in North Lincolnshire. The sumptuous original interior features have been carefully restored to a very high standard, and include ornate plasterwork ceilings, panelled walls and decorative fire surrounds. Much of the work is in the Georgian Gothic and Chinoiserie styles taken from Medieval and Chinese architecture.

The building has one of the most complete interiors of this period, certainly in this style, in the region. The exterior with its symmetric frontage in contrasting red and yellow bricks, stone work, window dressings and roof balustrade is one of the most unusual and accomplished designs in the county/region.

The building has had a chequered history having started life as the residence of ‘a man of substance’. It later became a ladies finishing school and up to the 1890’s was known as “The Old House” and for a brief time it was used to teach ballerinas.

Around 1895 the building was bought to accommodate the Exchange Club, the name having arrived from a group of wealthy farmers who had formed the group in the Corn Exchange which had at that time closed because of financial problems. Once they had arrived they built on to the main building a small Victorian hall to accommodate a recently constructed billiard table (still here today). From that day on the building became known as “The Exchange Club”.

In its hay day many important people came to stay - most notably the young Winston Churchill, who returned during the war years. During the Second World War it was the base for the local Home Guard and in 1984, the present owner found a sealed room which contained records of names, guns and uniform positions, along with papers etc. from that era.

Many fascinating stories have been connected to “The Exchange” throughout the years, including tales of farmers losing their farms on a single hand of cards. The infamous King William card table is still there today but no poker is, alas, played now.

There are also stories of ghosts, phantom footsteps, a headless monk and a little girl of twelve who is reputed to have fallen from the roof.

During the 1970’s when the farming community went into decline, the membership of the Exchange Club dropped off. As a result the building eventually became derelict save for that small hall that was built for the billiard table.

The present owner, Joe Mullen, bought the building and decided to completely renovate it to restore the building’s former glory, a daunting but worthwhile task!