

# **E**lizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia (1596 - 1662)



**ELIZABETH STUART**, the eldest and only surviving daughter of **King James I and VI** and his wife **Anne of Denmark** was born at 2 o'clock in the morning of **19 August 1596** at **Dunfermline Palace in Fife, Scotland**.

At the time of Elizabeth's birth, her father was **KING JAMES VI OF SCOTLAND** and had not yet inherited the English throne. The new Princess was christened on **28 November 1596** in the **Chapel Royal at Holyrood House**, she was named in honour of James' cousin **Queen Elizabeth I of England** who stood as her godmother. She was brought up at **Linlithgow Palace**, where she was placed in the care of **Lord Livingstone**.

**On the death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603, King James 1st. succeeded to the English throne.**

**Elizabeth**, then aged 7, travelled south along with her Mother and elder brother **Henry**, to join **King James** in England. Elizabeth remained at Court for but a few weeks and there is no evidence that she was present at her parents' coronation. The royal children lived mainly at **Oatlands**, an old Tudor hunting lodge near Weybridge and at **Coombe Abbey** in Warwickshire.

**The Gunpowder Plot of 1605** was intended to assassinate **King James I** and the Protestant aristocracy, kidnap the nine-year-old **Elizabeth** from **Coombe Abbey**, and place her on the throne as a Catholic monarch.

**Elizabeth** seems to have been an intelligent child, she received an excellent education which included natural history, geography, theology, languages, writing, history, music and dancing. By the age of twelve, Elizabeth was reported to be fluent in several languages, including French. She also displayed an aptitude for writing letters that "**sounded sincere and never stilted**". She was also extremely literary and several mementoes of her early love of books exist.

A marriage was arranged for Elizabeth with **Frederick V, Count Palatine of the Rhine**, "a senior Prince of the Empire" and a staunch defender of the Protestant faith. **Frederick** arrived in England on October 16th, 1612 to meet his future wife.



The couple met for the first time in **WHITEHALL PALACE IN LONDON**, contemporaries record how **Frederick seemed to "delight in nothing but her company and conversation"**. He also became friends with Elizabeth's eldest brother, **Prince Henry**, now Prince of Wales.



**Whitehall Palace, London**



On 6 November 1612, tragically Henry, Prince of Wales, died from typhoid fever at the age of 18. The siblings had been close, and his death took an emotional toll on Elizabeth.

**Princess Elizabeth's wedding took place on 14 February 1613 at the Royal Chapel at the Palace of Whitehall, the couple were both aged 16.**

The bride was dressed in cloth of silver lined with taffeta, with a crown "of immense value" on her head, an enormously popular match, it proved to be an occasion for an outpouring of public affection. After remaining in London for almost two months, the newly-weds travelled to the **Electoral Court in Heidelberg.**



**The Royal Chapel at the Palace of Whitehall**

**QUEEN ELIZABETH STUART and KING FREDERICK had 13 children:-**

1. **Henry Frederick**, Hereditary Prince of the Palatinate (1614-1629)
2. **Charles I Louis**, Elector Palatine (1617-1680)
3. **Elisabeth** of the Palatinate (1618-1680)
4. **Rupert** of the Rhine, Duke of Cumberland (1619-1682)
5. **Maurice** of the Palatinate (1620-1652)
6. **Louise Hollandine** of the Palatinate (18 April 1622 - 11 February 1709)
7. **Louis** (21 August 1624 - 24 December 1624)
8. **Edward**, Count Palatine of Simmern (1625-1663)
9. **Henriette Marie** of the Palatinate (7 July 1626 - 18 September 1651)
10. **John Philip Frederick** (26 September 1627 - 16 February 1650)
11. **Charlotte** (19 December 1628 - 14 January 1631)
12. **Sophia**, Electress of Hanover (14 October 1630 - 8 June 1714);  
**Married Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover, had issue including King George I of Great Britain**
13. **Gustavus Adolphus** (14 January 1632 - 1641)

**On the 26 August 1619 FREDERICK was elected as KING OF BOHEMIA;** initially he was uncertain as to whether he should accept, but under persuasion from Elizabeth he finally agreed to and the family moved to **Prague. Frederick was crowned King of Bohemia on 4 November 1619 with Elizabeth being crowned Queen three days later.** Frederick's reign in Bohemia got off to a good start, the Bohemian crown, however had always been a cornerstone of Hapsburg policy and the **Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand II** was loathe to give it up.

**Frederick's rule in Bohemia proved to be brief, as Ferdinand's forces routed him at the Battle of White Mountain on 8 November 1620, thus starting the Thirty Years' War across much of Northern and Central Europe. This led to Elizabeth being referred to as the "Winter Queen".**

The family were forced to flee, the Palatinate was now occupied by the Catholic league and a Spanish contingent, which led to their taking up residence at the Hague, as the guests of the Prince of Orange.

**Frederick** later met **King Gustavus Adolphus** at Frankfurt, in attempt to restore him to the Swedish throne, he participated in Gustavus Adolphus' march into the Duchy of Bavaria, and was present for the march into Munich on 17 May 1632. On his return journey to the Hague, suffering from an infection, **Frederick** died of a "**pestilential fever**" on the morning of 29 November 1632.

**Elizabeth**, devastated on hearing the news of her husband 's death, became senseless with grief and for three days was reported to be unable to eat, drink or sleep. When her brother, now **King Charles I**, heard of her sad plight he invited her to return to England, she turned his offer down, preferring to remain and push the rights of her son and Frederick's heir, **Charles Louis**.

**CHARLES LOUIS** regained the Electorate of the Palatinate in 1648, but Elizabeth remained in exile in The Hague.

**Elizabeth** finally returned to England on 26 May 1661 to visit her nephew **Charles II**, who had recently been restored to the English throne by the **Royalist General, George Henry Monck, Duke of Albermarle**, following the death of **Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell**. She initially planned to return to the Hague after her visit, but by July 1661 she seemed to have dropped her plans to return and made arrangements for the remainder of her furniture, clothing and other property to be sent to her.

She established her household at **Drury House in London** and on 29 January 1662 moved to **Leicester House**, but by this time her health had taken a turn for the worse. Suffering from pneumonia, on **10 February 1662** she haemorrhaged from the lungs and died soon after midnight on **13 February 1662**.

**Elizabeth**, "a survivor of an earlier age, isolated and without a country she could really call her own", was buried in the **Henry VII Chapel at Westminster Abbey**, close to her brother **Henry, Prince of Wales**.

On the death of the last Stuart monarch, **Queen Anne** in 1714, Elizabeth's German grandson, **GEORGE, ELECTOR OF HANOVER**, the son of her youngest daughter **Sophia, Electress of Hanover** ascended the thrones of England, Scotland and Ireland as **KING GEORGE I**.

