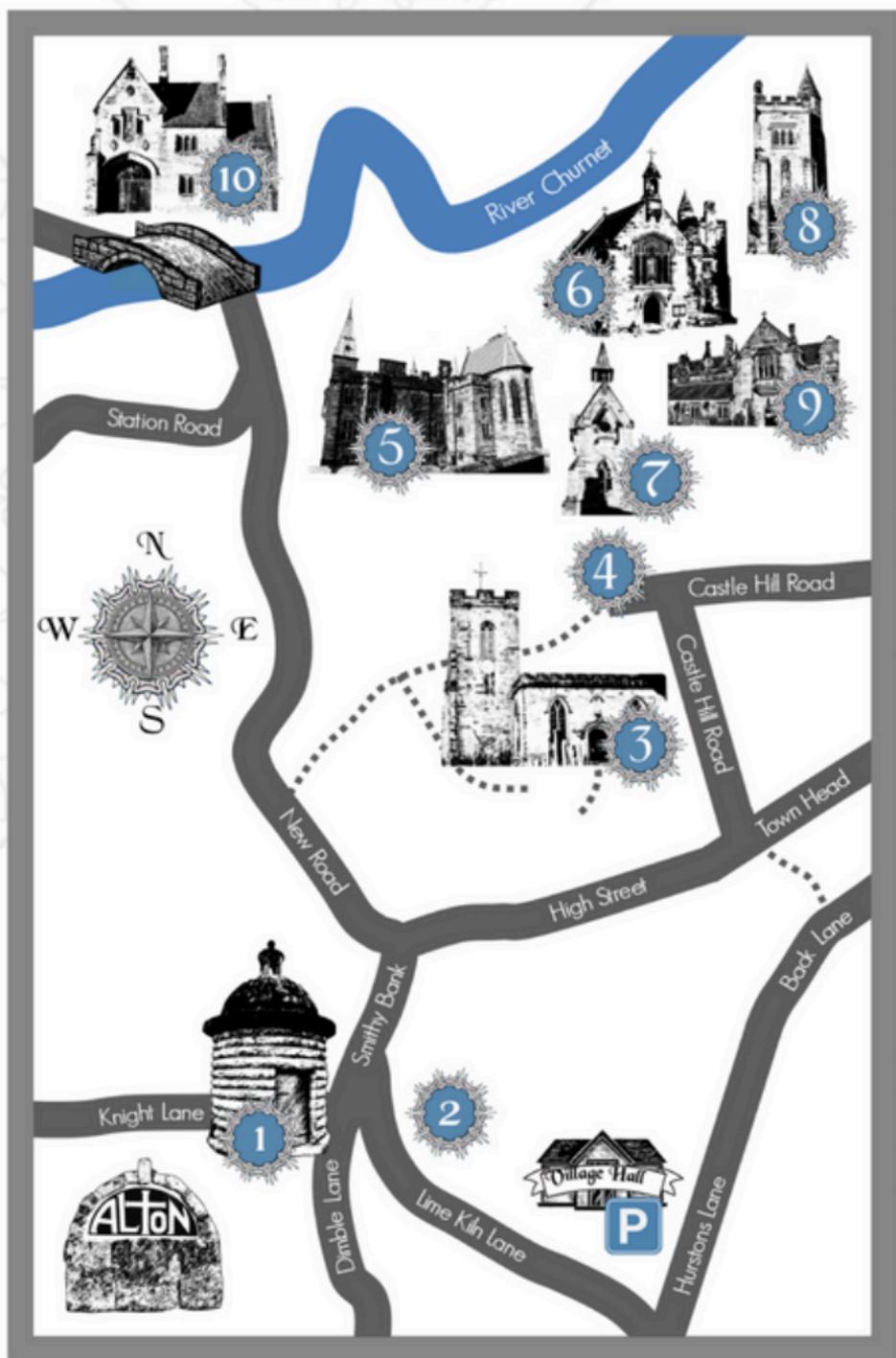


Jugin After Dark
Est. 2021

Alton
Jugin
Trail

My travels in search of the beautiful...

In Memory of Michael Fisher 1943 -2021



Pugin

After Dark

Est. 2021

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1. The Round House

Dating from 1819, The Round House is a lock-up or blind house, which were small buildings used to hold prisoners temporarily. This was usually for petty offences such as vagrancy, disturbing the peace or being a drunken nuisance.



The Round House, one of only four remaining lock-ups in Staffordshire, was still in regular use until the mid 19th century, when the establishment of local police forces rendered them obsolete.

The term blind house refers to the fact that lock-ups were often windowless and or only had small barred openings, which made them very dark inside. The only comfort a prisoner might have had in the dark was a bare wooden bench or a cast-iron cradle to sleep on.

Whilst the Round House may no longer hold prisoners, it does host the village's nativity scene and Alton Community Events carols every December.

Pugin behind bars

Pugin had several fears that plagued him throughout his life, including debt, death and civil unrest. Pugin abhorred the idea of dying in debt, so whenever he became unwell, he would try to settle all his accounts.



This fear stemmed mostly from his inability to successfully manage the financial side of his business, which at one time resulted in his arrest for non-payment of rent. Thankfully, his father was able to convince two well-known architectural publishers to act as

security for a bond to pay his debts so he might be spared a night in jail.

2. Rose Cottage & Rock House

This pair of semidetached houses, were designed by Pugin in around 1840 and feature slate roofs and chamfered mullioned windows beneath projecting eave cornices.

Although more Tudor Gothic in design than Pugin's signature medieval style, they still represent a fine example of his earlier works.

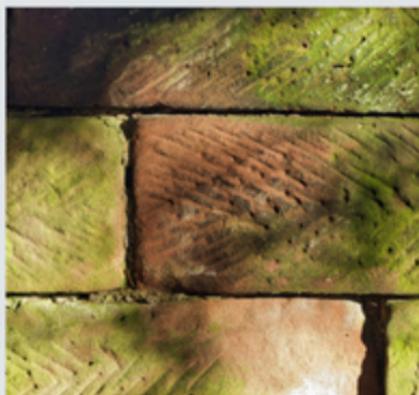
The houses were built to provide homes for members of the Bailey family. Brothers John, William and Peter Bailey were stonemasons who moved to Alton from Cripplegate, Middlesex to work not only the remodelling of Alton Towers but also other buildings throughout the 16th Earl's estate. .



Please note: the cottages are private residences, so please be mindful when viewing or photographing the properties.

A village of quarries

Over the years, the extraction of Hollington Sandstone from eight quarries throughout the village has dramatically altered the landscape of Alton. Rock House and Rose Cottage were constructed on one of these former quarry sites, and the old quarry wall is still visible today, running along the back of the houses on that side of Smithy Bank.



This type of sandstone formed within river environments during the Triassic Period when grains of sand, mainly quartz, and sometimes mica and feldspar, cemented together.

The variation in the stones' colour is determined by how much iron oxide they contain. High levels produce vivid reds, whilst low levels produce paler, almost white variations.

3. St Peter's Church

Although the exact date the church was built is unknown, historic records from nearby Croxden Abbey document its existence as early as 1176, when Alton was known as Alverton. The building features a Norman north arcade and a 14th-century tower, which underwent extensive



remodelling and restoration in the 1880s by architect John Reginald Naylor, who was a former pupil of another famous Gothic revivalist, Sir George Gilbert Scott.

A hall fit for a king!

The banqueting hall or great dining hall occupies the largest, most central part of Alton Towers, and in 1849 Pugin began his extensive remodelling of it. It was the first part of the house that would be entirely Pugin's work rather than just altering or adding to what was already there. It would be the greatest and grandest yet and would be the "real thing" in terms of medieval gothic architecture.



The hall was incredibly impressive with its great timber roof decorated in red, blue and gold, beneath which a large brass and crystal chandelier hung; the walls were panelled with finely carved oak, and the crowning

glory, an oriel window containing 27 stained glass panels manufactured by Hardman & Co.

But sadly neither the 16th Earl nor Pugin ever got to see all these things in place as they both tragically died in 1852 before the hall was completed. The inheritance disputes that followed the death of the subsequent young 17th Earl four years later resulted in the contents of the house being auctioned off, scattering its treasures far and wide.

Some of the oak panelling from the banqueting hall can, however, now be found in St Peter's, where it has been repurposed as an organ case and also forms the reredos of the north aisle.

A Gothic Wonderland

Pugin's influence extended beyond the buildings he designed and remodelled, resulting in the Gothification of several houses and structures throughout the village. These include St Peter's Church perimeter wall and gates, the two houses within the churchyard and two on the High Street.



4. Schoolmaster's House

The former schoolmaster's house, now the Presbytery, stands at the entrance of the Alton Castle complex. Built in the 17th century, it was extended and remodelled by Pugin in 1843.

Please note: the house is a private residence, so please be mindful when viewing or photographing the property.



The charitable architect

Pugin was incredibly generous and kind and was often involved in the rescue of sailors off the shore of Ramsgate, where his family home, The Grange, was located. He even kept a trunk of spare clothes in the hallway in case they were needed by those that had found themselves shipwrecked. He also abhorred the workhouse system and, along with the 16th Earl's vision, included provisions for educating the less fortunate children of the village in his designs for St John's Church.

Education for all

St John's church provided not only a place of worship but also a place of education. Pugin designed the church so that it could be divided in two, with the nave doubling up as a schoolroom and the pulpit as the schoolmaster's podium.



The benches also had hinged flaps, which enabled them to be raised and converted to desks, and rather than use tiles on the floor, Pugin insisted on wood, which would be warmer in winter for the children, who often went without shoes.

5. Alton Castle

The rocky precipice at the north end of the village is the perfect location for a fortress; therefore, it is no surprise that there has been a castle on this site since the 12th century. The castle's first incarnation, which now lies in ruin to the south, was built by the 16th Earl's ancestor Bertram de Verdun.



When Pugin began work on the castle in 1840, substantial remains of the medieval ruins were still in situ and were stabilised and incorporated into his plans. During the excavations of the site, the original crypt and medieval chapel were discovered, and on the 16th Earl's instructions, Pugin designed the new castle's chapel, with its distinctive snakeskin roof, to be built directly atop them.



The distinctive yellow and green roof tiles were manufactured by Minton, and it is the only roof of its kind ever designed by Pugin, making it a truly unique feature.

Much to Pugin's horror, the 16th Earl originally envisaged that the castle would be a residence for aged priests. For Pugin, this went against his principle of a building reflecting its function, and so he wrote to the Earl, 'I would sooner jump off the rocks than build a castellated residence for priests'.

It appears that the intended purpose of the castle was never truly realised or even agreed, although many suggestions were made from its being a residence for the 16th Earl's nephew and heir or a dower-house for the Countess should the earl predecease her. Whatever the intended purpose of the castle, it was sadly never fulfilled and much remained unfinished when the young 17th Earl died in 1856, including the final pyramid roof, which is still absent from one of its three towers.



Please note that whilst there is public access to St John's and the churchyard, the Castle and immediate grounds are only open to the public on certain days and events.

6. St John's Church

Pugin designed and built St John's Church between 1840 and 1842 to serve the growing number of Catholics in the area. Prior to the church's construction, the only option for local parishioners was to attend mass at the Earl's chapel at Alton Towers.



The windows in the nave were made by Thomas Willement and bear the armorial devices of the Verdun, Neville and Furnival families as well as the Earl's family motto, 'Prest d' Accomplir' in diagonal bands.

Like Pugin, Willement was passionate about the true principles of medieval craftsmanship and encouraged the return of methods such as using lead to emphasise the outline of designs. Whilst they shared many views, it was, however, over the windows of St John's that Willement and Pugin went their separate ways, the latter accusing the former of overcharging for the work.

In the chancel there are several lovely examples of poppy head benches, which are carved with Shrewsbury lions, a bishop and various types of symbols, flora and fauna. The east window, above the finely carved alabaster altar and reredos by Thomas Roddis, is another work of Willement, which depicts St John the Baptist, the Madonna and Child and St Nicolas.



On either side of the sanctuary are large brass memorials, designed by Pugin's eldest son, Edward, marking the burial sites of the 16th Earl and his countess and the 17th Earl, Bertram Talbot.

The Churchyard

Pugin greatly respected the dead and strongly believed in treating them with dignity and respect. The churchyard contains a number of memorials designed by Pugin, many belonging to the workers and stonemasons who were employed in the creation of the surrounding buildings. On some of these memorials, you will find the tools of their trade displayed.



Calvary Cross

Pugin designed the Calvary as a memorial to all. As of 1847 It was only the second of it's kind to be erected in England since the Reformation.

Loo with a view

One of the most unusual and arguably unique features of the churchyard that Pugin designed is a pair of outside toilets. Sitting on the edge of the valley, this small building constructed in a mix of red and white sandstone houses two stalls, one with a small window providing views of the valley.



Floriated Stone Cross

To the west of St John's is a stone cross which features the four Evangelists represented as an angel, lion, ox and eagle. Surrounding the cross are the graves of several priests who served at the church.

7. The Guildhall

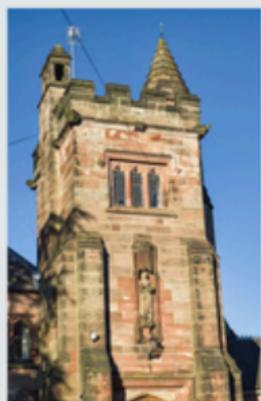
Initially, Pugin planned this wing of the complex to house the refectory, but it had to be revised to house the upper school due to the increasing demand for free education.



The Guildhall was also available for use by the villagers, serving not only as an adult education and community centre but also as a space to hold social functions.

In 1849 Pugin wrote to his wife, Jane of a party he attended at the hall 'There are strange doings here at St John's Balls in the Guild Hall, dancing till 2 in the morning, the Rev Dr Winter playing the French Horn!!'

The tower at the west end of the Guildhall contains three curious round windows, which were originally intended to house three clock faces. Pugin wrote of them, 'I have introduced provision for 3 clock faces which will give it a most picturesque effect'.



8. The Warden's Tower

Completed in 1842, the three-storey tower to the south of St John's provided lodgings for the churchwarden. Above the front door is an effigy of St John, and the label stops on either side depict likenesses of the 16th Earl and Countess.

The Cloister

The cloister is home to a number of brass memorials, including those dedicated to the Countess' parents, who died in Alton, and the 15th Earl.



The windows on the south side of the cloisters each contain a roundel of sixteenth-century grisaille glass of either Flemish or German origin. Pugin sourced the medallions along with several others, which were also installed in his own church, St Augustine's, in Ramsgate. Pugin began collecting antiquities and relics of medieval architecture from the young age of 12 and continued to do so throughout his life. Not only did he closely study and reference these artefacts, but he also incorporated many of them into his buildings and designs.



9. The Hospital

Pugin and the 16th Earl envisioned that the hospital, in addition to caring for the elderly and less fortunate, should firmly root itself in the whole community and also play a part in shaping its future.

When Pugin died in 1852, the main structure of the hospital was finished, leaving only the interiors to be completed. It was, however, the Sisters of Mercy that would first take up residence in the hospital and not the 'poor brethren' some years later in 1875.

10. Station Lodge

Station Lodge was designed by Pugin to act as a gatehouse for those visiting Alton Towers by train. It enabled them to take a more direct route by carriage rather than using the entrances at Farley and Quixhill.



Prior to Station Lodge, there had been a house on the site called Alton Cottage, which was home to estate worker Joseph Jackson plus his wife and children. The Jackson family were to be rehoused in the new building and, as such, the Earl thought it appropriate to name it Jackson Lodge. Pugin refused, preferring to name it Gatehouse. In the end, however, as always, a compromise was reached between the architect and Earl, with Station Lodge becoming the final choice. Despite this, the building is also sometimes referred to by a fourth name of Tudor Lodge.

Pugin loved the railways as they enabled him to travel more quickly and efficiently than he had been able to do so before. When Alton was connected to the main line in 1849, Pugin was delighted and hoped he would have the opportunity to design and build bridges and stations.

Alton Station

For the actual station itself, Pugin submitted designs to the Railway Company for a picturesque building of brick with stone trim. Pugin, however,



struggled with the tender as he was not accustomed to their way of working and as such the company went with London architect Henry Arthur Hunt.

For his design, Hunt stepped away from his usual Tudor and Jacobean style to create an Italianate station. This decision has led to some speculation that Hunt may have had an ulterior motive for doing so.

Pugin was incredibly passionate about his ideas and architecture, so much so that he upset numerous fellow architects during his time. It is unknown if Hunt had any such run-ins with Pugin, but the fact does remain Alton Station does stand at odds with the surrounding Gothic wonderland Pugin created, especially when you learn all the neighbouring stations in the area are of Gothic design.

Please note that Alton Station is now a holiday let owned by the Landmark Trust and is therefore not accessible to the public. It can however be viewed from the public footpath which runs along the old railway line.

Pugin After Dark

Pugin After Dark celebrates the life and work of AWN Pugin in new, imaginative, creative and inspiring ways. In doing so, we aim to not only raise his profile but also bring his architecture to new and diverse audiences, ensuring that his legacy and work are preserved for future generations to enjoy.

For more information on our work plus art projects, events, workshops, talks, blog and more visit:

www.puginafterdark.com