

10-2022

### Afterword: Morris & Pugin

Stephanie Brooke  
*Independent Researcher*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital.kenyon.edu/perejournal>



Part of the Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture Commons

---

#### Recommended Citation

Brooke, Stephanie. "Afterword: Morris & Pugin." *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 8, 3 (2022): 132-140. <https://digital.kenyon.edu/perejournal/vol8/iss3/14>

This Monograph is brought to you for free and open access by the Art History at Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* by an authorized editor of Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact [noltj@kenyon.edu](mailto:noltj@kenyon.edu).

AFTERWORD



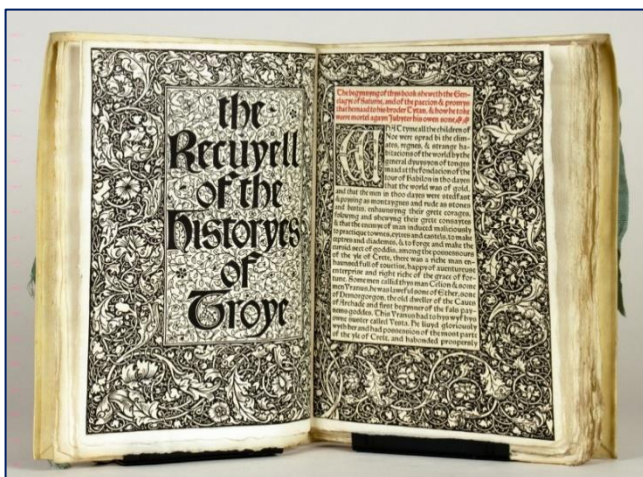
MORRIS & PUGIN

## AFTERWORD: MORRIS AND PUGIN

At first sight of the 1486 marriage bed, especially the headboard, the viewer may be reminded most of the artwork of William Morris's company, and perhaps most of all his Kelmscott Press books, which brought together both new books on old style, such as Ruskin on Gothic; and reprints of the oldest books ever printed in the English language, Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and *The Recuyell of the Histories of Troye*, translated by Anthony Wydville, Lord Rivers (both printed in the third quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century by William Caxton). However in Morris-land everything in the borders flourishes and there are no dry branches.

If any leading Victorian artist had sight of the bed at Rolleston Hall it was surely Augustus Northmore Welby Pugin (perhaps when travelling and working with his father), and long before he came to work on Alton Towers. Already in 1828, when sketching his designs for *Gothic Furniture of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century* there are echoes of the bed's crestings and the way banderoles weave between branches that is surely more than a coincidence. His slightly later Gothic State Bed however seems to draw on elements of the Thomas Stanley bed as it was pre 1913, and possibly also the Lovely Hall bed. How he came to see these real medieval beds is a mystery yet to be solved.

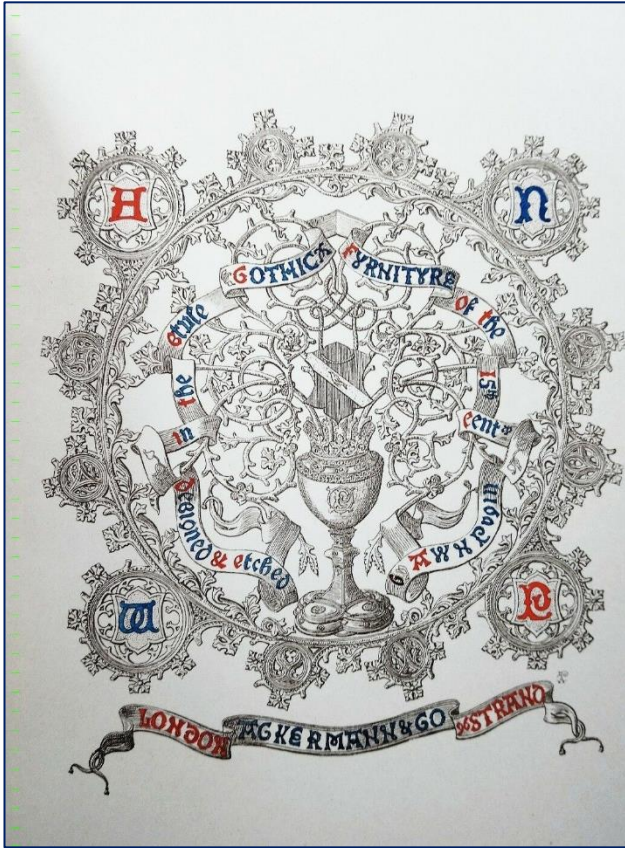
HERE ends this new edition of William Caxton's Recuyell of the Histories of Troy, done after the first Edition; corrected for the press by H. Halliday Sparling, and printed by me William Morris at the Kelmscott Press, Upper Mall, Hammersmith, in the County of Middlesex, & finished on the fourteenth day of October, 1892.  
Sold by Bernard Quaritch, 15, Piccadilly.



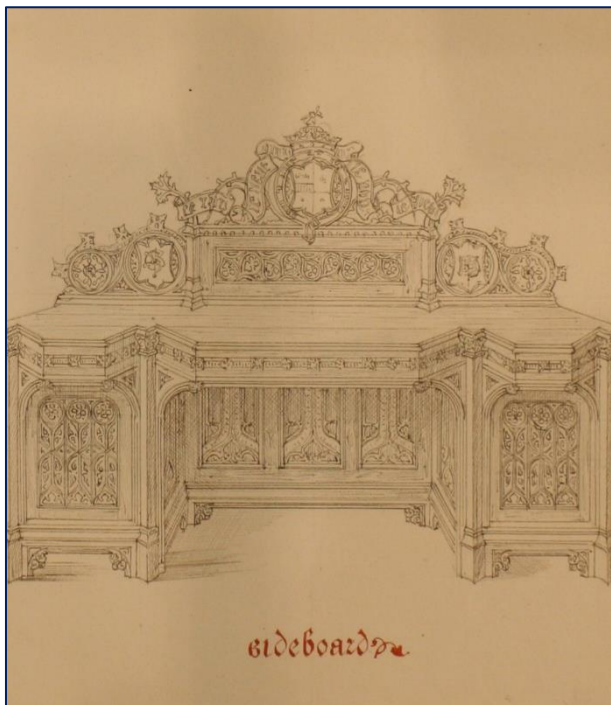
The original translation of the Recuyell of the Histories of Troy was done by Anthony Wydeville, Earl Rivers, at the behest of Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, and was printed by William Caxton in Bruges c. 1474



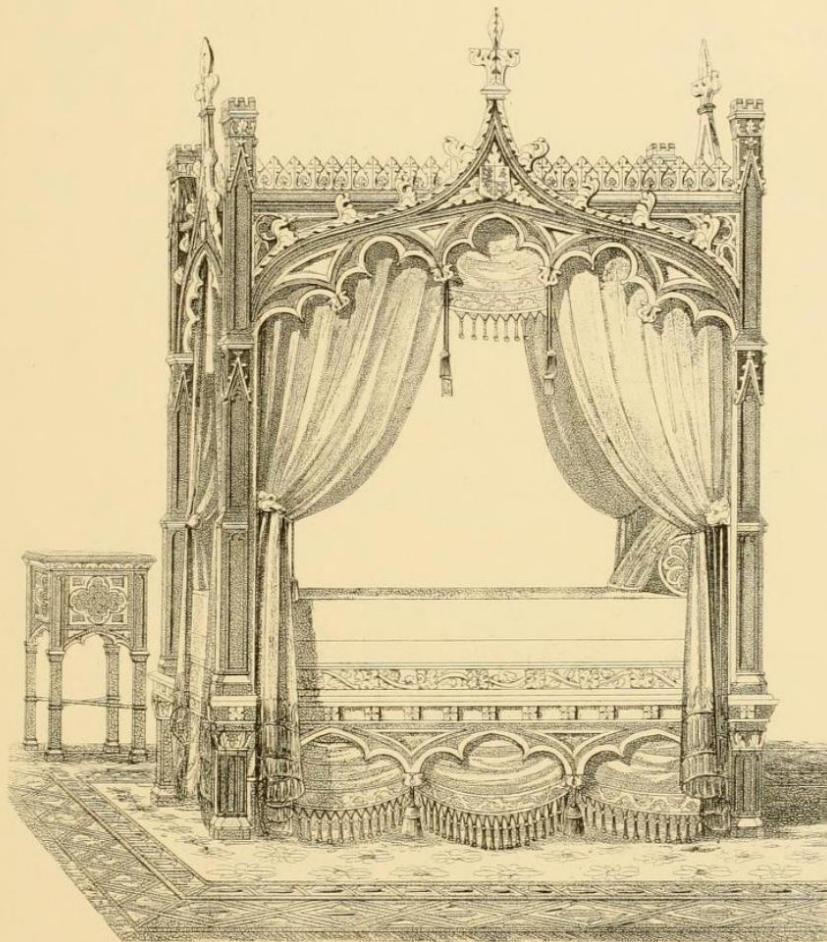




One of the royal bed's St George side crestings, probably mounted on the front throughout the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as at the hotel in Chester



The title page of Pugin's *Gothic Furniture in the Style of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century* published by R Ackermann, 1835; it and the cabinet, right, surely betray some acquaintance with the crestings of the 1486 state bed

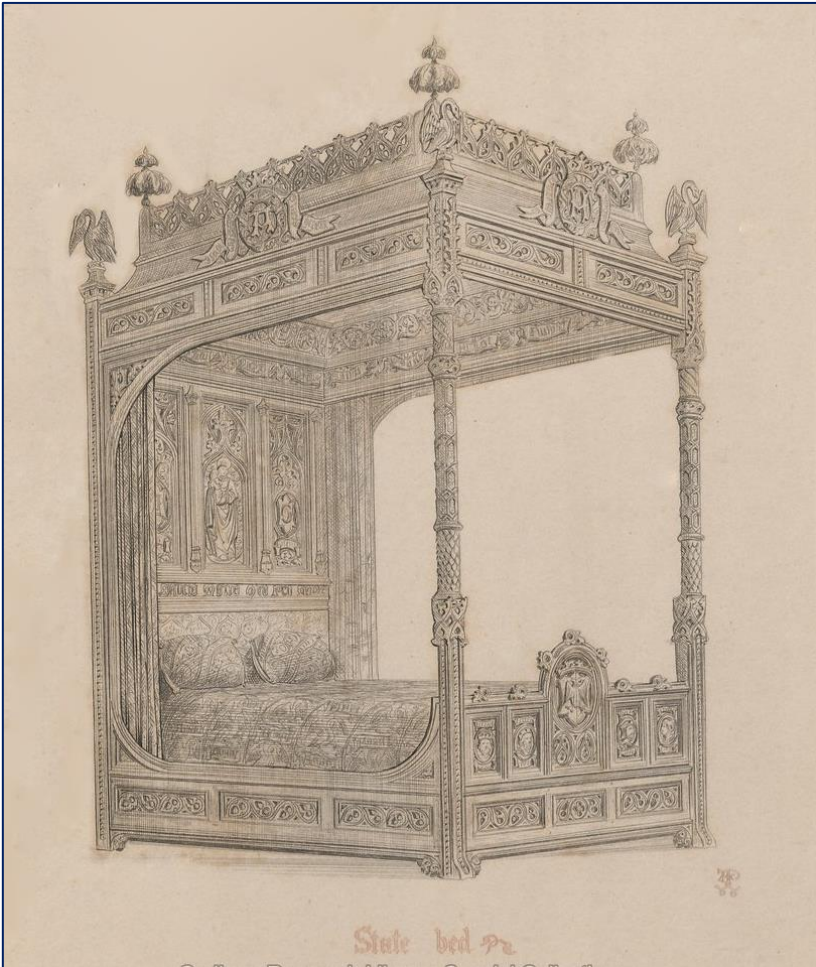


A GOTHIC BED.

*No. 10 of ACKERMANN'S PICTURES OF ARTS AND MANUFACTURES.*

This design for a Gothic Bed published in *Pugin's Gothic Furniture* by Ackermann in 1828 was quite different from the "State Bed" just a few years later in *Gothic Furniture of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century*; it was probably by Pugin Snr., though the settle design is supposedly by a 15 year old AWN Pugin





Chair from a set for the Speaker's House, Westminster by James Wyatt (1746-1813) and Augustus Charles Pugin (1768-1832), made by John Russell (1773-1822) and upholstered by Charles Elliot. The Speaker's House survived the 1834 fire but was demolished in 1842, when the chairs were transferred to Windsor Castle; they are now in the Garter Throne Room.

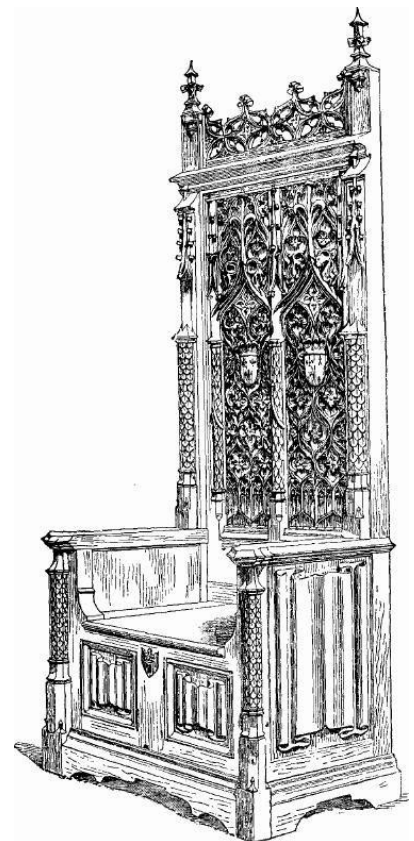


Pugin's State Bed as published in 1835 has a mansard roof, as the Thomas Stanley bed did by 1913; its finials are also birds (though not eagles); it has a tripartite headboard like an unfolded triptych, as does the royal bed, and notched banderoles; and it uses fishscale and the longer Lovely Hall bed type diapered lozenges on the posts.



The diapering motif on the chair legs is likely to have derived from the very slim diapered posts between the choir stalls of the Henry VII Chapel not far from Speaker's House, and the chairs went to Windsor Castle where a very young Pugin Jnr was already involved in furniture designs

This late 15<sup>th</sup> chair from Frederick Litchfield's *Illustrated History of Furniture* is a fully Gothic design which uses fishscale on its front posts; this was an unusual feature used as background on the royal bed and picked up by George Shaw; it was also used by Pugin, eg on the posts of the "State Bed", above



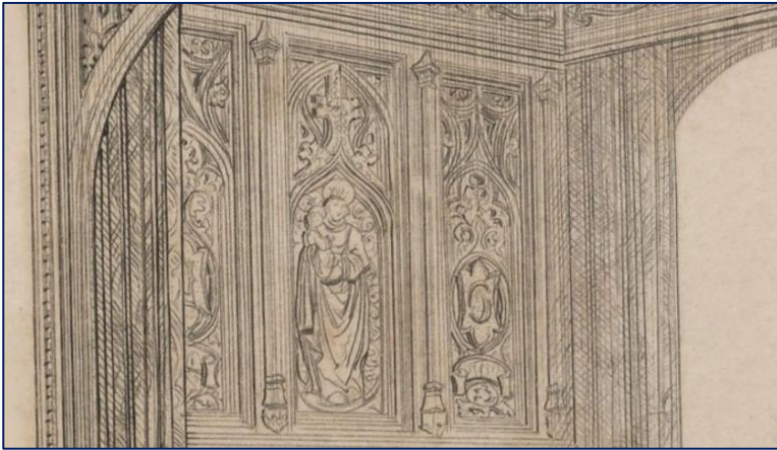


A closer look at the top of the cabinet and its banderole with notched ends; had Pugin seen the 1486 state bed aka "The Queen's Gift" displayed with a St George cresting on the front, as it still was at the Redland House Hotel in Chester ? (N.B. in all films and television appearances the crestings of the bed were not used, so must have been kept safely packed together with the bed). The cabinet also displays multiple roses.

Below: the Pugin mansard tester has similarities with the Thomas Stanley bed as it was in 1913, and probably long before that. Instead of the Eagle & Child, the post finials are swans or pelicans



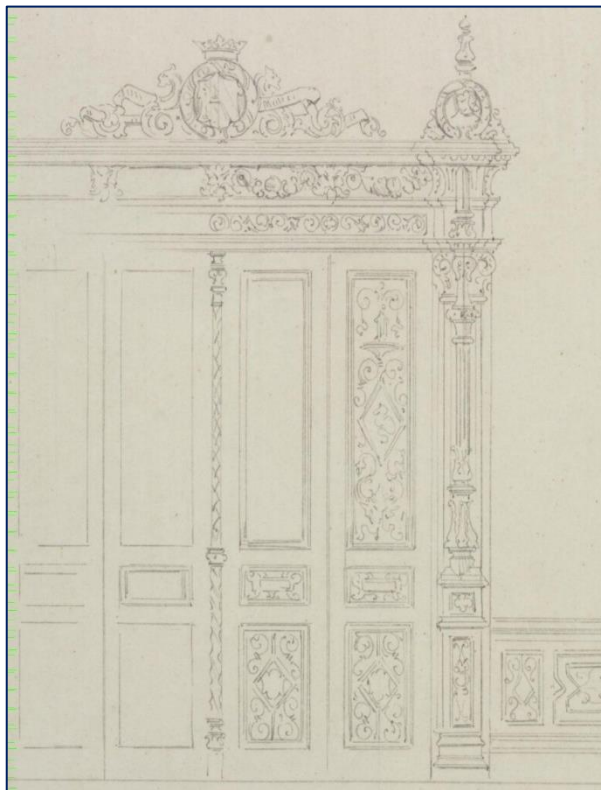
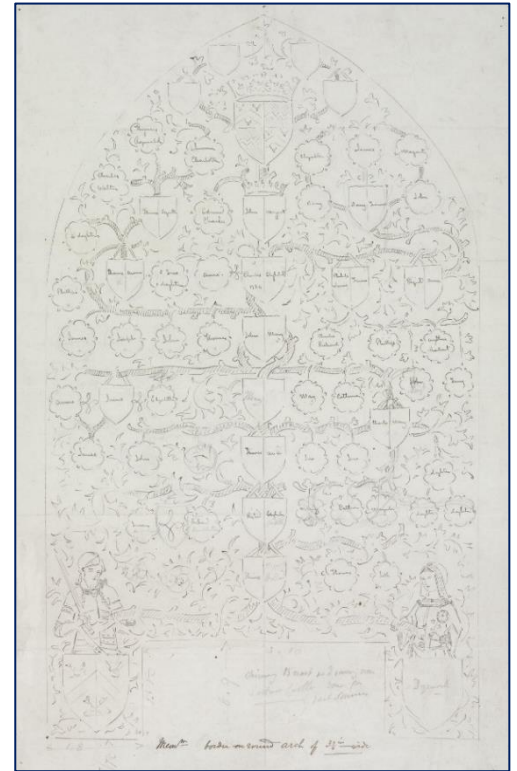




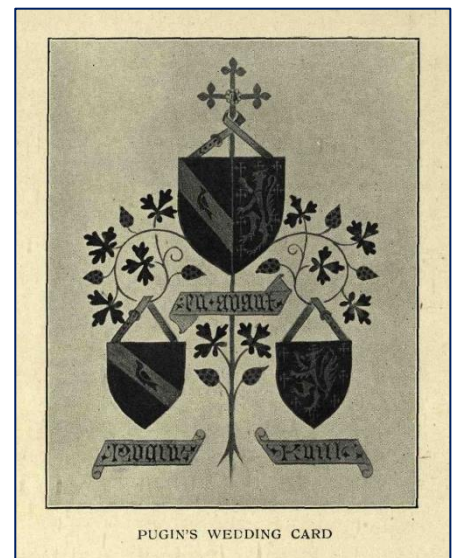
The headboard of Pugin's State Bed is tripartate like the royal bed of 1486, also displays hourglass shields in the two outer sections but opts for a traditional Catholic Madonna and Child in the central panel

Right: sketch for a Family tree for the Earl and Countess Somers at Eastnor Castle c. 1850 where Pugin was to supply furnishings in partnership with Crace.

The shields hang on straps as on the marriage bed and on Pugin's wedding card, below; however, Pugin had been to Bruges and would have seen the tomb of Mary of Burgundy

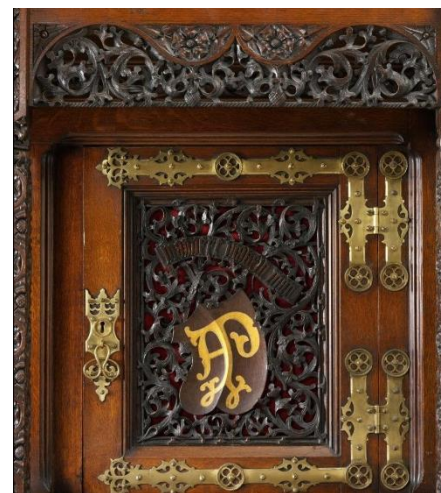
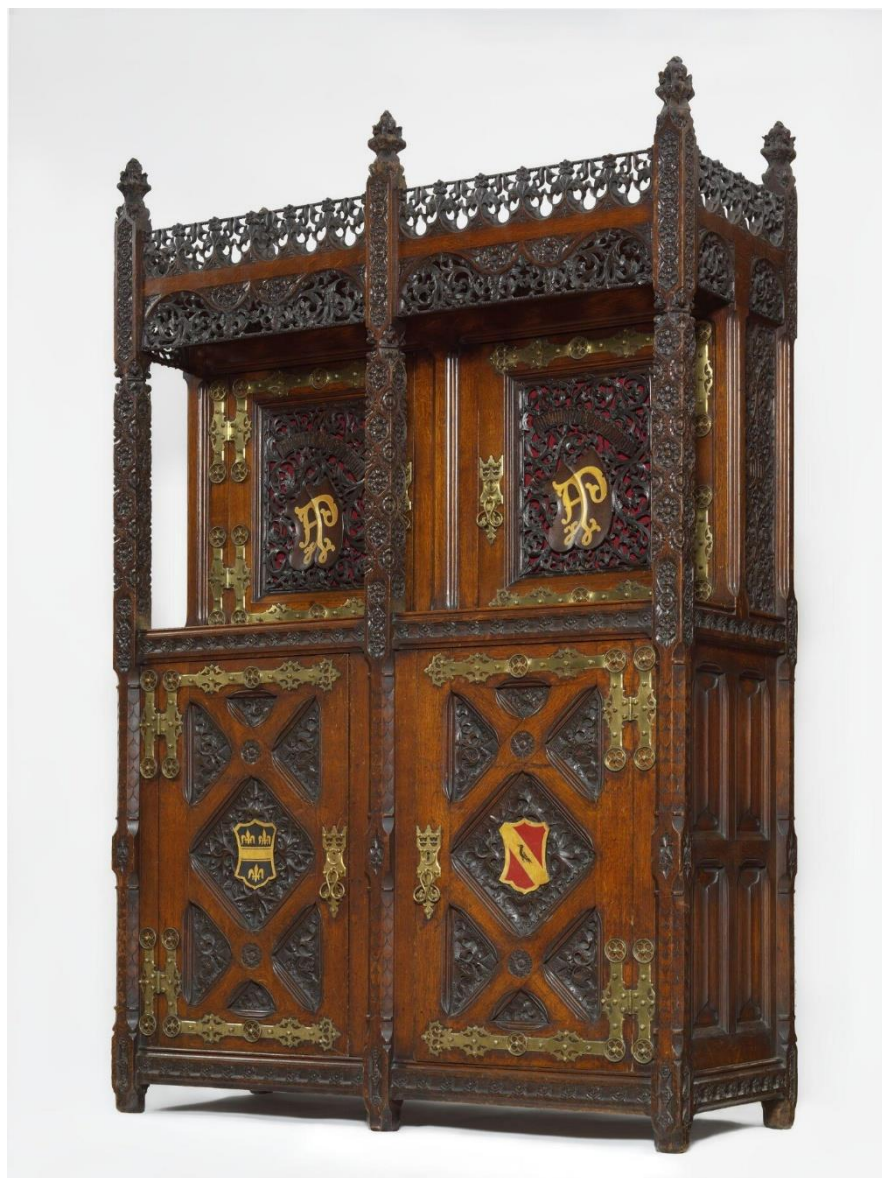


A drawing for work planned at Brodick Castle, Isle of Arran, for the Earl of Hamilton in c.1846. If Pugin was already familiar with diapered columns from the Speaker's House chairs and the Henry VII Chapel, it is again the shield, foliage and banderole combination which recalls the crestsings of the first Tudor state bed

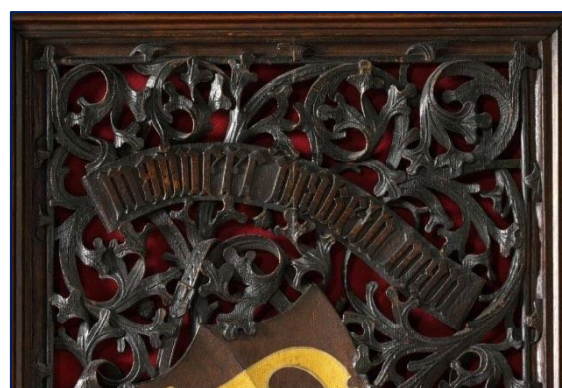


Sent to the Reverend James Hornby at Winwick on the day of his wedding to his 3<sup>rd</sup> wife Jane Knill on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1848; "... I am married, and have got a first-rate Gothic woman at last"





A cabinet A.W.N. Pugin designed c.1845 for the dining room of his own home, St Mary's Grange, Ramsgate. It has pierced carving to allow ventilation for fruit and foodstuffs between meals but the style and execution is very different to that of the royal bed despite the presence of similar elements like shields and foliage.







Etching of the exterior of the Henry VII Chapel, Westminster Abbey, by A.C. Pugin; sold at Christie's on May 25th 2022

© Stephanie Brooke    *September 2022*