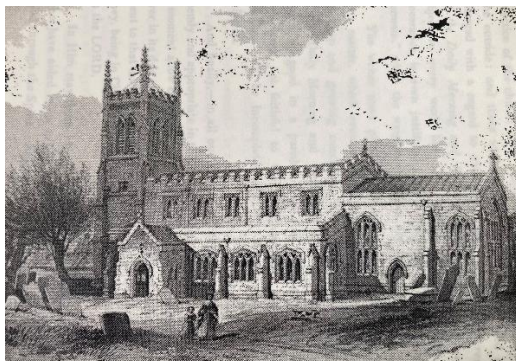


The Rev. Henry Alford, A.W.N. Pugin and the Restoration of St Mary's Church, Wymeswold: ecclesiology & architecture in 19th-century Leicestershire.

Conference Saturday 11th April 2026. 10am to 4.30pm
St Mary's Church, Wymeswold, Leicestershire.



Call for Papers.

Between 1844 and 1846, the Reverend Henry Alford, vicar of Wymeswold (later Dean of Canterbury) commissioned the architect A.W.N. Pugin to restore his parish church of St Mary's. The Rev. Alford had an enthusiasm for ecclesiology; he had recently joined the Cambridge Camden Society and was a good friend of the Leicestershire squire and convert to Roman Catholicism Ambrose de Lisle. Pugin rebuilt the nave, aisles, and windows of St Mary's, while the patrons Trinity College, Cambridge commissioned the refurbishment of the chancel roof. The interior of the church was completely overhauled, with altar, choir, screen, pews, lighting, and windows all of Pugin's design and largely manufactured by Hardman of Birmingham. St Mary's remains an important, Grade 1 listed, example of early ecclesiological design.

In 2025, the National Lottery Heritage Fund financed a major repair of the nave roof along with a heritage project focused on the history of the church. We are celebrating the end of the project with a study day on the Rev Alford and A.W.N. Pugin. We want to examine the form and style of the work; the context in which it took place; the music and liturgy designed for the interior; and to compare St Mary's and her context to other contemporaneous projects in the region.

We are looking for papers and presentations on A.W.N. Pugin, the Rev. Alford, the ecclesiological movement in the East Midlands and the wider Church and religious context of the work on St Mary's. Papers should be 20 minutes long and aim at a general audience.

There will be a fee of £10 for lunch and refreshments (free for speakers).

If you would like to participate in the conference, please send a 300 word abstract by 25 January 2026, to Professor Elizabeth Tingle at PCCWymeswold@outlook.com

'Preserving A.W.N. Pugin's Church: St Mary's church, Wymeswold roof repairs and heritage project' is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Project endorsed by the Ecclesiastical History Society.

