

The life of Queen Elizabeth I

Elizabeth I was the daughter of King Henry VIII. She lived through a difficult childhood and went on to become one of England's greatest monarchs. She ruled for forty-four years.

Early life

Princess Elizabeth Tudor was born 7 September 1533, in Greenwich. Her parents were King Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn. She had one older sister, Princess Mary, and a younger brother, Edward. Elizabeth's wise teachers were amazed by Elizabeth's intelligence and by her quick wit. At a young age, Elizabeth could read, sew, play several instruments and could speak many different languages.

King Henry died in 1547 and Elizabeth's nine-year-old brother became king. When Edward died at a young age, Mary was named Queen in July 1553. Unfortunately, Mary worried that Elizabeth would try to take her throne, so she had Elizabeth arrested.



Becoming queen

Elizabeth was crowned Queen of England, on 15th January 1559, after Mary died. She worked hard to be a good queen and travelled all over the country to greet her people. She set up a group of trusted advisors, called the Privy Council - which still exists today. This Privy Council included William Cecil and Sir Francis Walsingham. The council helped Elizabeth with important matters of state. To protect Queen Elizabeth a spy network was set up by Sir Francis Walsingham.

The Armada

In the summer of 1588, warships set sail for England from Spain. It was known as the Spanish Armada and wanted to replace Elizabeth with a Catholic ruler. Although England had fewer ships, they were quicker. The English sailors managed to set fire to many of the enemy's ships.

The end of an era

On 24 March 1603, Queen Elizabeth died, leaving her cousin's son, James VI of Scotland, as King. The period is known as the Elizabethan Age - a golden era of English history. It was a time of exploration, with Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Drake discovering the New World. They brought back many new items, such as potatoes, tobacco and gold.