

19th September

“Victorian & Early 20th Century Architecture in Reading”

A fascinating and well-illustrated talk was given by Richard Havelock, a local expert and member of the Lutyens Society.

He talked knowledgeably and enthusiastically about the different approaches to architecture and how these had changed, or not, over time. The rivalry between different architects had a profound impact on the buildings of towns like Reading, where a mixture of stone Georgian houses along London Road and the Assize Court in the Forbury should be seen alongside the Victorian red brick properties such as Reading and Kendrick Schools.

Although Reading was much maligned as a red brick town by writers such as Jerome K. Jerome and Sir John Betjeman, Mr Havelock pointed out that the town could be proud of its heritage and that some of the great architects, such as Waterhouse and George Gilbert Scott, had such a positive impact on buildings like Reading Prison, the alms houses on Castle Street, Huntley and Palmers and Caversham Rectory. Perhaps the Borough Council should do more to advertise the positive aspects of Reading now that the Abbey Ruins are once again open to the public.