**Anglo-Turkish Society / Levantine Heritage Foundation hybrid lecture, 2 February 2027, 6.00 pm** (UK time)

Speaker: James Bettley

Venue: Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St, Fitzrovia, London W1T 5BT

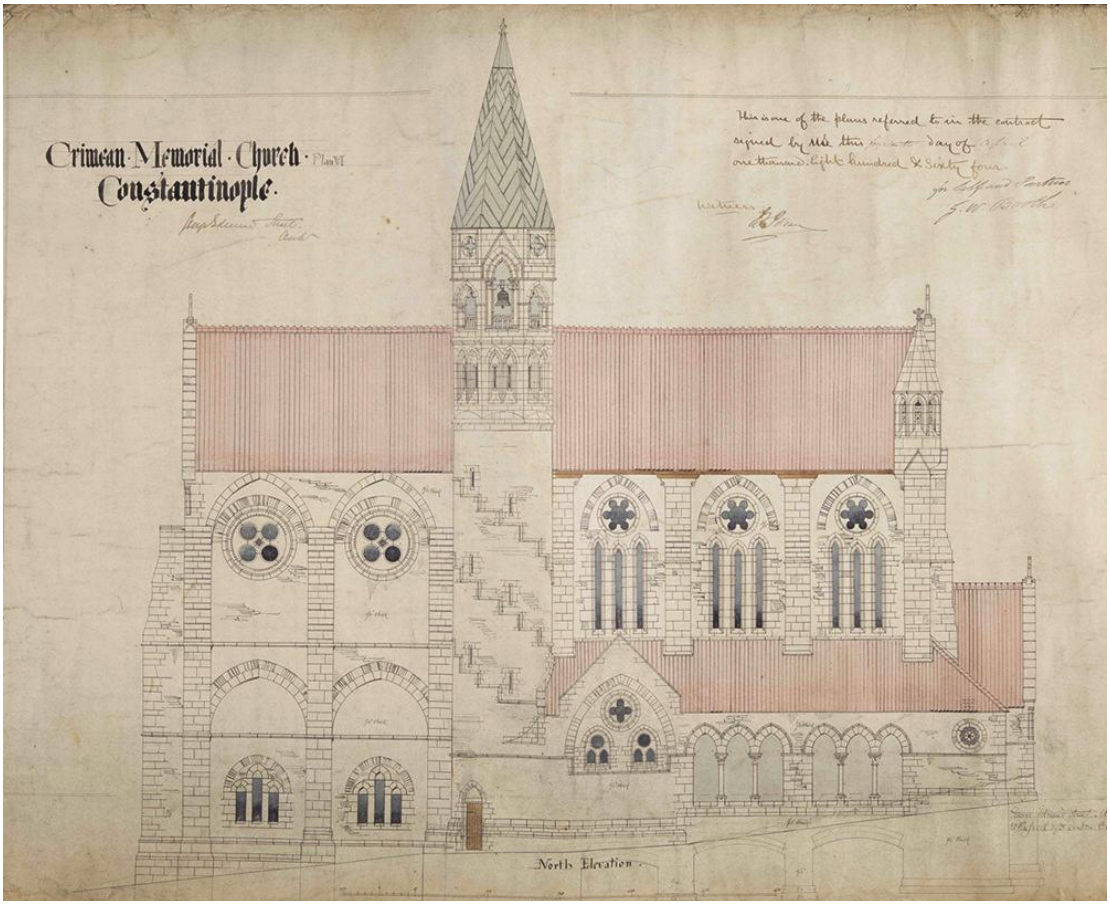
Title: 'English Churches in Turkey: the architectural and social history of Anglican places of worship on foreign shores'

Wherever the British have visited or settled in any numbers they have taken the Church of England with them, setting up Anglican chapels and buildings churches. Most of these were in British possessions that became part of the British Empire, but a surprising number were in foreign countries. By 1914 there were nearly 300 English churches across Europe and North Africa, from the Azores to Baku and from Casablanca to Archangel. Most of these catered for long-term private residents and visitors travelling for leisure or their health. Others, however, were there to serve those engaged in commerce and trade, and this accounts for the presence of no fewer than three English churches in Smyrna (Izmir), where Anglican worship dates back to 1635. The Anglican chaplaincy in Constantinople (Istanbul) is even older, and by the end of the 19th century there were five Anglican churches and chapels in the city, including the outstanding Crimean Memorial Church designed by one of the leading British architects of his day, G. E. Street.

This talk looks at these outposts of Anglican worship in the Ottoman Empire, explaining how they came to be built in those particular places at that particular time, considering them both as examples of church architecture and as centres of the British community, and exploring the difficulties they encountered along the way. It draws attention to the parts played by the Levant Company, the Ottoman Railway Company, and the European Commission of the Danube in the establishment of the churches, as well as the British and Ottoman governments and leading families such as the Whittalls.

Booking essential: https://james-bettley-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk

Contact: contact@angloturkishsociety.org.uk




Contract drawing for the Crimean Memorial Church, Constantinople, by G. E. Street, 1863. [United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel].



James Bettley is the author of *English Churches in Europe: an architectural and social history* (John Hudson Publishing, 2026). His previous publications include new editions of the Pevsner Architectural Guides to Essex (2007), Suffolk (two vols, 2015) and Hertfordshire (2019). He worked for many years at the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Victoria & Albert Museum, and was part of the team that set up London's Design Museum in 1989. He lives in Essex.