

Redlynch & District Local History Society

Augustus Pugin: His Architectural origins in Salisbury

By David Richards

Our October talk, given by David Richards, highlighted Augustus Pugin's early days in Salisbury and his role in the Gothic Revival.



Pugin first visited Salisbury as a teenager and was fascinated by the medieval architecture of the city, collecting antiquities of carved wood and stone which he would later use in his work, and, at the age of 13, producing a detailed drawing of the Poultry Cross. On his return to London he designed a medieval cup which was purchased by George IV and later designed chairs, a wine cooler and two sideboards for Windsor Castle.

After setting up a business producing commissioned furniture and also designing sets at the Royal Opera House, Pugin faced bankruptcy in 1831. His first wife, Anne Garnett, died in childbirth and was buried at Christchurch Priory, where he presented a Gothic wooden altar in her memory. Inheriting a large amount of money Pugin decided to return to Salisbury, lodging in the High Street and starting his architectural career in 1834 by restoring the hall of John Halle, with its gothic chandeliers and large fireplace.

With his second wife, Louisa Burton, he purchased some land in Alderbury and built a house in the Gothic Revival style and it was whilst in Salisbury that he converted to the Roman Catholic faith. In 1836, following a fire at the Palace of Westminster, Pugin was asked to supply the designs for the new interior. In the same year he published a book "Contrasts" in which he compared modern buildings with their medieval equivalents.

Following the death of his second wife Pugin married Jane Knill in 1844. About that time, and in the years following, his work in the Salisbury area included a memorial in Bishopstone Church, a lodge at Clarendon Park and the design of St. Osmund's Church in Exeter Street.

The Society next meets on Tuesday, November 6th, 7.30pm in Morgan's Vale and Woodfalls Village Hall, when Jamie Wright will be giving a talk on the Fisherton and Bemerton Brickyards.