

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1516/1517 – 19 January 1547), KG, (*courtesy title*), an English nobleman, was one of the founders of English Renaissance poetry. He was a first cousin of both Queen Anne Boleyn and Queen Catherine Howard second and fifth wives of King Henry VIII

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Origins

He was born in Hunsdon, Hertfordshire,^[1] the eldest son of Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk by his second wife Elizabeth Stafford, a daughter of Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham. He was thus descended from King Edward I on his father's side and from King Edward III on his mother's side.

Career

He was brought-up at Windsor Castle with Henry FitzRoy, 1st Duke of Richmond and Somerset, the illegitimate son of King Henry VIII, with whom he became a close friend, and later a brother-in-law, following the marriage of his sister to Fitzroy.^[2] Like his father and grandfather, he was a brave and able soldier, serving in Henry VIII's French wars as Lieutenant General of the King on Sea and Land.

He was repeatedly imprisoned for rash behaviour, on one occasion for striking a courtier, on another for wandering through the streets of London breaking the windows of houses whose occupants were asleep.^[2] He assumed the *courtesy title* Earl of Surrey in 1524 when his grandfather died and his father became Duke of Norfolk.^[3]

Henry Howard

Earl of Surrey (courtesy title)



A controversial painting of Surrey in 1546 with the arms of his royal ancestors Edward II (left) and Edward III (right)

Coat of arms



Arms of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, KG

Born	c. 1517 <div>Hunsdon, Hertfordshire</div>
Died	19 January 1547 (aged 29–30) <div>Tower Hill, Tower of London, London</div>
Noble family	Howard
Spouse(s)	Frances de Vere
Issue	Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk <div>Henry Howard, 1st Earl of Northampton</div> <div>Jane Howard, Countess of Westmorland</div> <div>Margaret Howard, Lady Scrope</div> <div>Catherine Howard, Lady Berkeley</div>
Father	Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of

In 1532 he accompanied Anne Boleyn (his first cousin), King Henry VIII, and the Duke of Richmond to France, staying there for more than a year as a member of the entourage of King Francis I of France. 1536 was a notable year for Surrey: his first son was born, namely Thomas Howard (later 4th Duke of Norfolk), Anne Boleyn was executed on charges of adultery and treason, and the Duke of Richmond died at the age of 17 and was buried at Thetford Abbey, one of the Howard seats. In 1536 Surrey also served with his father in the suppression of the Pilgrimage of Grace, a rebellion against the Dissolution of the Monasteries.^[3]

Norfolk

Mother

Lady Elizabeth Stafford

Marriage and progeny

He married Frances de Vere, a daughter of John de Vere, 15th Earl of Oxford,^[1] (by his wife Elizabeth Trussell) by whom he had two sons and three daughters:

- Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk (10 March 1536 – 2 June 1572), who married thrice: (1) Mary FitzAlan (2) Margaret Audley (3) Elizabeth Leyburne.
- Henry Howard, 1st Earl of Northampton, who died unmarried.
- Jane Howard, who married Charles Neville, 6th Earl of Westmorland.
- Margaret Howard, who married Henry Scrope, 9th Baron Scrope of Bolton.
- Katherine Howard, who married Henry Berkeley, 7th Baron Berkeley.

Downfall



Frances de Vere, by Hans Holbein the Younger, c. 1535



The arms for which Surrey was attainted (Edward the Confessor's arms are in the fifth quarter with a label of three points plain Argent).^[4]

The Howards had little regard for the "new men" who had risen to power at court, such as Thomas Cromwell and the Seymours. Surrey was less circumspect than his father in concealing his disdain. The Howards had many enemies at court.^[5]

Henry VIII, consumed by paranoia and increasing illness, became convinced that Surrey had planned to usurp the crown from his son the future King Edward VI. The matter came to a head when Surrey quartered the attributed arms of King Edward the Confessor. John Barlow had once called Surrey "the most foolish proud boy that is in England" and, although the arms of Surrey's ancestor Thomas Mowbray, 1st Duke of Norfolk show that he was entitled to bear Edward the Confessor's arms, doing so was an act of pride. In consequence, the King ordered Surrey's imprisonment and that of his father, sentencing them to death on 13 January 1547. Surrey was beheaded on 19 January 1547 on a charge of treasonably quartering the royal arms.

His father survived execution as the king died the day before that appointed for the beheading, but he remained imprisoned. Surrey's son Thomas Howard became heir to the Dukedom of Norfolk in place of his father, which title he inherited on the 3rd Duke's death in 1554.

Death and burial

He was buried in Framlingham Church in Suffolk, where survives his spectacular painted alabaster tomb.

Literary activity and legacy

He and his friend Sir Thomas Wyatt were the first English poets to write in the sonnet form that Shakespeare later used, and Surrey was the first English poet to publish blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter) in his translation of the second and fourth books of Virgil's Aeneid. Together, Wyatt and Surrey, due to their excellent translations of Petrarch's sonnets, are known as "Fathers of the English Sonnet". While Wyatt introduced the sonnet into English, it was Surrey who gave them the rhyming meter and the division into quatrains that now characterises the sonnets variously named English, Elizabethan or Shakespearean sonnets^{[6][7]}

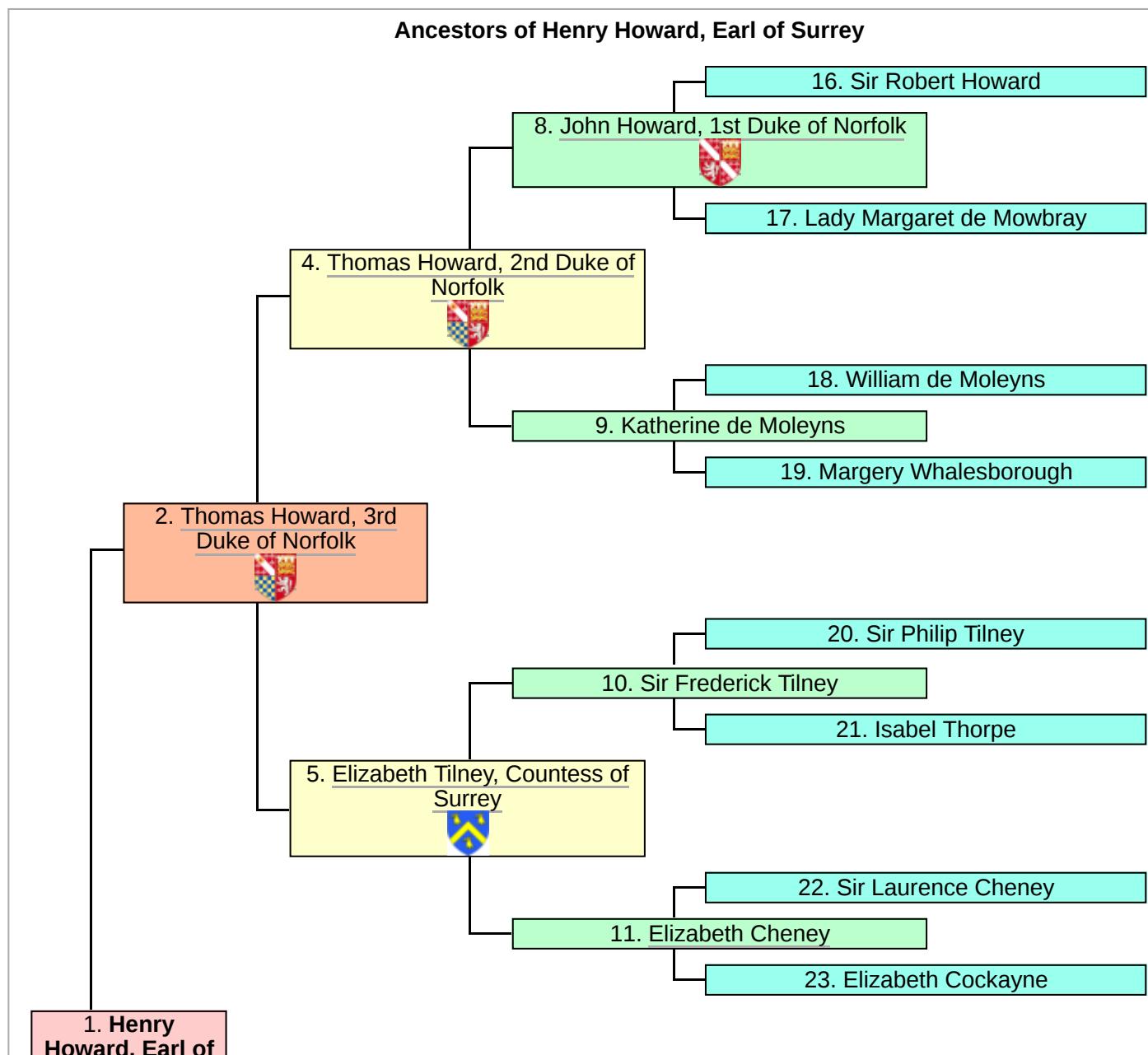


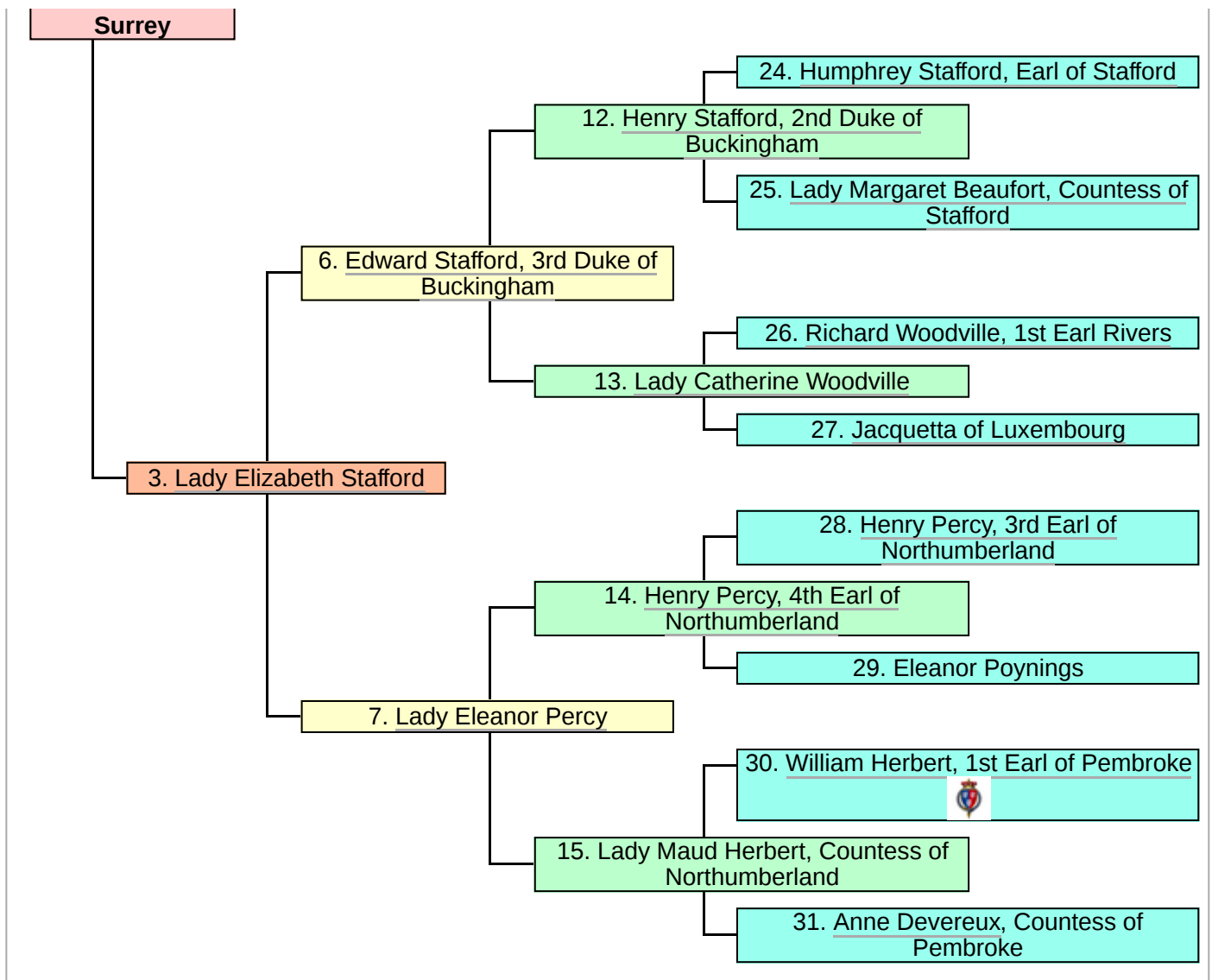
Surrey's chest tomb in Framlingham Church, Suffolk, displaying the arms of Howard and de Vere

In popular culture

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey was portrayed by actor David O'Hara in *The Tudors*, a television series which ran from 2007 to 2010.^[8]

Ancestry





References


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4. Jessie Childs, *Henry VIII's Last Victim: The Life and Times of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), plate 35.
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6. The Shakespearean Sonnet(<http://shakespeare-navigators.com/romeo/Sonnet.html>)
7. Sonnets (<http://www.sonnets.org/early.htm>)
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External links

- Works by or about Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey at Internet Archive
 - Works by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey at LibriVox (public domain audiobooks) 
 - "Complaint of the Absence of Her Lover Being upon the Sea" set to music From the 1990 concept album "Tyger and Other Tales"
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