

Antiquarianism in Early Victorian Rochdale: The Trinity Chapel at St Chad's

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This tale has three protagonists: George Shaw (1810–76), the son of a mill owner of Uppermill, near Oldham; the Reverend Francis Raines (1805–1878), vicar of the parish of Milnrow, near Rochdale; and James Dearden (1798–1862), lord of the Manor of Rochdale.

George Shaw was the eldest of nine children born to Giles Shaw and Elizabeth Radcliffe. The Shaws were originally farmers in the parish of Saddleworth in the Thame valley, about five miles east of Oldham at the extreme western edge of the West Riding of Yorkshire. About 1770 they began to industrialise, building a woollen mill, called Gile's Mill, on the river at Uppermill. In the 1790s the local roads were turnpiked and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal was dug, greatly improving Uppermill's connections to the wider world and with them the Shaw family's prosperity. George was educated locally and by 1829, aged eighteen, he was working in his father's mill. As the boss's son he had no trade as such, but instead learned the management of the business on the mill floor, the packing room and the counting house, and often accompanied his father to markets in Huddersfield, Halifax and Manchester. In 1830 he became the firm's traveller, covering an area from Birmingham in the Midlands to Perth in Scotland, dealing with sales and orders, making and receiving payments for woollen cloth. All the while, however, he aspired to a different and aesthetically richer existence; as he confided to his diary on 9 April 1830: 'My soaring ambition is confined within the narrow limits of a country manufacturer's life'.¹

Francis Raines was a grammar-school boy. He originally trained as a surgeon but, finding the work uncongenial, in 1826 he was admitted to St Bees Theological College and in 1828 was appointed assistant curate for the chapelry of Saddleworth, of which Uppermill was a part.

Since the Shaws were not only locally prominent but also assiduous churchgoers it was natural that they would soon make the acquaintance of the new curate, and a warm attachment was soon established. Although only five years older than George Shaw, Raines soon became the young man's confidant and mentor, guiding his reading in literature and history, encouraging his artistic talent and sharing a mutual enthusiasm for an idealised medieval past, drawn in equal measure from the novels of Sir Walter Scott and scholarly works such as Whitaker's *History of Whalley* or Meyrick's *A Critical Enquiry into Antient Armour*.²

In Shaw Raines found a receptive pupil, for the young man was sensitive, artistic and impressionable. Long walks over the moors and valleys took them to old manor

¹ Diary, Oldham Library and Archives. Accounts of Shaw's early life can be found in Howcroft (1972); Hyde and Petford (2006); Petford and Buckley (2017).

² Thomas Dunham Whitaker, *An History of the Original Parish of Whalley* (Blackburn, 1801); Samuel Rush Meyrick, *A Critical Enquiry into Antient Armour, As it Existed in Europe, but Particularly in England, from the Norman Conquest to the Reign of Charles II* (London, 1824).

houses, ruined abbeys, slighted castles and Roman encampments, while evenings were spent reading, sketching and absorbing the principles of ancient architecture. When Raines was moved to the curacy of Rochdale in July 1829 the two friends kept in touch, frequently walking the ten miles between Uppermill and Rochdale to take tea and occasionally to stay in each other's houses.³ The close association continued when Raines was made perpetual curate of nearby Milnrow in 1832.

It was almost certainly through Raines that Shaw met James Dearden, a Cambridge educated barrister who had inherited the manor of Rochdale in 1828. The Deardens were not, however, of aristocratic stock, for Dearden's father had bought the manor only in 1823 from Lord Byron, whose family had also acquired it by purchase in 1638. There was no manor house. The Deardens lived in a brick-built Queen Anne house in Rochdale called the Orchard, now demolished. Dearden's legal career effectively ended with his inheritance. He married in 1829 and spent the rest of his life devoted to the interests, responsibilities and obligations arising from his tenure of the manor of Rochdale. He was closely concerned in local politics, exercising patronage in both secular and religious matters, and also enjoyed the customary sporting and other leisure pursuits of an English gentleman.

Shaw's friendship with Dearden took longer to mature, for socially they were not likely to meet in their daily course. But they had a mutual friend in Francis Raines, a mutual interest in antiquarian subjects and both were avid collectors, and on these foundations a relationship developed. However, they did not become close until the 1840s. In the earliest letter between them to survive, dated 8 March 1842, Shaw addressed Dearden rather formally as 'My Dear Sir', and expressed an unexpected pleasure — 'delighted beyond measure' — at Dearden's proposal that they meet in London.⁴ Dearden's reply does not survive, but he had evidently chided Shaw for his formality, for in his next letter Shaw explained, with much flattery, that he was conscious of the social gulf between them. Dearden was 'an Oxford man [sic] — a barrister — a magistrate — and Lord of one of the most important Manors in the Kingdom'.⁵ Henceforth, however, he would begin his letters 'Dear Dearden'. They remained on this friendly and informal footing until Dearden's death in 1862.

All three men were active antiquarians. They did a little buying and selling, they tipped each other off about choice finds at local auctions or interesting monuments in local churches and exchanged or sold antiques of all kinds between themselves. Their idol was Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick (1783–1848), the most eminent antiquary of the age and known to modern furniture historians as the author of *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836), illustrated by Henry Shaw F.S.A. (no relation). In time they all came to know Meyrick personally, and Shaw stayed at his house, Goodrich Court in Herefordshire, on more than one occasion. Indeed, it was at Goodrich Court in August 1840 that Shaw met Thomas William King, alias Rouge Dragon of the College of Arms. He became an invaluable ally in Shaw's incessant quest for information on genealogy and heraldry.

³ Diary, Oldham Library and Archives.

⁴ Rochdale Archives, Box 20, Shaw to Dearden, 8 March 1842.

⁵ Rochdale Archives, Box 20, Shaw to Dearden, 24 March 1841.

By the early 1840s the three men were recognised among the most prominent antiquaries in Lancashire. Raines was an author, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a founder member of the Chetham Society of which both Dearden and Shaw were also members. Dearden too was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and an associate of the British Archaeological Association. Shaw, without the social advantages of his friends, had to work harder to gain acceptance and owed much to the two older men's encouragement and support. They were, in effect, his patrons, and played a crucial role in Shaw's progression from mill owner to Gothic revival architect. From the late 1840s until his death in 1876 he built an architectural practice which eventually employed upwards of a hundred hands in different trades.⁶ More than thirty of his churches, houses and other buildings survive, most in the northwest of England, with some outliers in North Wales, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire.

In 1842, when this story begins, Shaw was still a young man, just thirty-two years old, and looking for a way out of the woollen trade. Since 1830 he had been teaching himself how to restore, recycle and copy old woodwork and furniture. With the assistance of Charles Lawton (1798–1879) a dyer and wool sorter in one of his father's mills, he taught himself to carve, to darken and age wood, and to mix old and new work into a plausible semblance of medieval authenticity. In his parents' house in Uppermill, where he lived all his life, he installed chimneypieces made from old bed headboards, lined rooms with panelling removed from local houses and replaced the staircase with one of his own design in a loosely 'Jacobean' style.⁷ His model was Sir Walter Scott's house at Abbotsford, which he had first visited on a spring evening in early May 1830. It made a deep and lasting impression — his description of the house and its contents runs to over fifteen hundred words — but how could he, a country manufacturer's son, ever afford to such a house and such a collection? Later that year he confessed: '... how I should like to have such a house ... [but] a fine taste without the means of gratifying it, is of no use'.⁸ Nevertheless he determined to try, and in stages he transformed his parents' Georgian-fronted seventeenth-century farmhouse into a Gothic pastiche which he named 'St Chad's' (Figure 1). The staircase, two chimney-pieces and substantial quantities of panelling are still in the building, which is now Uppermill public library. The entrance hall, now greatly altered since Shaw's day, was very obviously modelled on Scott's hall at Abbotsford (Figure 2).

Both Raines and Dearden took an interest in Shaw's progress, not least because they also were dabbling in similar projects. Indeed, there was a friendly rivalry between them as each developed their campaigns of medievalising their respective homes. In October 1833 Shaw wrote to Raines about four oak figures which the latter was installing in his study at Milnrow: '... bye the bye, were they a God send, or did Robinson your carver extraordinary make them ... Come confess the truth as I suspect, well knowing the great difficulty there is in meeting with such articles, that they are modern'.⁹ The jocular tone hints at an ambiguous relationship with historical truth

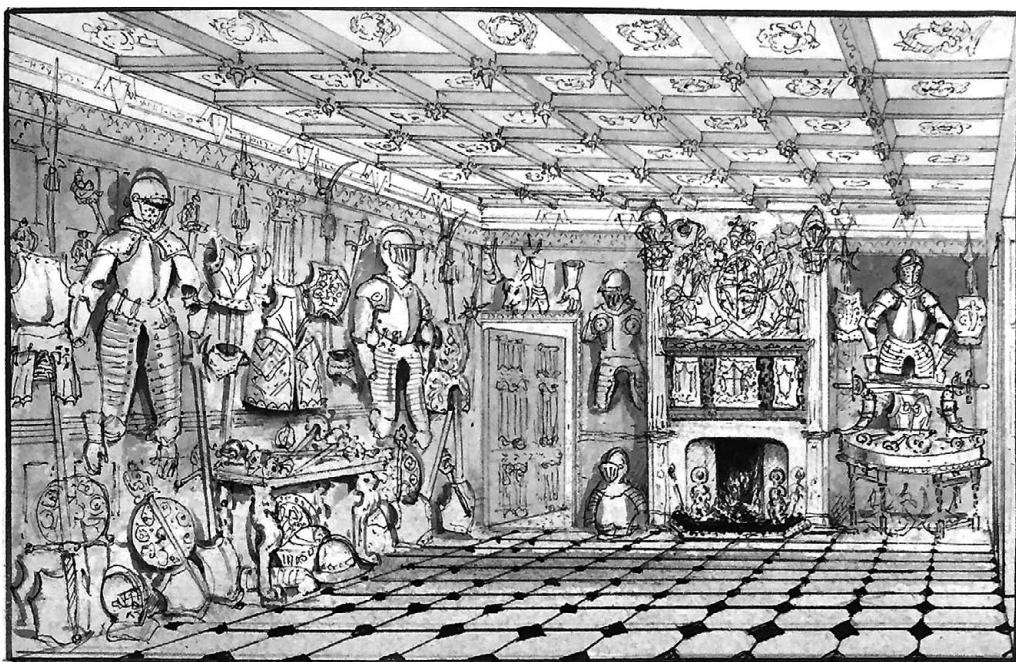
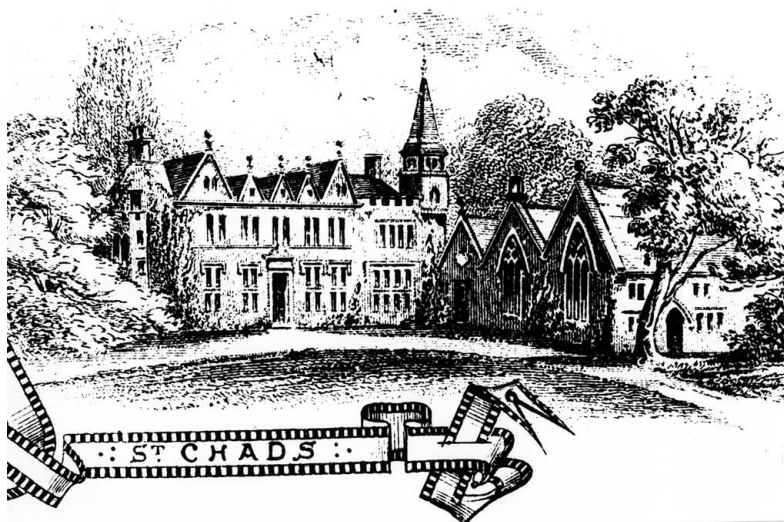
⁶ Howcroft (1972), *passim*; Hyde and Petford (2006).

⁷ Diary, Oldham Library and Archives, various dates.

⁸ Diary, Oldham Library and Archives, 1 May and 6 September 1830.

⁹ Chetham's Library, Shaw to Raines, 5 October 1833.

1 Letterhead of George Shaw, showing his house, St Chad's, as it appeared in the 1860s. Saddleworth Museum and Gallery. *The Author*



2 George Shaw, The Hall, St Chad's, c. 1860. Ink and Wash. Saddleworth Museum and Gallery, H/HOW/GS/1

which underlies a great deal of Shaw's work. If the deception is good enough, who is to say it is not real?

By the early 1840s antiquarianism was more than a hobby for Shaw. He had architectural ambitions and already he was acquiring a reputation both locally and further afield as an authority on Gothic, Tudor and Jacobean architecture, and was flattered when early in 1842 John Tollemache, a Cheshire landowner and MP for Cheshire South, asked him to look over the plans for his proposed country house, Peckforton Castle. Since the architect was Anthony Salvin this was quite a compliment, and one which he proudly shared with his two friends.¹⁰ He confided to Dearden that 'Sir Samuel Meyrick Advises me to cease being a Manuf^{ctr} and to become an Architect!! What say you?'.¹¹

On 24 March 1842 Shaw wrote a long letter to James Dearden, evidently in reply to one Dearden had sent him. He concluded:

Pray what do you mean by this sentence? 'I could make you a more profitable week than all Saddleworth trade ever will do for one of your ideas and opinions' — If you can put me in the way of some lucrative occupation, I shall be very much obliged to you I am sure, as my present one is almost defunct. One half of my Father's property is at this present moment of no value to him, as our trade through the country from the daily growth in poverty of the drapers and county dealers, is of no use to us. A mill which we let a few years ago for 300£ per ann^m is now unoccupied and we can get no rents from either cottagers or our land tenants. — Such is the state of things here, and instead of mending they appear to get worse. — God help us.¹²

Dearden's meaning must have been made clear later that year when Shaw wrote to Raines in October 1842: 'By the by, have you seen the new old armorial and heraldic aumbrie at "the orchard". — Pray give it recommendation when you see it, and which I hope you will find it merit. — The Squire [Dearden] is much pleased with it, and declares it a pet piece of old oak and like to become a drawing room favourite'.¹³ In the same letter he wrote that 'Dearden is pele mele after a very fine old and much dilapidated bed, near Huddersfield and which he wishes me to get repaired for him. I have seen it, and believe it will be one of the finest and first ones after its reparation, with additions of heraldic inspiration ...'. From these it is clear that by late 1842 Shaw was acting as Dearden's agent in buying, repairing and 'improving' antique furniture.

It is not known whether the 'aumbrie' and bed referred to in these letters survive, but a sideboard almost certainly made for Dearden does (Figure 3). It is carved with the Byron arms and dated 1643; below the arms is an inscription:

IOHN*BARON*BYRON*24DAIE*OCT*XIX*CHAS*REX

The reference is to John Byron, commander of Royalist forces in Lancashire and Cheshire during the Civil War and created Baron Byron after the first Battle of Newbury in October 1643. Pieces like this and the 'aumbrie', plus the restoration work on

¹⁰ Chetham's Library, Shaw to Raines, 13 June 1842, 24 January 1843; Rochdale Archives, Box 12, Shaw to Dearden, 10 June, 6 November 1842.

¹¹ Rochdale Archives, Box 20, Shaw to Dearden, 6 November 1842.

¹² Rochdale Archives, Box 19, Shaw to Dearden, 24 March 1842.

¹³ Chetham's Library, Shaw to Raines, 5 October 1842.



3 Sideboard attributed to George Shaw, c. 1842, St Chad's parish church, Rochdale.
The Author

the bed, convinced Dearden that Shaw was the man to deliver something much more ambitious — the complete remodelling of the 'Trinity Aisle' in the parish church of St Chad's at Rochdale (Figure 4).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the parish church in Rochdale was partly ruinous. It was patched up in 1815–16, the first of several partial restorations until a major rebuilding beginning in 1873. The eastern end of the south aisle alongside the chancel had been established as a private chapel in 1487 by a 'brotherhood' of three



4 Parish church of St Chad's Rochdale. *The Author*

local men, Adam Marland, Sir Randolph Butterworth and Sir James Middleton.¹⁴ After passing through the hands of several owners it was inherited by Richard Greaves Townley from whom it was bought by James Dearden's father in 1823 for £650.¹⁵ In the 1830s it was 'a comfortable cushioned and carpeted room, with its windows corniced and curtained'.¹⁶ Dearden decided to have it remodelled into something that accorded more closely with his notion of how a medieval chapel should look, and Shaw received his proposal on 17 November 1842. He replied the same day: 'I should like above all things to undertake the doing up of that for you, and will guarantee it equalling Trinity Aisle at Mavesyn Ridware'.¹⁷

Mavesyn Ridware is a Staffordshire village where at the beginning of the nineteenth century the local lord of the Manor, Charles Chadwick (1753–1829), had created a cod-medieval chapel in the parish church, complete with tombs, grave slabs and other monuments. Shaw had visited the church in June the previous year and had written an account of it to Raines:

¹⁴ Dixon (2004), p. 31.

¹⁵ Raines (1849), p. 123; Baines (1888–93), III, pp. 36–37.

¹⁶ *The Ecclesiologist* (August 1847), p. 59.

¹⁷ Chetham's Library, Shaw to Dearden, 17 November 1842.

A door opens ... into the Chapel and a scene breaks upon the dazzled gaze of an antiquarian beholder of a very uncommon nature. For splendour the only thing I know superior is the Beauchamp Chapel Warwick. I did expect to be pleased but for such a blaze of sepulchral grandeur I was totally unprepared ... I was struck quite dumb on my first entrance, for wherever my eyes turned they encountered either blazoned escutcheon, mailed warrior, painted glass in quaint inscriptions in every style from the days of the conqueror to the present time. After the eye becomes a little more accustomed to the scene it becomes evident to the antiquarian, that many of the monuments are modern, but so exactly copied from ancient models that to an unpractised observer they would pass for what they appear. Charles Chadwick Esq^r the Antiquary has evidently found the chapel of his forefathers contained a few mutilated recumbent figures in a near dilapidated state, and has renovated it, and added a monument to each ancient in the style of his age. The spaces between the altar tombs and alabaster flags of the floor are filled with coloured tiles with armorial bearings of the family upon them, and at the door end... carvings in alabaster of battles about the old hall in one of which the inscription says the Mavesyn was killed by his own gate, and an exact representation of the old gateway is carved in the alabaster with a battle going on about it, and one old fellow falling off his horse. After you have examined the place for some time you can discern the old things from the new — I say I can — and I can — but how few can do, and the chapel is inconsequence the lion of the neighbourhood, and parties go frequently from Litchfield to see it ...¹⁸

With this in the forefront of his mind Shaw continued his letter to Dearden:

If you are really in earnest let me commence with the perforated oak screen work and a cumbent stone figure in chain mail and without slapping[?] at the whole thing at once, proceed by degrees. — I can engage to make your Chapel rival 'Ridware' — with armour — [illegible] — stained glass — open screen work — cumbent tombs — brasses — tiled (armorial [illegible]) floor &c. &c. &c. — I could set a clever mason to work upon a monumental effigy this winter under my own eye, and proceed with him as I see [?] him succeed — you giving the name and time of existence — There ought to be three or four cumbent effigies, and as many or more brasses —¹⁹

He concluded, 'What think you, shall we conjointly try, if we two with Raines's assistance cannot equal Coll Chadwick?'.

Here was a plan. Dearden would provide the funds, Shaw the designs and the workmen, and Raines would look on with a scholar's eye. In the first week of January 1843 work on the Trinity Chapel was under way. Shaw took his joiner to Rochdale to measure up and make plans for the screen and then, not having enough wood on hand, went to Manchester to buy oak.²⁰ Later that month he wrote to Raines that 'the materials for the first screen are being brought into shape, and with the assistance of a clever mason I have made a capital figure of Sir Roger de Duerden, temp. Edw^d Ist, in the ring mail of that period, with legs crossed drawing his sword. — The model is the full size, and looks noble. — If the mason succeeds with the stone figure as well we shall make a fine thing of it, and can talk with much confidence of other monumental erections'.²¹

¹⁸ Chetham's Library, Shaw to Raines, 1 July 1841.

¹⁹ Chetham's Library, Shaw to Dearden, 17 November 1842.

²⁰ Rochdale Archives, Box 20, Shaw to Dearden, 31 December 1842.

²¹ Chetham's Library, Shaw to Raines, 24 January 1843.

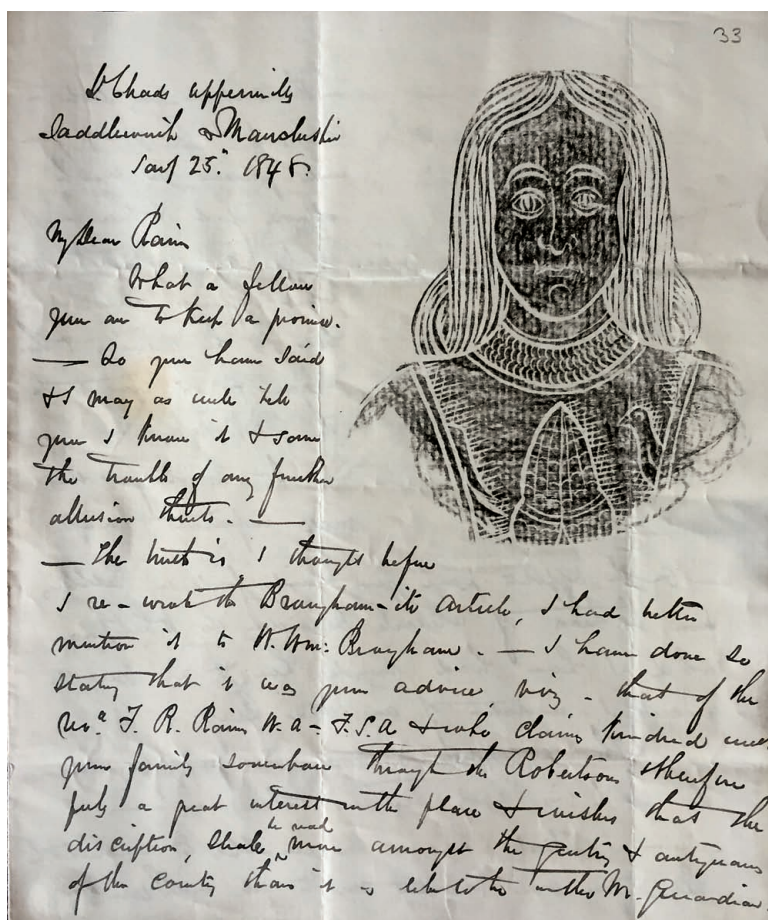


5 George Shaw, screen for the west side of the Trinity Chapel, 1843. This is the only part of Shaw's woodwork still in its original location. *The Author*



6 George Shaw, screen for the north side of the Trinity Chapel, 1843. Now removed to the north aisle of the church. *The Author*

7 Letter from
George Shaw to
Francis Raines,
23 January 1848,
with a rubbing of
his brass of
Otimelus Duerden.
Chetham's Library,
Manchester.
The Author



The work was slow, delayed perhaps by the shortage of skilled labour, but by November 1843 the screens were ready to be installed (Figures 5 and 6), and it is likely that the rest of the woodwork comprising stalls and sedilia soon followed.²² The final touches took much longer. As late as January 1848 Shaw was engaged in making, or having made, some brass memorials, as he described in a letter to Raines on 23 January: '... on the opposite page you will find a rubbing from the head of Otimelus Duerden de Whitfield which I have had made here & a most successful imitation of an old brass it is. The inscription is now in progress, but the work is very tedious & slow' (Figure 7).²³ Two payments to Shaw were noted in Dearden's pocket book at this time. The first, on 19 February 1848, was a cheque for £30 and the second, on 17 July, was £25 lent 'on account of work at Trinity Chapel'.²⁴ Nevertheless, the work was sufficiently advanced to allow the *Ecclesiologist* to publish a highly complimentary

²² Chetham's Library, Shaw to Raines, 11 November 1843.

²³ Chetham's Library, Shaw to Raines, 23 January 1848.

²⁴ Dearden Papers, Box 6.

account in August 1847. And since the south aisle was extended and completely reconfigured in 1885 it is a valuable description of the Chapel in its original form:

This is a spirited restoration ... [The chapel] ... stands on the south side of the spacious chancel of the church, and is separated from it and the south aisle by a most elaborate oak screen. This is almost entirely new (a very small portion only of the original one remaining), of late Middle-Pointed. The lower part is panelled on both sides with deeply cut carving. In the centre of each panel is a shield of armorial bearings. Of these there are about 150 — the arms of numerous family alliances. The heads of the bays are filled with tracery, and the cornice is ornamented with the grape and vine-leaf moulding. The chapel contains two benches arranged stallwise and returned, the desk fronts resembling the lower part of the screen. At the ends instead of poppy-heads are kneeling ecclesiastics. The sedilia are of oak, without canopies ... The floor is laid with armorial tiles unglazed. The roof is late Third-Pointed of oak heavily panelled, and is to be painted in azure and gold. The east window of three lights (also Third-Pointed) is filled with stained glass, by Mr Willement. In the centre light are the usual emblems of the Holy Trinity, with foliage on a deep ruby ground. The side lights contain respectively the figures of the blessed Virgin and S. John the Baptist, with the evangelical symbols at the corners ... There are two south windows of the same character, both filled with stained glass, but chiefly armorial ... There are four interesting monuments. At the entrance is a stone coffin lid, with foliated cross standing upon a dragon, with a sword and shield about the stem. Next a recumbent alabaster effigy of a bishop, with pastoral staff, piercing a serpent — the head under a canopy, with a low mitre. There is no inscription. It is the monument of a bishop Duerden, of Lichfield and Coventry, who died in A.D. 1161. Opposite to this is another effigy in ring mail set edgeways, the legs crossed, bearing in Lombardic characters this inscription — ‘Sire Rogier de Durden gist ici deu [sic] de son alme eit merci.’ There are two alabaster slabs incised in enamel colours; one of a Priest in canonicals ‘... quondam Rector Ecclie B. Marie de Mamcester qui obit IIII mensis augusti an dni millmo c.c.c.vii mo. t’cio ... E’ra d’nicalis cujs aie ppet Deus. Ame.’ In this Christian company there is but one pagan monument. In the centre of the chapel is suspended a *corona lucis*, made, we fear, of tin, painted and gilt. It is the only unsatisfactory thing, as far as material is concerned, in the place, and ought to be replaced with one of brass. After all these particulars, it seems useless to add that the chapel looks exceedingly beautiful.²⁵

A correspondent to the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in February 1852 took a different view, however, describing a ‘long series of “mediaeval” mockeries’ and castigating the individual ‘whose vanity has led him into so great a folly’.²⁶ The objection was not so much on the grounds of historical authenticity as of taste, and in particular the appropriation of illustrious ancestors by one who was not entitled to them. Particular scorn was directed at the recumbent effigy of Walter Durdent, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, ‘of whom it has been reserved to Mr. Dearden to discover that he was of *his* race of Dearden, and buried at Rochdale, whilst other (perhaps less learned) authorities state that he was buried at Coventry ...’. Dearden’s egregious error, it seems, was to have been born base and to be unable to trace his own ancestors ‘beyond the time of James I’. When James Dearden’s arms were registered in 1841 his lineage

²⁵ *The Ecclesiologist* (August 1847), pp. 59–61.

²⁶ *Gentleman’s Magazine* (February 1852). The letter was later quoted in George Burnett, *Popular Genealogists, or the Art of Pedigree Making* (Edinburgh, 1865), p. 65.



8 George Shaw, the chancel of St Chad's, looking east, showing the stalls and desks originally made for the Trinity Chapel, 1843–7. *The Author*



9 George Shaw, desk front, showing various arms supposedly related to the Dearden family. Their motto was 'Dum Spiro Spero'. Note the paired S – Shaw's 'signature'. *The Author*



10 George Shaw, Glastonbury-type chair, c. 1848. This was one of Shaw's most widely used designs. *The Author*



11 George Shaw, lectern, c. 1848. A standard model used, with variations, in numerous Shaw churches. *The Author*

was traced to Richard Dearden of Whitefield (d. 1630), a mere yeoman, so neither he nor his successors had any true claim to arms. In the absence of any proven arms, Dearden used a variant of the arms of the local Rashdale family — an escutcheon within a bordure sable charged with seven martlets, the crest a stag and the motto *dum spiro spero*. Variations of this appear all over the woodwork of the Trinity Chapel.²⁷

The *Gentleman's Magazine* correspondent, who signed himself 'W. C.', began his excoriation by referring to similar 'performances of this nature done at Brougham ... already ... discussed in your pages'. This was a deliberate swipe at Shaw, who had obviously made enemies as well as friends among the antiquarian community. In April 1848 Shaw had published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* a long and highly coloured account of the recently restored Brougham Castle (near Carlisle) in which, wittingly or otherwise, he failed to distinguish between modern and old work, presenting the whole edifice and its contents as a wondrous medieval survival.²⁸ The response, written by the 'Old Subscribers', was both forensic and brutal and although Shaw tried gamely to defend his case he was firmly slapped down in subsequent issues.²⁹ The degree of

²⁷ Shaw undoubtedly played a role in constructing Dearden's ancestry. Correspondence survives from Rouge Dragon discussing the largely unfruitful search for appropriate ancestors on which to base Dearden's lineage; Saddleworth Museum and Gallery, Rouge Dragon to Shaw, 18 December 1841 and 19 January 1842.

²⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine* (April 1848).

²⁹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (June 1848, July 1848, July 1849).

12 George Shaw, stone grave slab, 1843–47. *The Author*13 George Shaw, alabaster grave slab, 1843–47. *The Author*

animus used against him suggests that Shaw's real crime was not to be ill-informed but to have attempted, through his article, to join the ranks of a club to which he was not eligible.

In 1885 St Chad's chancel was rebuilt and enlarged, sweeping away Shaw's chapel in the process. Only the screen closing it at the west end survives *in situ* — the rest of the woodwork has been relocated. The north side of the screen, which closed the chapel from the chancel, is now in the north aisle and the stalls and sedilia have been moved into the chancel (Figures 8 and 9). All the woodwork bears Shaw's S monogram, which became virtually his trademark in both woodwork and architecture. It is everywhere carved with armorials representing Dearden and the noble families to which he was in imagination or reality related. Variations on the royal arms were added for good measure. Additional furniture supplied either for the Chapel or for the chancel at a later date includes two Glastonbury-type chairs, a model much used by Shaw in his churches from 1850 onwards, and a lectern, again of a typical Shaw pattern (Figures 10 and 11).



14 George Shaw, monumental brasses, 1848.

A) James Duerden at prayer, 1609;

B) Oliver Duerden in armour, 1545;

C) Otimelus Duerden in armour;

D) Richard Duerden kneeling in armour, 1586;

E) Richard Duerden standing, 1630.

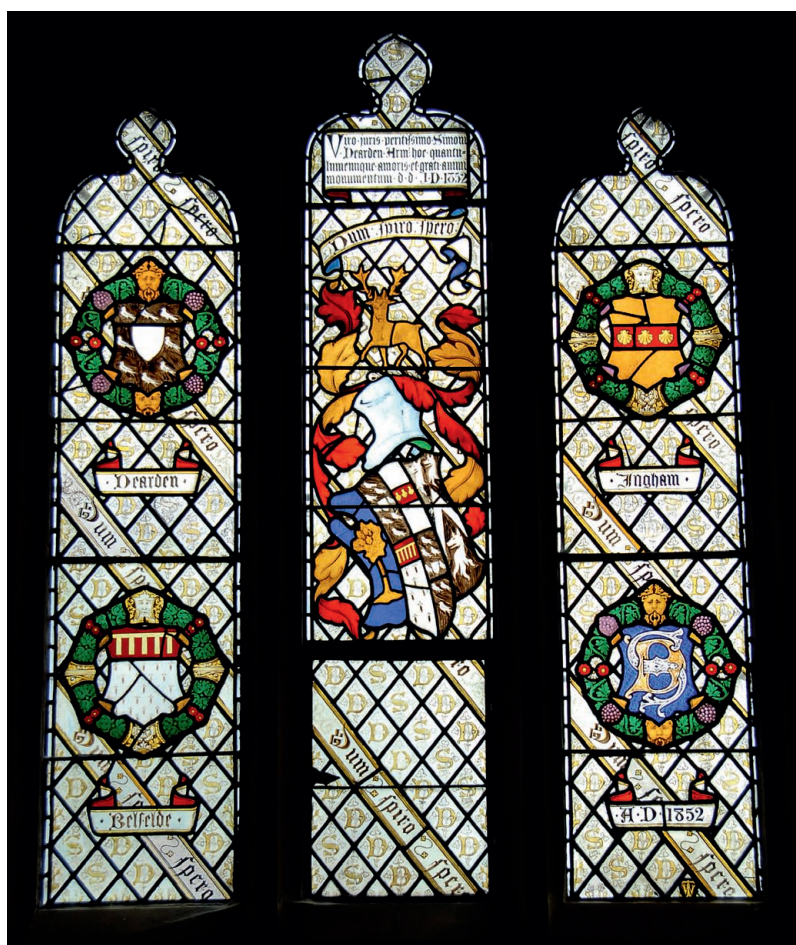
The Author

Of the stone slabs and effigies, two remain; one carved with a cross fleurie piercing a dragon and another of alabaster incised with the figure of an ecclesiastic (Figures 12 and 13). The latter was copied from an original in a Yorkshire church for which Shaw's original drawing survives.³⁰ The two carved effigies of Bishop Deurden and Sir Roger Duerden were apparently buried beneath the floor when the chapel was dismantled in the 1880s and the five surviving brasses are now set into the south wall (Figures 14 a–e). There has been much speculation about these over the years, and they have been alternately taken as genuine or condemned as fake.³¹ However, Ottwell (Otimelus) Duerden is certainly one of Shaw's brasses and, given that the Duerdens had no connection to St Chad's before James Dearden's father bought the manor of Rochdale,

³⁰ Saddleworth Museum and Gallery, H/HOW/GS/3.

³¹ Dixon (2004), p. 34.

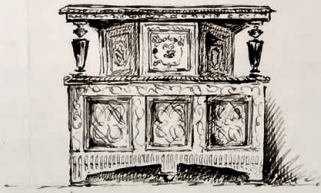
15 Thomas Willement, stained glass depicting the arms of Dearden and related families, designed by George Shaw, c. 1847.
The Author



the rest must be Shaw's too. The stained glass, most of which survived the rebuilding of 1885, was supplied by Thomas Willement of London (1786–1871), one of the best known of the early nineteenth-century stained glass manufacturers.³² One window displays the newly acquired arms of Dearden quartered with those of Bellfield and Ingham (Figure 15), the other has memorials to Dearden children recently deceased.

Trinity Chapel was the commission which launched Shaw's career. Before it was finished he had built at least three churches — St John the Baptist, Birtles (1845–46), Christ Church, Friezland (begun 1848) and St Mark's, Scarisbrick (1848–51) — and supplied woodwork for St Leonard's, Middleton, among others. From these beginnings he was able to extract himself from the woollen trade and build a busy and extensive practice which, except locally, has perhaps not gained the recognition it deserves. Shaw's buildings are all strongly imprinted with his personality and his woodwork is distinctive, albeit somewhat repetitive. But there was another side to his business, one

³² Dixon (2004), pp. 27 and 32–33.



*F. Chas. Lippincomb Diddleworth St. Manchester
Jan. 7. 1842.*

My Lord

Some time ago I picked up a piece of ancient oak furniture, very much covered, in a cottage on the borders of Lancashire, of the time of Elizth or her successor James^{1st}, and of which the above is a rude representation. — In the centre upper panel is carved the eagle and child and on each side panel are the arms of Lathom and Stanley, carved within medallions of very good design, and these carvings relate to your Lordship's family from the season of my troubling you with this letter; — as I have been given to understand you are anxious to get to know the all the supposed relics of the pillaged and dismantled house of Lathom. — The article in question is a sort of sideboard or cupboard, formerly

16 Letter from George Shaw to the Earl of Derby, 7 January 1842, with a drawing of a fake 'sideboard' made by Shaw and sold to the Earl for £15. Liverpool Record Office. *The Author*

which he did not share with his good friends Raines and Dearden. For Shaw was also a purveyor of fake furniture and metalware to the nobility of northern England. His victims were mostly aristocrats of an antiquarian bent, usually engaged on refurbishing or remodelling their ancestral seats in a revived Gothic or Elizabethan style. His first recorded venture in this vein was in January 1842, when he wrote to Edward Smith-Stanley, 13th Earl of Derby, that he had picked up 'a sort of sideboard' bearing the carved arms of Lathom and Stanley which he now offered to his lordship for £15. He claimed it came from a cottage on the borders of Lancashire and dated 'from the time if Elizth or her successor James 1st' (Figure 16). This was the first of a number of pieces of bogus ancient furniture which Shaw made and sold to the Earl between 1842 and 1849, and in all he conned him out of at least £95.³³ A more ambitious fraud was perpetrated on the Duke of Northumberland between 1847 and 1850, amounting to more than £600 of fake aumbries, beds, sideboards, tables, benches, andirons and

³³ Liverpool Record Office, Stanley Papers, 920 DER (13) 1/146/1-7.

firebacks. Most of this survives, at Alnwick, Warkworth and Syon House, and is furthermore fully documented.³⁴ Furniture from Shaw's own house also survives, at Saddleworth Museum and locally in private collections, and his own bed, originally made for Sir John Radcliffe of Ordsall Hall about 1572, is now on public display at Ordsall Hall, Salford.³⁵ Finally, it is amusing to record that almost than a century and a half after his death Shaw's fakes are still deceiving some. The so-called 'Henry VII' bed, which has in recent years received coverage in newspapers and online and is believed by its supporters to be a genuine Tudor relic, is one of at least three almost identical beds that Shaw made about 1847–48.³⁶ One was made for the Duke of Northumberland and the other two (of which the 'Henry VII' bed is one) for as yet unidentified victims.³⁷ Shaw seems not to have had much sense of humour; he was devout, dogmatic and self-opinionated, but this posthumous accolade would surely have raised a smile.

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³⁴ Petford and Buckley (2017).

³⁵ Bowett (2020).

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