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ARUNDEL CASTLE AS A 'PALLADIUM OF ENGLISH LIBERTY'

OLIVER COX

Arundel Castle is a reminder of the spectacular Victorian finale to the association of castles with landed power. C.A. Buckler's work overshadows all earlier restorations. Yet at the close of the eighteenth century, the eleventh Duke of Norfolk commissioned J.C.F. Rossi to sculpt a striking Coade stone tableau of King Alfred Instituting Trial by Jury on Salisbury Plain as part of a series of extensive restorations and alterations. These changes told the story of English liberty in stone, inflected with the Duke's own partisan interpretation, to a growing number of domestic tourists.

Entering the great courtyard of Arundel Castle, West Sussex, the well-prepared nineteenth-century visitor, confronted with a twenty-foot bas-relief crowded with bearded figures and Anglo-Saxon text, could turn to his guidebook for help in decoding the scene before them (Fig. 1):

'The visitor will be riveted with admiration in reviewing a large *basso relievo* representation of one of the most important constitutional laws, handed down to posterity, namely, "Trial by Jury". It is an historical representation, founded upon fact, therefore we give the subject subsequent to a description.'

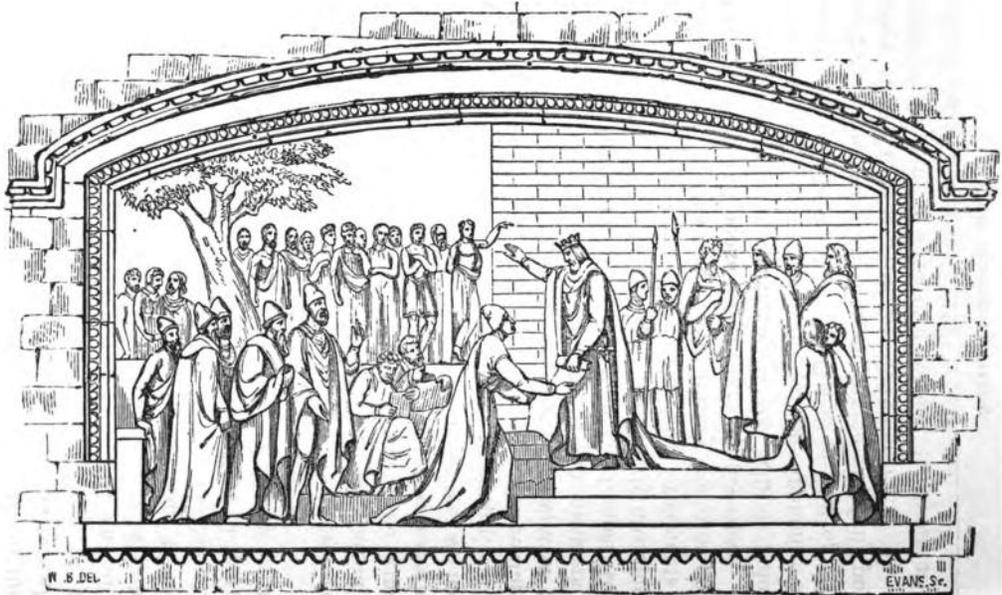


Fig. 1. 'King Alfred Instituting The Trial By Jury', in *A Visit to Arundel Castle*.
Profusely Illustrated (Arundel and London, 1851)

King Alfred, elevated, crowned and robed, holds a roll of parchment with the phrase, 'The man in every hundred shall find 12 Jury' written in Saxon characters. The Lord Chief Justice, standing opposite Alfred, reverently inserts this declaration into Alfred's new book of laws; attendants and soldiers can be found 'attentively listening to this great palladium of English liberties' as the first twelve jurymen look on.² Charles Wright, the author of one of several competing guidebooks to the castle concluded: 'This fine representation was executed by Rossi, in 1797. To render the design more unique it is raised above four beautiful Saxon windows, the architecture of which exactly corresponds with the period of the declaration of Alfred'.³ Praise was not just contained within the pages of Arundel guidebooks; the *Edinburgh Annual Register*, observed that the 'grand sculptural piece, representing King Alfred dictating to his chief judge the right of jury' was 'admirably executed, and has a majestic effect',⁴ whilst another praised how Rossi's 'stone cement' was 'equal to the finest sculpture'.⁵ However, little over half a century after its completion, the Arundel bas-relief was torn down, a victim of changing fashions which, as early as 1814, had labelled Rossi's work 'an exceedingly frightful thing in Code's [*sic*] stone'.⁶ Even Mark Tierney, chaplain and archivist to the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth Dukes could not bring himself to love it, remarking on the 'remarkable specimen of bad taste in a representation of the Saxon monarchy instituting Trial by Jury'.⁷

Reflecting on the character of Charles, eleventh Duke of Norfolk, from the lofty moral high ground of Victorian periodical culture, *The Leisure Hour: An Illustrated Magazine for Home Reading* concluded that his 'eccentricities have earned him a niche in the temple of notoriety' and that these moral failings were reflected in his architectural works which displayed 'a sad lack both of taste and knowledge'.⁸ Succeeding to his father's title in 1786, Charles Howard was celebrated for his conviviality. Charles Piggot's *Political Dictionary* of 1795 went so far as to

define drunkenness as 'the Duke of Norfolk drinking common gin with the Royal Sovereign, at her lodgings in Strand-lane'.⁹ This article, however, moves beyond mid-Victorian prejudices and uncovers how the eleventh Duke and his successor used architecture, sculpture and painting to transform Arundel Castle into a three-dimensional narrative of English liberty. Historians' partiality to the convivial, drunken, bumbling duke has obscured Norfolk's position as an inheritor of the rich tradition of amateur Gothic architects that had coalesced around influential figures such as Sanderson Miller, Sir Roger Newdigate and Horace Walpole earlier in the eighteenth century, as well as his antiquarian learning and his political perspicacity. The hitherto unstudied bas-relief of *King Alfred Instituting Trial by Jury on Salisbury Plain* offers an opportunity for exploring how these three neglected elements of the duke's personality combined to produce a powerful political statement.

'DRUNKEN DUKE' OR FRIEND OF LIBERTY? POLITICS AND THE ELEVENTH DUKE OF NORFOLK

On 24 Jan 1798 at a raucous gathering to celebrate the birthday of Charles James Fox, the Duke of Norfolk rose from his chair to propose a toast at the Crown and Anchor Tavern. Comparing Fox to George Washington, Norfolk offered 'a direct incitement to Rebellion' by comparing George Washington's two thousand supporters to those gathered at the tavern on the Strand.¹⁰ But the Duke went further, and

'... observed to the Company, that as they had drunk the health of a Man dear to the People, he would now call upon them to drink the health of their Sovereign – here a hiccup interrupted His Grace, and a most violent cry of "no Sovereign! no Sovereign!" resounded through the room, and continued for several minutes, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of the Duke to be heard. Order was, however, restored at length, when His Grace gently chid the Company

for taking advantage of a slight infirmity of nature, to impute a design to him which was wholly foreign from his heart... He augured well, however, of their patriotism, and would now afford them an opportunity of repairing the injury they had done him, by giving the Toast as he first intended – “The Health of Our Sovereign – The Majesty of the People”.¹¹

George III was less than amused. Norfolk was stripped of his Lord Lieutenancy of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and of his command of the First Regiment of the West Yorkshire militia.¹² *The Anti-Jacobin* celebrated his removal, arguing that he had sanctified with his presence, ‘the ceremony of a formal act of alliance between the remains of the Parliamentary Opposition of this Country, and the leaders of a faction, French in principle, French in inclination, and French in conduct’.¹³ Norfolk’s dismissal was a salutary warning to ‘all sober and well-disposed people’: ‘It has put to the proof the spirit of the Government. It may be the pledge of safety of the Country’.¹⁴ John Bowdler, in his popular pamphlet, *Sound An Alarm*, argued that Norfolk had ‘deserted the true fountain of honour, to have paid his court to the Majesty of the People’. Such an alliance was foolish, for ‘unless this muddy democratic stream shall possess the quality of purging him from every taint of his hereditary dignity, he best knows what will be his sensation, when he feels himself jostled upon the Bench of an upstart Directory’.¹⁵

Bowdler and *The Anti-Jacobin* represented one end of the political spectrum. The *Morning Chronicle*, by contrast, felt that ‘the annals of British Liberty do not record an instance of so large a Meeting of its friends’ as occurred at the Crown and Anchor Tavern. It was, the newspaper gushed, ‘the Feast of Liberty’ as the ‘Premier Peer of England’ supported by ‘the descendants and representatives of the illustrious families who established Liberty in England’ reaffirmed their commitment to the ‘indispensable necessity of Reform, as the only means of national salvation’.¹⁶ The *Observer*, attempting to find a middle ground in the partisan reporting that

followed, concluded that ‘the opposition papers relate, that the day was passed with the most rational order and conviviality; whilst ministerial ones compare the meeting to a Bear Garden’.¹⁷ What could not be questioned, however, was the extent to which the speech, and subsequent dismissal of the Duke of Norfolk, dominated public discussion during the first months of 1798.

By the time of his Crown and Anchor toast, the Duke had been involved in politics for at least eighteen years. Renouncing his Catholic upbringing, Howard, under the courtesy title of the Earl of Surrey, entered the House of Commons for Carlisle in 1780, against the interest of Sir James Lowther, where he ‘laboured to stem the torrent arising from the encreasing influence of the crown’ until the fall of North’s ministry in 1782. Appointed Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire, he also became a member of the Society for Constitutional Information and took an active part in promoting parliamentary reform. Succeeding to his father’s title and seat in the House of Lords in 1786, Norfolk continued to espouse ‘the popular cause’.¹⁸ The Duke became public property during the Regency Crisis of 1789. Adopting the persona of a country gentleman who professed political independence, William Coombe launched a character assassination on the Duke, suggesting that ‘the dissipation of his life, and the renunciation of his religion, will operate very powerfully against his acquiring any stability of popular regard’.¹⁹ Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall portrayed Norfolk, when Earl of Surrey, as a man lacking in the necessary refinements to succeed at court or in the Commons, suggesting that, ‘no man, of whatever rank, inherited more of the rough spirit of the barons who forced John to sign the Magna Carta’.²⁰ The response from the Foxite benches was equally vociferous, claiming that ‘his patriotic disposition would not suffer him to remain a calm spectator, whilst the interests of his country were devoted to ruin, and the sacred barriers of her constitution were wantonly trampled upon’.²¹ By far

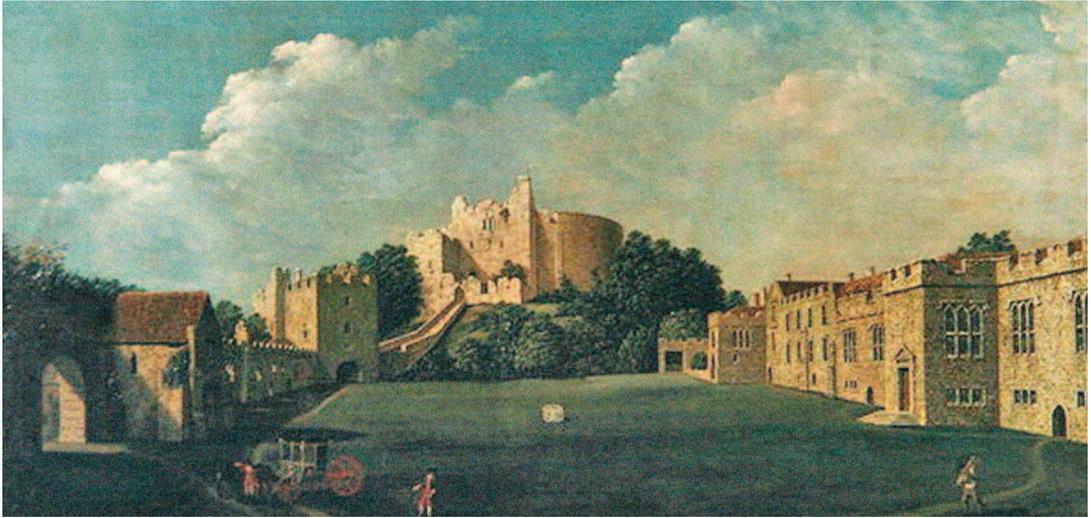


Fig. 2. James Canter, *Arundel Castle, Keep and Quadrangle* (c.1770). (Image © Bridgeman Education)

the most gushing of dedications, however, came from the prominent political balladeer John Freeth:

‘It is but justice to say, his disinterested conduct as a Senator, and the true British spirit he has shewn as a steady supporter of the Rights of Mankind on many public occasions, must still render the antient and much recorded name of Howard, truly respectable to every lover of his country.’²²

‘FINISHED IN THE TRUE GOTHIC STYLE’: THE ELEVENTH DUKE’S ALTERATIONS AT ARUNDEL

Charles Howard’s reputation as ‘the Drunken Duke’ has obscured other facets of his character. As Earl of Surrey, his correspondence with John Charles Brooke, Somerset Herald and later secretary to the Deputy Earl Marshall, suggests a man deeply interested in history and heraldry.²³ Brooke encouraged him to support antiquarian endeavours across the country,²⁴ consulted him on questions of heraldic precedence,²⁵ accompanied him on tours across Britain where he had ‘an opportunity of

surveying many of the anc^t Seats & other antiquities’.²⁶ James Milne wrote to Brooke, on the occasion of Howard becoming Deputy Earl Marshall, that, ‘now he will have it in his power to indulge his fondness for Heraldry as much as he pleases’.²⁷ Brooke believed that Howard ‘makes an excellent Earl-Marshall, as he shews more inclinⁿ to our studies than any who have presided here for a century past’.²⁸

This interest was not just limited to heraldry or his family. The Duke’s position as hereditary Earl Marshal combined with his own interest in history meant that he was a convenient target for scholars looking for support. Edmund Lodge, for example, addressed his proposal for publishing his *Illustrations of British History, Biography and Manners in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth I and James I* (1790) to Norfolk, as did Ralph Bigland’s son, Richard, when publishing his father’s *Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections, relative to the County of Gloucester* (1791–2). The Duke was president of the Toxophilite Society and attracted praise as a patron of the theatre.²⁹ Norfolk’s greatest legacy, however, was his work at Arundel Castle. His letters to Joseph Hinde,



Fig. 3. William Daniell, *Arundel Castle from the Keep* (1823). (Image © Bridgeman Education)

his steward with responsibility for the Castle and all the Sussex and Surrey estates demonstrate the level to which he engaged with the architectural minutiae of his scheme to refurbish his family’s ancient seat.³⁰

For most of the eighteenth century Arundel Castle had been, at best, an occasional residence for the Dukes of Norfolk, at worst a cross between a museum and a jumble store (Fig. 2).³¹ Elizabeth Carter’s sister, on visiting in 1776, was convinced that the castle’s ruined condition had given ‘Mr Walpole the idea of the Castle of Otranto’,³² and Dr Lort, President of the Society of Antiquaries, on desiring to visit Arundel a decade later was advised that ‘the Castle has little to recommend it but its situation & antiq^y’.³³ Lort’s visit came just before the eleventh Duke started the large-scale reconstruction of the residential buildings. Alexander Hay, in his 1794 guide to Chichester, informed his readers that, ‘His Grace is at this time repairing his castle in the old Gothic stile, which will add to its grandeur, and have a pleasing and venerable effect’.³⁴

Hay’s ‘old Gothic stile’ was inflected with the Duke’s idiosyncrasies, and did not come cheap; by 1797 £200,000 is said to have been spent, and by his

death in 1816 this figure had risen to an estimated £600,000.³⁵ As J.M. Robinson has observed, the Duke’s restoration of Arundel parallels George III’s work at Windsor, along with Beckford’s at Fonthill Abbey and that of several other landowners who turned to castle-building at the close of the eighteenth-century.³⁶ After consulting some of the leading lights of the Gothic Revival – Gough, Hiorne, Walpole (who recommended Wyatt) – the Duke resolved, in the words of James Dallaway his secretary as Earl Marshal,

‘... to form the whole upon his own design, and he accordingly selected from his own estates at Greystoke in Cumberland [craftsmen] whom he placed under architects and sculptors in London until they were perfect in their art – viz. Mr J. Teasdale architect, his brother a sculptor of ornament in marble, and J. Ritson and his son in mahogany.’³⁷

Dallaway believed this decision offered Norfolk the freedom to express in architecture, ‘the ideas which he entertained, of the baronial magnificence in early days’.³⁸ What Dallaway meant by this was, as Robinson has pointed out, not a Tory enthusiasm for castellar architecture as the embodiment of tradition

and feudal associations. Rather, castellated and Gothic forms offered the Duke a powerful medium through which to express his decidedly Whiggish political beliefs.

The restoration work was carried out in stages (Fig. 3). The park was completed in 1787, the south front in 1791, the north front in 1795, the east wing – containing the library and Rossi's *Alfred* – in 1801, the west wing with the Barons' Hall in 1806 and the new gatehouse in 1809. Working within the old foundations of the castle required compromise, and the interior spaces failed to live up to Classical notions of symmetry. Dallaway, unsurprisingly, saw this as a strength, arguing that, 'the objections raised by professional architects against their symmetry will not avail much with men of intelligence and candour' who knew that restoration which paid any attention to the 'proper character' of castellar architecture 'would scarcely contain apartments of modern proportions'.³⁹ The Duke took a keen interest in the design process, as the letters from his steward, Joseph Hinde, illustrate. Writing in July 1795 Hinde informed him of the 'forms of Doors that are Characteristic of Anchients Architecture';⁴⁰ Norfolk replied a month later specifying the exact design of windows – 'it shall not be a pointed Gothick' – and including 'a rough plan herewith the better to explain';⁴¹ correspondence continued, with Norfolk indicating the ornament for architraves,⁴² and procuring stone for the building work himself.⁴³ Norfolk was always on the lookout for new sources of inspiration, as he wrote to Hinde under the heading 'Saxon Corbels':

'The elephant & Lions head may be prepared as sketch'd by M^r Teasdale & unless orders to the contrary are sent, may be adapted, let me know how soon they will be ready to be placed as I mean to go to York where possibly may see something I shall like better.'⁴⁴

In designing a grand new Hall, Norfolk took aim at the 'several modern gothic halls which have been erected' which served as 'merely grand entrances connected with the staircase' and sought to return

the hall to its primary purpose, 'the reception of numerous guests'.⁴⁵ The Baron's Hall, with its dedication to 'Liberty assured by the Barons in the reign of John',⁴⁶ continued the theme that had been established by the two large Coade stone statues representing *Liberty* and *Hospitality*, which flanked the entrance to the castle,⁴⁷ and was intended to be the apotheosis of the Duke's scheme. Visiting Arundel in May 1806, Lady Ailesbury interpreted Norfolk as a benign, hospitable, feudal lord: '[He] has old-fashioned notions which I like right well, keeping his family together and keeping them up in this world'. The need to provide for his family found its corollary, for Lady Ailesbury, in Norfolk's stylistic choices: 'The artists at Arundel are all English and the Duke loves to have his family about him – some alive and others painted on wood; as he is his own architect, I suppose Mr Wyatt will sneer at the improvements in the castle'.⁴⁸ The Barons' Hall was a critical attack on the architectural practice of the period. Dallaway was proud to note that the Duke, 'having long resolved in his own mind the idea of such a building' trusted only his 'ingenious master-mason' and made sure to consult 'none of the modern architects, who have undertaken to revive the style and commanding effect of ancient English Castles'.⁴⁹ Grounded on a Norman arcade, the windows and battlements of the Barons' Hall were styled after fourteenth-century Gothic, suggesting the evolution of British liberties.⁵⁰ The thirteen stained glass windows around the hall emphasised the Duke's lineal descent from the barons who compelled King John to sign the Magna Carta. Such was the Duke's enthusiasm for Magna Carta that he hosted a six hundredth anniversary celebration, which for the somewhat biased Dallaway realised 'what constituted the splendour of the ancient English nobility'.⁵¹

If the Baron's Hall was the apotheosis, Rossi's *Alfred* (Fig. 4), crucially, was the opening salvo. Dominating the east side of the courtyard and facing the entrance gateway, *Alfred* would have been the



Fig. 4. Benjamin Brecknall Turner, *North [sic] Side of Quadrangle, Arundel Castle* (1852–4).
(© Victoria and Albert Museum)

first feature to attract the visitor's glance. Standing on three solid round, dogtoothed 'Saxon' arches, Rossi's bas-relief demanded attention. Charles Wright, as we have seen, thought that the rounded 'Saxon' – or, as we would now say, Norman or Romanesque – arches corresponded stylistically with 'the period of the declaration of Alfred'.⁵² Beattie praised Rossi's work as 'strictly historical' but felt the need to assert that 'this admirable institution did not originate with Alfred, but that it was only improved and perfected by him'.⁵³ Mentions of Alfred in the archival material preserved at Arundel Castle are, however, frustratingly scarce.⁵⁴ Norfolk wrote to Hinde on 31 July 1805 including the two word sentence 'King Alfred',⁵⁵ and again in August observing that, 'The Alfred Cross is quite right'.⁵⁶ The latter refers to the design of the battlements, which surmounted the east wing, suggesting that Norfolk wanted his building to be crowned with symbols of Anglo-Saxon liberty.⁵⁷

To enthrone Alfred above a triad of 'Saxon' Romanesque arches continued a theme developed

in Paul de Rapin-Thoyras's *History of England*, which presented the ninth-century king as one of the pioneers of what was to become known as Gothic architecture.⁵⁸ Alfred, having defeated the Danish invaders, 'believed he ought not to be forgetful of one thing in itself useful and to the Kingdom very ornamental; and that was to induce the English to build their Houses for the future in a stronger and more regular manner, than they had been used to'. Alfred, building his palaces with brick and stone, set a trend for his nobles, which Rapin laments 'did not become general till several ages after'.⁵⁹ This interpretation held true in 1805, when *The European Magazine, and London Review* provided a more detailed analysis of ninth-century architectural style.

'Though authors have generally divided Gothic architecture into two species, the ancient and the modern, yet we think it may with great propriety be subdivided into that species to which we have already alluded, which clumsy and inartificial, the Saxons introduced into this kingdom in the fifth century, and that which commenced in the reign of Alfred, which

may be termed the simply ornamented Gothic. In this species the enormous and clumsy columns were lightened by the deep grooving of their shafts, so that they resemble several trees bound together with fillets; the arches were heightened; checker work and tracery began to appear; while mouldings and cornices exhibited some enrichments.⁶⁰

The eleventh Duke's fusion of 'Saxon' Romanesque and Perpendicular Gothic – so offensive to the Rickman inspired critics of the mid nineteenth century – was intended to suggest the origins and subsequent codification of ancient liberties. Arundel provided a narrative in stone to rival that of Rapin, the eighteenth century's most popular historian. They shared the same narrative framework. The mixed constitution of King and Parliament, as created by the Glorious Revolution, was not a recent invention, but was a Teutonic creation brought over by the Saxons from Northern Europe. Ancient liberties, including trial by jury, frequent parliaments and common law, were codified by King Alfred but came under threat from the 'Norman Yoke'. Liberty could only be maintained through the even balance between the 'prerogatives' of the sovereign and the 'privileges' of the people. Accordingly, the signing of Magna Carta was crucial as both an affirmation of common law over feudal law, and the privileges of the people over the prerogatives of kings. Arundel Castle dramatised this struggle in stone, sculpture and stained glass.

**'THE WORTHIEST PRINCE THAT
EVER SWAYED A SCEPTRE':⁶¹
WHY ALFRED?**

Reviewing a new pamphlet life of Alfred in 1795, *The Monthly Review* asked its readers to recognise 'How superior does his conduct, both as a Man and a Magistrate, appear to that dishonest artifice and chicanery which often pass on the world as political wisdom.'⁶² Norfolk's particular take on English

legislative history found its scholarly counterpart in Sir William Jones' *Essay on the Law of Bailments*, where the lawyer argued that

'By the wisdom and patriotism of Alfred the Great, the Saxon customs were improved into a system of policy, the remains of which display the just pretensions of that amiable monarch to the grateful memory of Englishmen. The institutions of Alfred were impregnated with those genuine principles of legislation which assist and expand with the progressive improvements of a state, and a subsequent age might have seen the free model of the Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence, adorned with the cultivated reason of the civil law. It was, however, the fate of our country, that its political liberties should be surrendered to the shackles of the feudal system.'⁶³

The 1790s saw the most sustained period of political invocations of the Anglo-Saxon king seen during the eighteenth century. Just as the Duke of Norfolk was thrust to centre stage by the Regency Crisis, so Philip Withers used Alfred to criticise the suppression of a pamphlet *Structures on the Declaration of Horne Tooke*.⁶⁴ Withers turned the debate stereo, adding another voice through his *Nemesis or A Letter to Alfred* (1789), which then occasioned *Alfred's Appeal. Containing his address to the Court of King's Bench, on the subject of the marriage of Mary Anne Fitzherbert, and her intrigue with Count Bellois* (1789), followed by *Alfred's Apology* (1789), *Alfred to the Bishop of London* (1789), and a reply from other authors, *Alfred Unmasked: Or the new Cataline. Intended as a Pair of Spectacles for the Short-Sighted Politicians of 1789* (1789) and *A Letter to the Author of Alfred...* (1789). Sir James Bland Burges, by contrast, writing under the pseudonym Alfred, took it upon himself to praise 'the auspicious guidance' of Pitt's ministry.⁶⁵ Alfred was invoked once more during the Shrewsbury borough election of 1796 in a pamphlet, *To Alfred, alias Fidelis* and in 1798 a series of letters addressed to Thomas Erskine and Charles James Fox from the author 'Ghost of Alfred'.⁶⁶

As a figure available for Whigs, Tories and Radicals throughout the 1790s Alfred appeared in pamphlets and other forms of political literature as a



Fig. 5. Temple of British Worthies, Stowe, Buckinghamshire. (Photo: author's own)

powerful source of historical legitimacy at a time when the very structure of British politics and government was being questioned. Whilst the eleventh Duke may have been unusual in rendering Alfred's achievements in stone, he was not alone in dramatising Alfred's reign. In 1797, the same year as the Duke commissioned Rossi, a *Sketch of Alfred the Great: Or the Danish Invasion. A Grand Historical Ballet of Action* was performed at Sadler's Wells. Later in the year John Penn's *The Battle of Eddington, or British Liberty* was performed at the Haymarket and celebrated 'Alfred as the Legislator of England'.⁶⁷ The play, dedicated to Pitt, was 'professly written with a political view' with Alfred 'supposed to be not only engaged in resisting the Danes, but the plots of his subjects'. 'We are told', the *Critical Review* explained, 'of the necessary inconvenience of juries and free laws'.⁶⁸ The previous year, however, John O'Keefe's *Alfred, or the Magic Banner*, had concluded with a triumphant representation on stage of Alfred the Great instituting trial by jury.⁶⁹

The Duke's library collections make clear his interest in the Anglo-Saxon king, containing both editions of the first 'modern' biography of King Alfred, written by Sir John Spelman: Obadiah Walker's *Alfredi Magni Vita* and Thomas Hearne's *Life of Alfred the Great*.⁷⁰ Furthermore, as the vast majority of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century accounts of Arundel Castle emphasise, the earliest record of Arundel occurs in 'the will of the Great Alfred, in which he bequeathed it, along with other lordships, to his brother's son Athelm'.⁷¹ Whilst local history may have played a role, it is also possible to find possible sources of architectural inspiration for the eleventh Duke's enthusiasm for Alfred across the country. The historian can, for example, look to the Patriot Opposition to Sir Robert Walpole, where the Anglo-Saxon king looked out from Cobham's Temple of British Worthies at Stowe (Fig. 5), Prince Frederick's Octagon at Carlton House and later to Cliveden, where 'Rule, Britannia' was first performed as the finale to *Alfred: A Masque*; or, most importantly,

to a hitherto neglected political monument on the outskirts of Leeds erected by the Yorkshire merchant Jeremiah Dixon in 1769.

In response to the petitioning movement of the summer of 1769, Jeremiah Dixon of Gledhow Hall constructed a Gothic folly known as King Alfred's Castle (Fig. 6).⁷² Completed in a deliberately ruined state, the mock-ruin of Alfred's Castle recalls the Temple of Modern Virtue at Stowe, and made an equally potent political comment. The decision to expel John Wilkes from the House of Commons resulted in a well-documented howl of protest in response to the perceived threat to the right of the English freeholder to choose his own parliamentary representative.⁷³ Dixon wrote to Lord Rockingham of the need not to submit to 'the deprivation of one of our dearest privileges as Englishmen',⁷⁴ and made a leap into the type of aspirational political architecture reserved only for landed magnates. Dixon chose his site carefully. Adjacent to the main road heading out to Harewood House, the home of

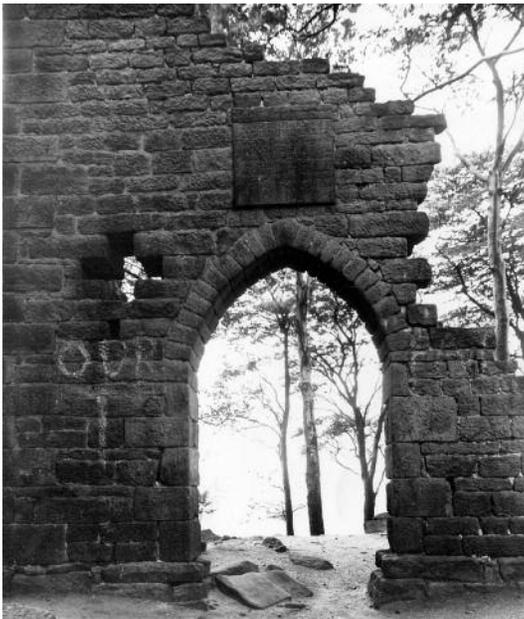


Fig. 6. Alfred's Castle, Tunnel How Hill, Leeds, West Yorkshire. (© Leeds Library & Information Services)

Edwin Lascelles, Alfred's Castle would have acted as a prompt to the polite classes on their way to pay homage to one of Yorkshire's most important political personages to remember the ancient origins of the English constitution.⁷⁵ The ruined outline of Alfred's Castle suggested that long cherished traditions were in danger and scolded Yorkshire's elite for their limited engagement with the petitioning movement.

The Duke of Norfolk, at the time of commissioning Rossi, was engaged in a similar political battle. Throughout 1797 and 1798 Christopher Wyvill, guiding light of the Yorkshire Association, and inheritor of the political movement that Dixon was so involved with, wrote to Norfolk's friend Charles James Fox, urging him to persuade the Duke to take an active part in the Association's agitation for parliamentary reform. Wyvill went so far as to suggest that thanks to Norfolk's 'reserve' the 'continued timorousness [*sic.*] of many well-wishers in the West of Yorkshire may be imputed'.⁷⁶ By 1800, Wyvill, observing that 'the power and influence of the crown are greatly increased, beyond what they were in the year 1780' lamented to Fox that without Norfolk's 'strenuous assistance, I should be inclined to doubt whether we should be strong enough'.⁷⁷ Moreover, Norfolk, during the sixteen years in his position as Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire had come to know Jeremiah Dixon's son and heir, John, inviting the Dixons to visit him at Greystoke Castle.⁷⁸ For John's father, Alfred was a reminder to honour ancient liberties. For Norfolk, Alfred was a reminder that not all kings were tyrannical.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the Duke had flirted with political architecture for the decade before he began his scheme at Arundel Castle. At his ancestral seat of Greystoke Castle in Cumberland, he named his model farms after prominent locations or characters of the American Revolutionary Wars: Fort Putnam, Bunker Hill, Jefferson.⁷⁹ Ten years previous to his work at Arundel, he also invoked the Anglo-Saxon past on his Cumberland estates. William

Fig. 7. Arundel Castle quadrangle (October 2011).
(Photo: author’s own)



Thomson, on a tour of the Lake District in 1785, recorded a visit to the ‘very whimsical’ Lyulph’s Tower, ‘quite in the stile of an old castle’.⁸⁰ The folly ‘in memory of some Saxon hero’ served as a sporting retreat for the Duke and his companions.⁸¹ One visitor was impressed by the Duke of Norfolk’s anachronism, ‘when here, he never uses chairs, but wooden forms, and has a long hospitable board for a table’,⁸² and the Gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe relished the tower’s setting ‘in one of the finest situations of a park, abounding with views of the grand and the sublime’.⁸³

**‘AN EXCEEDINGLY FRIGHTFUL
THING IN CODE’S STONE’:
THE END OF ALFRED.**

The eleventh Duke’s alterations initially received positive press. The *European Magazine and London Review* included an engraving of the south-east view of Arundel Castle in September 1799,⁸⁴ following up with an engraving of the new entrance gateway in 1802.⁸⁵ The magazine observed that ‘The Present Duke of Norfolk is repairing it at a most considerable expense; and, by keeping up the ancient stile of architecture, gives it a grand majestic appearance’ concluding that, when completed, it would ‘certainly

be one of the noblest mansions in this kingdom’.⁸⁶ The ‘true Gothic style’ had rendered the castle ‘equally convenient and elegant’.⁸⁷ The laconic John Dickinson noted how he ‘viewed the Duke of Norfolk’s castle and gardens; approved of his alterations’.⁸⁸ Wright was more effusive in his praise, declaring Norfolk ‘the founder of [a] new style of building, which justly deserves the designation of the Arundelian Order of Architecture’.⁸⁹ However, by 1832, Arundel Castle had fallen out of fashion. New histories of Gothic architecture prevented the kind of storytelling in stone practised by the eleventh Duke: ‘The Castle has undergone modern alterations in bad taste; the details are of that description of the ornamental gothic, which appear to me to throw severe criticisms on the abilities of the architect’.⁹⁰ Queen Victoria was equally disparaging, remarking in her journal on 2 December 1846 that ‘Unfortunately the Castle has not been restored in a good style, by Duke Charles, the last but one, and Saxon and Gothic architecture are mixed’.⁹¹ One of the more discerning critics, Mark Tierney, concluded that, although the restorations were ‘the effort of a mind strongly imbued with admiration of the ancient models’, the edifice unfortunately ‘loses more from the indiscriminate attachment of its founder to whatever bears the appearance of antiquity, than it can possibly gain from

his knowledge of the various styles he adopts'.⁹² Even the immortal Alfred – 'with what hallowed feelings of reverence' wrote a woman of fashion 'must a locale ever be approached which bears the name of that illustrious monarch'⁹³ – could not escape censure, and was removed to allow windows for the thirteenth Duke's billiard room (Fig. 7).⁹⁴

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The author would like to thank His Grace the Duke of Norfolk for his permission to quote from the Arundel Castle archives.

NOTES

- 1 C. Wright, *The History and Description of Arundel Castle, Sussex; The Seat of His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, with an abstract of the lives of the Earls of Arundel, from the Conquest to the Present Time*, 2nd edn. (London, 1818), p. 42.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- 4 *Edinburgh Annual Register*, 8 (1815), p. 40. For further accounts of Rossi's Alfred, see: *A Visit to Arundel Castle. Profusely Illustrated* (Arundel and London, 1851), pp. 88–89; Rossi's work, however, is curiously absent from the most complete account of the eleventh Duke's building work: J. Dallaway, *The Parochial Topography of the Rape of Arundel, in the Western Division of the County of Sussex*, 2nd edn (2 vols., London, 1832), I., pp. 187–192.
- 5 *The Bognor Guide, Containing the History of Bognor, and the History and Antiquities of Several Adjoining Parishes, including an account of Goodwood, Arundel Castle, &c. &c. and the Roman Remains at Bognor* (Petworth, 1838), p. 90.
- 6 A.E. Stothard, *Memoirs, including Original Journals, Letters, Papers and Antiquarian Tracts of the late Charles Alfred Stothard, F.S.A.*... (London, 1823), p. 137.
- 7 M.A. Tierney, *The History and Antiquities of The Castle and Town of Arundel; including the Biography of its Earls from the Conquest to the Present Time* (2 vols., London, 1834), I, p. 83.
- 8 *The Leisure Hour: An Illustrated Magazine for Home Reading*, 534 (1862), p. 192.
- 9 C. Pigott, *A Political Dictionary: Explaining the True Meaning of Words. Illustrated and Exemplified in the Lives, Morals, Character and Conduct of the Following Most Illustrious Personages*... (London, 1795), p. 16. During the Regency Crisis of 1789, Norfolk frequently featured in pamphlet literature. In *The Funeral Procession of Mrs Regency. To which is added, the sermon; with the last will and testament* (London, 1789), Mrs Regency, 'give[s] and bequeath to his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, a fine portrait of Hippesley's Drunken Man' (p. 18).
- 10 *The Anti-Jacobin Or, Weekly Examiner*, no. 13 (5 Feb. 1798).
- 11 *Ibid.*, no. 12 (29 Jan. 1798).
- 12 For a pithy summary of Norfolk's fall from grace, see: *The Chronologist of the Present War; Or, General Historical and Political Register*... (Dublin, 1799), pp. 419–422.
- 13 *Anti-Jacobin* (5 Feb. 1798).
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 [J. Bowdler], *Sound An Alarm, &c. By Way of Appendix to Reform or Ruin* (London, 1798), pp. 6–7.
- 16 *Morning Chronicle*, no. 8946 (25 Jan. 1798).
- 17 *Observer*, no. 320 (28 Jan. 1798).
- 18 For details of Norfolk's political career, see *British Public Characters of 1798* (London, 1798), pp. 398–402.
- 19 [W. Combe], *A Letter from a Country Gentleman, to a Member of Parliament, on the Present State of Public Affairs*... 5th edn (London, 1789), p. 26.
- 20 H.B. Wheatley (ed.), *The Historical and Posthumous Memoirs of Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall 1772–1784* (5 vols., London, 1884), II, p. 203.
- 21 *An Answer to the Country Gentleman's Letter to a Member of Parliament*... (London, 1789), p. 33.
- 22 J. Freeth, *The Political Songster Or, A Touch on the Times, On Various Subjects, and Adapted to Common Tunes*, 6th edn (Birmingham, 1790), p. v.
- 23 Bodleian Libraries Oxford (hereafter Bodl.) MS. Eng. lett. e. 98–99 and MS. Eng. lett. c. 223–224.
- 24 For example, Brooke wrote to Howard regarding proposals for a history of Holderness in Yorkshire that he should 'probably think it proper to encourage works of this nature': Bodl. MS. Eng. lett. e. 98, f. 117^r.
- 25 Brooke to Howard (Feb. 1784): Bodl. MS. Eng. lett. e. 99, f. 4^v.
- 26 Brooke to Lord Dacre (Dec. 1784): *Ibid.*, f. 16^v.
- 27 Milne to Brooke (24 Jul. 1782): Bodl. MS. Eng. lett. c. 223, f. 38^r.

- 28 Brooke to Marmaduke Tunstall (30 May. 1785): Bodl. MS. Eng. lett. e. 99, f. 22^v.
- 29 Names of the Members of the Toxophilite Society (London, 1792), p. 3; T. Wilkinson, *Memoirs of His Own Life by Tate Wilkinson, Patentee of the Theatre Royal, York and Hull* (4 vols., York, 1790), I, p. 168.
- 30 Arundel Castle Archives (hereafter, ACA) SHE29 – Correspondence of eleventh Duke and Joseph Hinde.
- 31 J.M. Robinson, *Arundel Castle* (Chichester, 1994), p. 20.
- 32 M. Pennington (ed.), *A Series of Letters between Mrs Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot from the Year 1741 to 1770: To which are added letters from Mrs Carter to Mrs Vesey between the Years 1767 and 1787* (4 vols., London, 1809), III., p. 22.
- 33 Bodl. MS. Eng. lett. e. 99, f. 41^r.
- 34 A. Hay, *The Chichester Guide: Containing an Account of the Antient and Present State of the City...* (Chichester, 1794), p. 44.
- 35 T.P. Hudson (ed.), *A History of the County of Sussex* (Oxford, 1997), V. part i., p. 43. See also, William Beattie, *The Castles and Abbeys of England* (2 vols, London, 1842), I., p. 27.
- 36 Robinson, *Arundel Castle*, p. 28.
- 37 Dallaway, quoted in *ibid*.
- 38 E. Cartwright (ed.), *The Parochial Topography of the Rape of Arundel, in the Western Division of the County of Sussex by James Dallway* (2 vols., London, 1832), I., p. 188.
- 39 *Ibid*.
- 40 ACA SHE29/1/9: Hinde to Norfolk (9 Jul. 1795).
- 41 ACA SHE29/1/12: Norfolk to Hinde (18 Aug. 1795).
- 42 ACA SHE29/1/20: Norfolk to Hinde (18 Jun. 1799).
- 43 ACA SHE29/2/10: Norfolk to Hinde (24 Feb. 1801).
- 44 ACA SHE29/3/18: Norfolk to Hinde (13 Jul. 1805).
- 45 *The Parochial Topography of the Rape of Arundel*, p. 189.
- 46 A correspondent calling himself 'Sidney' sent the full details of the inscription to *The Gentleman's Magazine*, (July 1816), p. 32.
- 47 The figures were made in 1798, perhaps to the designs of John Bacon the elder: Hudson (ed.), *History of Sussex*, p. 43. See also, A. Kelly, 'Coade Stone in Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 126 (1988), pp. 181–2.
- 48 Lady Ailesbury to Lady Louisa Stuart (Worthing, 22 May 1806): A Clark (ed.), *Gleanings from an Old Portfolio: Containing Some Correspondence Between Lady Louisa Stuart and her sister Caroline, Countess of Portarlington, and other friends and relations* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1895–1898), III., p. 150.
- 49 ACA DB68: [J. Dallaway] 'An Account of the Festival Held in the Barons' Hall of Arundel Castle on the Fifteenth day of June 1815', p. 1.
- 50 Others believed the Hall to be 'in the taste of the fifteenth century, when the elaborate Gothic was at its perfection': Wright, *History and Description of Arundel Castle*, p. 47.
- 51 'An Account of the Festival held in the Barons' Hall', p. 5.
- 52 Wright, *The History and Description of Arundel Castle*, p. 43.
- 53 Beattie, *The Castles and Abbeys of England*, p. 28.
- 54 The date by which Rossi's work was in situ at Arundel remains uncertain. One visitor recorded how, in 1805, he 'returned through a large quadrangular inclosure, where the workmen were employed in finishing that part of the Castle, which goes under the denomination of the Library. The improvements now making are on such a scale, that, years must elapse, e'er they are completed': J. Evans, *Picture of Worthing: To which is added an Account of Arundel and Shoreham, with other parts of the surrounding country* (London, 1805), p. 107. Alfred is strangely absent from James Dallaway's account of Arundel.
- 55 ACA SHE 29/3/19: Norfolk to Hinde (31 Jul. 1805).
- 56 ACA SHE 29/3/22: Norfolk to Hinde (29 Aug. 1805).
- 57 'Buildings. Has Mr Teasdale the design for the Cross intended to be cut through in the Battlements & if not how soon edn it be wanted'. ACA SHE 29/3/20: Norfolk to Hinde (21 Aug. 1805).
- 58 On Rapin, see: H. Trevor-Roper, 'A Huguenot Historian – Paul Rapin', in I. Scouloudi (ed.), *Huguenots in Britain and their French Background, 1550–1800* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 3–19; M.G. Sullivan, 'Rapin, Hume and the identity of the historian in eighteenth century England', *History of European Ideas*, 28 (2002), pp. 145–162.
- 59 P. de Rapin-Thoyras, *History of England*, trans. N. Tindall, 3rd edn (2 vols., London, 1743), I., p. 96.
- 60 *The European Magazine and London Review*, 42 (1805), p. 253.
- 61 Anon., *Observations on the Life and Character of Alfred the Great* (London, 1794), p. 3.
- 62 *The Monthly Review, Or Literary Journal*, 18 (1795), p. 105.
- 63 W. Jones, *An Essay on the Law of Bailments*, 2nd edn (London, 1798), pp. 43–44. Jones' enthusiasm for

- Alfred was inculcated during his time as an undergraduate at University College Oxford, believed to have been founded by King Alfred, see: O.J.W. Cox, 'An Oxford College and the Eighteenth-Century Gothic Revival', *Oxoniensia*, 77 (2012), pp. 117–135.
- 64 P. Withers, *Alfred, or a narrative of the daring and illegal measures to suppress a pamphlet intituled, Strictures on the declaration of Horne Tooke, Esq.* (London, 1789).
- 65 J. Bland Burges, *Alfred's Letters; or, a review of the political state of Europe, to the end of the summer 1792. As Originally Published in The Sun* (London, 1793).
- 66 *Letters of the ghost of Alfred, addressed to the Hon. Thomas Erskine, and the Hon. Charles James Fox, on the occasion of the state trials at the close of the year 1794, and the beginning of the year 1795* (London, 1798).
- 67 *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, no. 19528 (24 Jan. 1797).
- 68 *Critical review, or, Annals of Literature* 20 (1797), p. 445.
- 69 John Philip Kemble observed that the play, 'was no more endurable than the other attempts to exhibit the great King upon the stage': J. Boaden, *Memoirs of the life of John Philip Kemble...* (2 vols., London, 1825) II, p. 180. O'Keefe himself agreed that 'my "Alfred" had no great success': *Recollections of the Life of John O'Keefe, Written by Himself* (2 vols., London, 1826), p. 347.
- 70 [O. Walker], *Ælfredi Magni Anglorum regis invictissimi vita tribus libris comprehensa a clarissimo dno Johanne Spelman* (Oxford, 1678); T. Hearne, *The Life of Ælfred the Great, by Sir John Spelman Kt* (Oxford, 1709). Both are listed in the 'Catalogue of the Norfolk Library 1844': ACA L10, pp. 2, 44.
- 71 Beattie, *The Castles and Abbeys of England*, p. 8.
- 72 The monument was inscribed: To the Memory of/ Alfred the Great/ The Wise, the Pious and Magnanimous/ The Friend of/ Science, Virtue, Law, and Liberty/ This Monument/ Jeremiah Dixon of Allerton/ Gledhow caused to be erected./ A.D. MDCCLXIX.
- 73 See, for example, G. Rudé, *Wilkes and Liberty* (Oxford, 1962).
- 74 City of Sheffield Archives, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments (hereafter WWM) R/1/1255: Dixon to Rockingham (26 Dec. 1769).
- 75 Alfred's Castle was used as a navigational tool: T. Pride, *The Traveller's companion; or new itinerary of England and Wales, with part of Scotland; Arranged in the Manner of Copper-Plates, Being an accurate and comprehensive view of the principal roads in Great Britain, Taken from Actual Surveys; Wherein every Object worthy of Notice is pointed out; Illustrated by two maps* (London, 1789), p. 156.
- 76 Wyvill to Fox (29 Jan. 1798): C. Wyvill, *Political Papers, Chiefly Respecting the Attempt of the County of York...* (6 vols., York, 1794–1802), VI., p. 19.
- 77 Wyvill to Fox (13 Jan. 1800): *ibid.*, p. 50.
- 78 Bodl. MS. Eng. lett. e. 99, f. 71: Brooke to Norfolk (22 Jun. 1787).
- 79 Robinson, *The Dukes of Norfolk*, p. 177.
- 80 W. Thomson, *A Tour in England and Scotland, in 1785. By an English Gentleman* (London, 1788), p. 63.
- 81 J. Palmer, *A Fortnight's Ramble to the Lakes in Westmoreland, Lancashire and Cumberland. By a Rambler* (London, 1792), p. 74. The second edition (1795) added the following footnote: 'Probability why it is called Lyulph's tower. Edmund the first, who cleared his country of robbers, and conquered Cumberland, was assassinated at a Feast by a daring outlaw of the name of Leolf, (p. 84).
- 82 *Ibid.*, 2nd edn (1795), p. 271.
- 83 A. Radcliffe, *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794, through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany, with a return down the Rhine: To Which are Added Observations during a Tour to the Lakes...* 2nd edn (2 vols., London, 1795), II., p. 255.
- 84 *The European Magazine and London Review*, 36 (1799), p. 151.
- 85 *Ibid.*, 42 (1802), p. 373.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 36 (1799), p. 151.
- 87 *Ibid.*, 42, p. 373.
- 88 J. Dickinson, *J. Dickinson's Minutes, taken in a tour from London to Brighton, August 1793* (London, 1793), p. 9.
- 89 Wright, *History and Description of Arundel Castle*, p. 30.
- 90 *The Mirror Monthly Magazine*, 20:565 (1832), p. 157.
- 91 ACA Acc. 193.
- 92 Tierney, *The History and Antiquities of the Castle and Town of Arundel*, p. 89.
- 93 *Ibid.*, p. 158.
- 94 Robinson, *Arundel Castle*, p. 36. As Robinson writes elsewhere, Alfred 'so embarrassed later generations with its blatant historical solecism that it was banished to a corner of the park and eventually used as foundations for a cricket pavillion': *The Dukes of Norfolk*, p. 180.