

Bohemian queen

## **Elizabeth Stuart**

**1596-1662**

Intelligent, pretty and capable of inspiring great loyalty, Princess Elizabeth Stuart had a charmed start to life.

Born at Falkland Palace in 1596, the daughter of James VI and I, was brought up around Linlithgow but headed to the royal court in England in 1608.

There she enjoyed lavish festivals and masques, with lodgings at Hampton Court, Whitehall and Kew.

The question arose of a husband and the queue of suitors included Frederick Ulrich of Brunswick, Prince Otto of Hesse, and the Swedish Gustavus Adolphus.

Frederick V, Count Palatine of the Rhine and Elector of the Holy Roman Empire was finally chosen and the wedding took place in 1613 in the chapel of Whitehall Palace.

The couple then headed for Heidelberg, where Elizabeth brought an air of extravagance and refinement to the palatinate. The couple were devoted and happy.

Frederick later accepted an offer to become King of Bohemia and Elizabeth was crowned queen.

But her low-cut dresses, irregular hours, dogs and pet monkeys offended local people.

Political crises ensued and the Bohemian adventure collapsed followed by much of the family's fortune, with Elizabeth's once-sparkling life going into permanent decline.

- Read the Oxford DNB biography here: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/dnb/8638.html>.