



a Royal Tudor Bed & a Northern Rogue

'Royal' Chest-on-Stand

by George Shaw, c.1845, Private Collection

Probably from the 1840s—a time when Shaw was making new pieces of 'Tudor' furniture and selling them as genuinely ancient 'family relics' to Northern aristocrats—this **chest-on-stand** remained at Shaw's house in Uppermill until 1920.

Photographed next to Shaw's composite 'Radcliffe bed', *below*, and today at Ordsall Hall in Salford, this chest-on-stand is almost identical to another made by his workshop in 1847, *below right*, and sold for £18 to the Duke of Northumberland as one of his family's ancient possessions from Wressle Castle, Yorkshire. Today, this is at Warkworth Castle, Northumberland.

Unlike the Duke of Northumberland's chest-on-stand decorated with family heraldry, Shaw's more closely imitates the iconography found on the central headboard panel of **the Henry VII and Elizabeth of York bed**. Each drawer is carved with one of the head-

board's beasts: a lion, a dragon, and a cockatrice. Compared with the simplified decoration on the Northumberland example, Shaw's version is awash with fruits and flowers, including acorns, daises, and strawberries.

When creating these 'Tudor' pieces, Shaw economised: the chests of drawers are from the eighteenth century, and they are augmented with intricate carving applied to the drawer fronts, the sides, and the cresting. Shaw fabricated the stand for his own piece out of various woods, both new and ancient.

Shaw's two chests-on-stand include diagonal **diaper** on the legs and attached '**buttressing**', repeating circular **brattishing**, wave-like **rinseau frieze** with alternating leaves and flowers, and **barbed hour-glass shields**. Inspired by **the Royal Tudor bed**, such elements characterise Shaw's 'Tudor style'.



Shaw's chest-on-stand, seen in the 1920 auction catalogue.



Shaw's Northumberland chest-on-stand. Warkworth.



a Royal Tudor Bed & a Northern Rogue

'Hall Cupboard' or 'Beaufet' for Sir Oswald Mosley
by George Shaw, c.1835–42, Private Collection

Made for Rolleston Hall, Staffordshire, the country house of Sir Oswald Mosley, second Baronet of Ancoats, this 'hall cupboard' or 'beaufet' is one of a pair photographed in the house's entrance hall, *below*. The family moved here after leaving their Manchester properties in the eighteenth century.

Such 'hall cupboards' were a staple of Shaw's fake Tudor furniture: he made almost identical versions for the Duke of Northumberland (1847), the Earl of Bradford (1849), and the Earl of Derby (1849). In these instances, Shaw differentiated them via the coats of arms carved onto the front posts and the backing panels. The version displayed here includes heraldic devices extracted from the Mosley arms: the battle-axe and open-winged eagle.



Shaw's Hall Cupboard at Rolleston Hall, Staffordshire, March 1892. Courtesy of Historic England.

Others were almost certainly made for the Towneleys of Towneley Hall, Burnley: Shaw supplied this family with at least two grand beds—the 'Adam and Eve', or 'Paradise' model (his imitation of **the Henry VII and Elizabeth of York bed**, one of which is included in this exhibition)—and a seventeenth-century type also produced for the Duke of Northumberland.

In appearance, this hall cupboard imitates the Tudor **Adam Hulton bed** after it had been reconfigured into its present bookcase-like form. Today, the 'Hulton bed' is in the Reading Room of Chetham's Library.

Shaw subscribed to Sir Oswald Mosley's *History of Tutbury* (1832) and regularly visited Tutbury castle: this piece, so closely imitating the royal Tudor bed and the Adam Hulton 'bed', echoes the ancient material of which Shaw was so aware.



Shaw's Northumberland Hall Cupboard, Warkworth Castle.



a Royal Tudor Bed & a Northern Rogue

Marriage bed of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York
1485, *The Langley Collection*

This grand **tester bed** was commissioned for the January 1486 marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. Their wedding unified the houses of York and Lancaster that, for over 30 years, had been fighting the divisive **Wars of the Roses**. To mark this momentous occasion, the bed was designed as a piece of elaborate statecraft expressing the Tudor dynasty's foundation and status.



Double portrait of Elizabeth of York and Henry VII.

The ornate carving, especially on the headboard, has many meanings: **fruit and flowers, figures, animals,** and **heraldry** represent marriage and union, fertility, rule over 'all England', royalty, and legitimacy.

Strikingly, the headboard depicts **Adam and Eve**: they represent the biblical figures, but also Henry and Elizabeth as **Christ and the Virgin Mary**. Instead of taking the fruit of temptation from the serpent, the pair hold another apple—the apple of redemption—and gaze into each other's eyes, hand on heart, making a marital pledge as joint redeemers of the country.

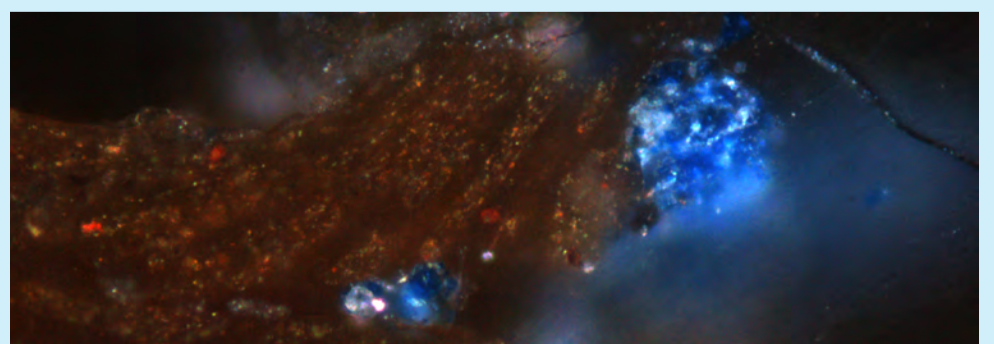
The couple trample the young lion and dragon (representing evil) in reference to Psalm 91:13, emphasising their piety. They also flank the shield of **Egbert**, first 'king of all England', whose reign it is hoped their rule will emulate. These figures are in addition surrounded by floral representations of fertility: without a male heir, the Tudor dynasty would end.

The bed consequently represents the status of Henry and Elizabeth, their aspirations for just rule over England, and for offspring to continue their house. Indeed, the footboard depicts England's (re)birth with the country's quartered arms separated into France, *three fleurs-de-lys*, and England, *three lions passant guardant*, emerging from Gothic *mandorla*.



Double portrait of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York as Adam and Eve and Christ and the Virgin Mary.

Remaining in the Royal Collection until 1599/1600, a bed matching its size and description is included in the 1547 postmortem inventory of Henry VIII. Recorded as a painted bed, some of this paint scheme survives today beneath its Victorian varnish, including *lapis lazuli* (more expensive than gold). Under close examination, the paint has been identified as medieval in terms of chemical composition, preparation, and layered application.



Lapis lazuli paint fragment from the royal Tudor bed.
© Helen Hughes.



a Royal Tudor Bed & a Northern Rogue

Marriage bed of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York
1485, *The Langley Collection*

In *Family Memoirs* (1849), **Sir Oswald Mosley, second Baronet of Ancoats** (d.1871), a politician and historian, records Elizabeth I knighting and gifting his ancestor, **Nicholas Mosley** (d.1612), 'a handsomely-carved oak bedstead, together with some other articles of furniture, for the new house which he had recently erected at Hough End' in Manchester, before termination of Nicholas' year in office as Lord Mayor of London (1600).



Sir Nicholas Mosley.

As the Mosley family maintains, this bed was kept in Manchester. Whilst some historic furniture moved with the family to **Rolleston Hall** in Staffordshire, the remainder was left behind until the start of the nineteenth century when it needed repair. These refurbishments, it appears, were made by George Shaw of



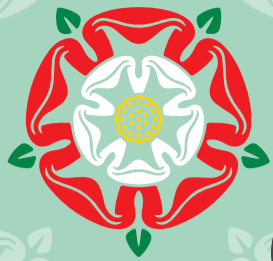
Georgian 'Jacobite' achievement, an overmantel at Shaw's house, St Chad's, Uppermill.

Uppermill; a respectable architect and collector and restorer of ancient furniture within the Mosley orbit.

Whilst in the Mosley's possession, the bed has two surprising connections. The first is to **Charles Edward Stuart**, or 'Bonnie Prince Charlie'; a 'Jacobite' achievement was made for the bed from Midlands oak which dates, via dendrochronology, to the early eighteenth century. Today installed in Shaw's former house, St Chad's, now Uppermill Library, the royal arms were designed to match the bed's unusual design characteristics, especially the 'dead wood' symbolising rebirth. Seemingly installed above the top rail, it gave the bed an overtly Jacobite association suitable for Mosley taste and to receive the 'Young Pretender' who ventured to Manchester in 1744. Secondly, **Sir Oswald Mosley** (d.1980), the fascist politician, attempted to gift the bed to Hough End Hall in August 1933 when the property was being considered for use as a museum.



Reconstruction of the bed with the 'Jacobite' arms installed.



a Royal Tudor Bed & a Northern Rogue

The 'Henricus VII Rex' copy bed
by George Shaw, c.1845, Private Collection

Produced by Shaw around 1845 for an unknown client, this is one of his workshop's earliest and best known copies of the **royal Tudor bed**. A similar version was sold to the fourth Duke of Northumberland in 1847 for £80 as a genuine Tudor 'relic'. Another, appearing as a film prop in *Pride and Prejudice* (1997), was made for the Towneleys of Towneley Hall, Burnley.

The second Earl of Bradford was offered one in 1848 described by Shaw as a 'most magnificent State Bed Stead' covered with Bradford heraldry. William Herrick of Beaumanor, Leicestershire, received his c.1850, but he returned it as a fake. How many more were made?

Shaw's 'copy' here is of a different scale to the Tudor original, and its qualities pale in comparison. The stilted headboard figures are surrounded by far fewer fruits and flowers, and the **seven stars** on the Tudor original (four on the headboard for the cardinal virtues, three on the footboard for the Trinity) are reduced to two.



Detail of the Northumberland headboard panel. Christie's.

The complex meaning woven throughout the Tudor bed's decoration is lost in Shaw's reproductions. Reductive, his parodies seem to have been made at a distance from the original in Staffordshire. Shaw's footboards mix the royal Tudor bed's organic decoration with the double-*mandorla* panelling taken from the **Sir Thomas Stanley bed** Shaw saw in the 1830s, *below*.



Thomas Stanley bed's footboard seen in 1913.

Far less accomplished, Egbert's shield on the '**Henricus VII Rex**' headboard is flat, yet superior to the stilted and uncomfortably splayed example on the Duke of Northumberland's version, *left*: the lion's face on this headboard from 1847 is also a pig-like caricature.

Shaw was aware the royal Tudor bed had belonged to Henry VII. Whereas other copies were emblazoned in family heraldry, he designed this version to represent Henry. 'H' and 'R' carved onto the headposts' shields stand for *Henricus Rex* (King Henry). The English royal arms of France (left) and England (right) on the headboard, and the Beaufort portcullis and rose (for Lancashire) on the footboard, represent Henry's royalty and ancestry: the portcullis is for Henry's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort.

But while the royal Tudor bed is made almost entirely of wood from one tree, Shaw's copy is cobbled together: old siderails have been extended to make a larger, more imposing bed, and the front right post was made from fast-grown and freshly felled oak. When this new timber aged, it split and deformed dramatically.

Shaw used the bed as a pattern for other work, including Manchester Cathedral's c.1848 lectern in the Choir.



a Royal Tudor Bed & a Northern Rogue

The 'Adam Hulton Bookcase' | *Anon., c.1489, Chetham's Library*

This bookcase or hall cupboard was originally a four-poster bed made in early Tudor Lancashire. How do we know this? It relates directly to a group of other four-posters created c.1500 for notable Lancashire families including the Molyneux of Sefton Old Hall and the Stanleys of Lathom House.

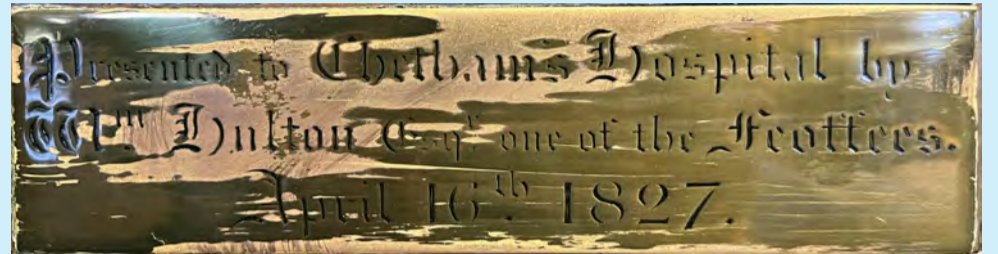


The Molyneux Bed.

The shields are decorated with 'A' and 'H', almost certainly for Adam and Alice Hulton who married in 1489. Embellished with leaves appearing to come from behind in imitation of heraldic mantling, this shield design appears on Tudor woodwork including the royal marriage bed of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, the choir-stalls at Manchester Cathedral, Holy Trinity Church Wensley, Durham Castle, and Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster Abbey.

Originally, the bookcase would have looked like the Molyneux bed. The backboard panelling is very similar to the Molyneux headboard, and the posts' geometric carving—diaper—also match: the lower sections have simply been removed to form the bookcase.

Why was the bed reconfigured? This is difficult to answer. Was it damaged? Perhaps. Helpfully, a brass plaque fixed to the side of the bookcase tells us William Hulton (1787–1864), a Manchester Magistrate during the Peterloo Massacre, and a feoffer (governor) of Chetham's, gifted it to the library on 16 April 1827. As a



Bookcase's dedication plate.

bookcase, it was a far more practical and topical gift that could be displayed or used unlike a bed.

Inscribed with a dedicatory plaque declaring it 'THE GIFT OF HVMPHREY CHETHAM • ESQVIRE • 1655', this was 'inherited' from a cresting rail taken from one of Chetham's portable chained libraries, one of which is the Gorton Chest in the reading room. Added to give the bookcase a sense of provenance connecting it to the library's founder, Humphrey Chetham (1580–1653), this historical 'fudge' is symptomatic of nineteenth-century romantic recreations of the past. Interestingly, instead of giving the genuine Tudor woodwork age and legitimacy, it underplays the former bed's significance and age by c.166 years!

When architect George Shaw visited Chetham's on 31 January 1832, he recorded seeing the Hulton bookcase but did not appear to recognise its previous incarnation as a bed. A decade later, Shaw recreated it as fake 'Tudor' hall cupboards sold to the Duke of Northumberland, the Earl of Derby, Sir Oswald Mosley, second Baronet, and more besides.



Shaw's Northumberland hall cupboard, Warkworth Castle.



a Royal Tudor Bed & a Northern Rogue

Dining Room Suite | George Shaw, 1847, Chetham's Library

Created for Chetham's Library, the dining table, chairs, and sideboard are in George Shaw's 'Tudor' style, characterised by the posts' diamond 'diaper' patterning, brattishing, and linenfold panelling found throughout his work. Unlike the Adam Hulton bookcase—originally an elaborate four-poster Tudor bed on display in the library's Reading Room—these pieces are mostly Victorian and without the marks of age.

Dating to 1847, this furniture was produced when the library was 'undergoing partial repairs, by order of the feoffees [governors], under the direction of Mr. George Shaw, architect, of St. Chad's, Upper Mills'. Ignoring them, *The Manchester Guardian* instead records Shaw's 'rare-dos and dogs, or andirons, with the arms of Henry VII'. Still in the Audit Room, the fireback displays Henry VII's arms with his typical supporters: a dragon and a collared greyhound.



Shaw's Henry VII fireback.

Henry VII, the first Tudor king, is not the most obvious monarch to celebrate here at Chetham's which was constructed from the end of Henry V's reign. However, Henry VII chimed with Shaw's love of Tudor design, access he enjoyed to Henry VII's bed, and the furniture he made for the library.

Shaw's sideboard originally included two royal heraldic achievements arms between the pinnacles. Thought to have come from Henry VII's marriage bed and serving as pillow-boards, they have been removed for protection. Like the fireback, the shields are of the barbed hour-glass form, but this is where the similarities end.

Unlike the fireback, they separate Henry VII's arms into its constituent parts, *France modern* and *England*, as found on the royal Tudor bed's headboard and footboard. Their carving, colour, and patina are unlike the sideboard, and instead match the Tudor bed. Very



Royal arms removed from the sideboard, 1485.

unusual for Henry VII's arms, these shields are flanked by lion and dragon supporters, unlike the more typical ones included on Shaw's fireback. Their most notable other appearance is over the high altar in Henry VII's Chapel, Westminster Abbey.

Shaw's workshop also included the royal arms on the sideboard's central drawer. Whilst the supporters are Henry VII's usual dragon and collared greyhound, the arms are impaled, not quartered. This mixture of Tudor and Victorian material, along with various heraldic representations of Henry VII, muddle the sideboard's credentials. Its royalty, nevertheless, is beyond doubt.

Within the sideboard's spandrels, a 'C' and intertwined 'JD' are depicted in florid Gothic capitals. The backboard's outer quatrefoils also include 'DCs' instead of Shaw's typical mouchette wheels. Much like the associated chairs, including Humphrey Chetham's armorial, Shaw subtly wove lettering throughout the sideboard to memorialise figures important to the library. 'JD' is seemingly for James Stanley (1607–51), seventh Earl of Derby, who turned the collegiate buildings into a hospital. 'C' is for Humphrey Chetham (1580–1653) who left instructions in his will for the site to be 'for the use of schollars and others well affected'.

Shaw's chairs, table, sideboard, and fireback therefore offer a vision of Tudor England, and record the role of Humphrey Chetham and other figures central to the site's history.