Follow in the footsteps of Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603) in the East of England - and discover her strong associations and connections with the region.

Elizabeth: The Golden Age
In November 2007, a lavish new film ‘Elizabeth: The Golden Age’ was released at cinemas around the world. Directed by Shekhar Kapur, it tells the thrilling tale of an era - the story of one woman’s crusade (Elizabeth I) to control love, crush enemies and secure her position as a beloved icon of the western world. Many of the scenes for the film were shot in the region - including Ely Cathedral in Cambridgeshire.

Brief History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Henry VIII marries his second wife Anne Boleyn.</td>
<td>January 1533</td>
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<td>Anne gives birth to Elizabeth at Greenwich Palace in London. Three days later a grand christening is held, but Henry VIII does not attend disappointed that the child is not a boy.</td>
<td>September 7 1533</td>
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<td>Anne Boleyn becomes the first English Queen to be publicly executed. Just three years old, Elizabeth is declared illegitimate and banished from court.</td>
<td>May 19 1536</td>
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<td>Henry VIII dies at the Palace of Whitehall in London. His son (aged nine) Edward VI (from his third marriage to Jane Seymour) becomes King.</td>
<td>January 28 1547</td>
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<td>Mary I becomes Queen of England (she was the child of Henry VIII and his first wife Catherine of Aragon).</td>
<td>July 6 1553</td>
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<td>Upon her half-sister’s death, Elizabeth succeeds to the throne. She hears the news whilst at Hatfield Palace in Hertfordshire.</td>
<td>November 17 1558</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth dies (aged 70) at Richmond Palace in London.</td>
<td>March 24 1603</td>
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During the reign of Elizabeth, the country experienced a time of great achievement and prosperity - this period becoming known as ‘The Golden Age’.

The Royal Court was a centre of power and influence - from Elizabeth’s loyal and trusted ‘Privy Council’ members, such as William Cecil (1520-1598); his son Robert (1563-1612); and Francis Walsingham (1532-1590) - to numerous courtiers.
all trying to get their slice of fame and fortune. During the Summer months, Elizabeth would undertake her ‘Royal Progresses’ around the Kingdom - herself and the court accommodated and entertained with lavish expense at the homes of her courtiers. One of these passed through the East of England region in 1578.

Whilst on the throne, Elizabeth made the Church of England the state religion, her navy defeated the Spanish Armada, the first settlers reached the New World - alongside other brave voyages of discovery (Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh), and her court became a centre for writers, musicians and scholars.

### Places of Interest

#### Bedfordshire

**Woburn Abbey**  
*Tel: +44 (0)1525 290333. [www.woburnabbey.co.uk](http://www.woburnabbey.co.uk)*  
Magnificent 18th C. Palladian mansion, set in a 3,000 acre deer park. Home of the Dukes of Bedford for nearly 400 years. Fine collections of porcelain, gold and silver, furniture and art (such as the Venetian views by Canaletto).

Francis Russell, the 2nd Earl of Bedford (1527-1585) became a prominent Privy Councillor during Elizabeth I’s reign, sent on various diplomatic errands. In 1572, the Queen paid a visit to see him at Woburn.

The most famous painting at Woburn is the Armada portrait of Elizabeth, painted by George Gower - who was appointed Serjeant (official) Painter to the Queen in 1581. Hung in the Long Gallery, it commemorates the victory of the English fleet, commanded by Francis Drake, over the Armada which was sent by Spain to invade this country. The Queen is portrayed as Empress in fantastic attire, covered with priceless gems, and with her hand on a globe. On the opposite wall is a portrait of the ill-fated Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, Elizabeth’s favourite in the latter years of her reign.

#### Cambridgeshire

**Cambridge**  
*Tel: Tourist Information Centre +44 (0)871 226 8006. [www.visitcambridge.org](http://www.visitcambridge.org)*  
Famous University city, noted for its historic colleges (the first founded in 1284), complete with their courtyards and bridges across the River Cam. The crowning glory is King’s College Chapel, noted for its fan-vaulted ceiling. Take a river trip through the watermeadows and gardens of ‘The Backs’ aboard the famous punts.

*Elizabeth I visited Cambridge in August 1564. After being escorted through the streets she attended a formal oration at King’s College Chapel.*

#### Essex

**Audley End House** (nr. Saffron Walden)  
*Tel: +44 (0)1799 522399. [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)*  
This palatial Jacobean house was built 1603-14 by the first Earl of Suffolk, with the express interest of providing accommodation for visiting royalty. Magnificent Great Hall with 17th C. plaster ceilings. Rooms and furniture by Robert Adam.

The house sits on the site of a priory founded in 1140 - which during the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII was given to Sir Thomas Audley, Lord Chancellor of England in 1538. He had become extremely powerful helping
Henry to divorce his first wife Catherine of Aragon, and also presiding over the trial of his second wife (and Elizabeth I’s mother) Anne Boleyn in 1536. Audley’s daughter Margaret married Thomas Howard, the 4th Duke of Norfolk (1536-1572). He was an ambitious courier and close confidant of Elizabeth. However he fell from favour after being implicated in a plot to place Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne, and was executed.

**Colchester**
*Tel: Tourist Information Centre +44 (0)1206 282920. [www.visitcolchester.com](http://www.visitcolchester.com)*

Britain’s oldest recorded town, with over 2,000 years of history. Home of the largest Norman castle keep in Europe (now an award-winning museum), and Britain’s best preserved Roman gateway.

The **Tymperleys Clock Museum** (off Trinity Street) is set in a beautiful 15th C. timber-framed house, once the home of Dr William Gilberd (1544-1603) who served as physician to Elizabeth I. He is buried at Holy Trinity Church.

**The Gardens of Easton Lodge** (Little Easton, nr. Great Dunmow)
*Tel: +44 (0)1371 876979. [www.eastonlodge.co.uk](http://www.eastonlodge.co.uk)*

23 acres of beautiful historic gardens, featuring the formal areas created (1902-3) by leading Edwardian designer Harold Peto. The gardens, grounds and whole estate of Easton Lodge date back to Tudor times. It is believed that, in 1590, Elizabeth I granted the 10,000 acre manor to Henry Maynard as a reward for his duties as Private Secretary to the Lord Chancellor and Treasurer to the Queen.

**Hedingham Castle** (Castle Hedingham)
*Tel: +44 (0)1787 460261. [www.hedinghamcastle.co.uk](http://www.hedinghamcastle.co.uk)*

The finest Norman keep in England, built in 1140 by the de Veres, Earls of Oxford. The Banqueting Hall is spanned by one of the largest Norman arches in England.

In August 1561, Elizabeth I was entertained at the castle by the 16th Earl John de Vere (1516-1562). He had escorted the Queen from Hatfield Palace to London for her coronation in 1559. His son - the 17th Earl, Edward (1550-1604) also became a favourite of Elizabeth - acclaimed as one of the best courtier poets.

**Hill Hall** (Theydon Mount, nr. Epping)
*Tel: +44 (0)1799 522842. [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)*

This fine Elizabethan mansion was built by Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577). During the reign of Elizabeth I, he was prominently employed in public affairs becoming a trusted counsellor, then in 1572 Secretary of State. Inside Hill Hall are rare 16th C. wall paintings of mythical and biblical subjects. Today the property has been divided into private houses, but parts remain open to the public by prior arrangement.

**Ingatestone Hall**
*Tel: +44 (0)1277 353010.*

16th C. Tudor manor house, built by Sir William Petre, Secretary of State to four Tudor monarchs - Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. Family portrait collection, furniture and other heirlooms. Elizabeth spent several nights at the hall on her ‘Royal Progress’ of 1561. Sir William’s descendants still live here, and the building retains its Tudor form and appearance.

**Queen Elizabeth’s Hunting Lodge** (Epping Forest, nr. Chingford)
*Tel: +44 (0)208 529 7090. [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)*

Deer hunting was the great sport of Tudor England. In 1543, to entertain guests, King Henry VIII had this impressive three storey viewing platform built in Epping Forest. This could be used as a grandstand to watch the hunt, or possibly from which to shoot deer with crossbows. His daughter, Elizabeth I is known to have hunted in the forest on a number of occasions - and in 1589 she ordered its repair and improvement. Today the Hunting Lodge is the only remaining timber-framed Standing in England, possibly in Europe. An excellent example of Tudor carpentry.
Tilbury Fort
Tel: +44 (0)1375 858489. www.english-heritage.org.uk
One of Henry VIII’s coastal forts (c.1539), re-modelled and extended in the 17th C. Today it is the best example of 17th C. military engineering in England. It was close to the fort that Elizabeth I visited in August 1588, at a time when the Spanish Armada was threatening our shores. At West Tilbury, a vast camp for 4,000 men had been established, ready to repel invasion. Elizabeth reviewed the troops making a famous speech, “I know I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and a King of England too”.

Hertfordshire

Cedars Park (Cheshunt)
This historic park with ornamental gardens and lake was the former site of Theobalds Palace, built around 1563 by William Cecil, Lord Burghley (1520-1598). He was an English politician and chief advisor to Elizabeth I for most of her reign. When Elizabeth came to the throne, she immediately appointed him Secretary of State, then later Lord Treasurer in 1572. Elizabeth visited Theobalds on several occasions. William’s son, Robert (1563-1612) also served as Secretary of State (from 1590) to both Elizabeth and her heir James I. In 1607, he agreed with the King to exchange Theobalds with the nearby Hatfield Palace. Theobalds was largely demolished at the end of 1650, with a few traces remaining today.

Hatfield House
Tel: +44 (0)1707 287010. www.hatfield-house.co.uk
A magnificent Jacobean house built between 1607-1611 by Robert Cecil (1563-1612), first Earl of Salisbury and son of William Cecil, Lord Burghley. Today it is the home of the 7th Marquess and Marchioness of Salisbury.

Adjacent is the Old Palace (formerly Hatfield Palace) which was built in about 1485 by John Morton, Bishop of Ely. When Henry VIII (Elizabeth I’s father) dispersed the possessions of the church, he seized the building and the surrounding deer park - using it chiefly as a residence for his children - Mary, Elizabeth and Edward. Elizabeth became a gifted scholar with the ability to speak several languages. After Henry’s death, Elizabeth’s life became troubled and during the reign of her sister Mary, she found herself virtually a prisoner at Hatfield. In 1558, Mary died. Seated under an Oak tree in the park at Hatfield, Elizabeth was reading when she heard the news of her accession to the throne. In November the same year, her first Council of State was held in the Banqueting Hall of Hatfield Palace. But after this time Elizabeth did not spend much time here.

Robert Cecil’s former home was Theobalds Palace at nearby Cheshunt - in 1607, Elizabeth’s heir King James I agree to exchange Hatfield for Theobalds. On arrival, Robert immediately began to demolish the existing Old Palace, and today only one side remains (containing the Banqueting Hall).

Inside the main house, the fine state rooms are rich in paintings, furniture, tapestries and historic armour. Look out for the two portraits of Elizabeth - in the Marble Hall and beside the Grand Staircase. You can also see her hat, gloves and stockings.Outside, take a walk in the park to see the new Oak tree planted (to replace the original one) by Queen Elizabeth II in 1985, at the spot where Elizabeth heard of her accession to the throne. Whilst in the Elizabethan-style Knot Garden are a collection of Roses which Elizabeth must have known during her childhood at the Old Palace.
Norfolk

**Norwich**
*Tel: Tourist Information Centre +44 (0)1603 727927. [www.visitnorwich.co.uk](http://www.visitnorwich.co.uk)*

East Anglia’s capital, and the most complete medieval city in Britain. Surrounded by its old walls are over 1,500 historic buildings, and an intricate network of winding streets and lanes, such as cobbled Elm Hill. Norwich is dominated by its magnificent cathedral and impressive 12th C. castle keep.

Elizabeth I paid a visit in 1578, when it was the second city in the Kingdom after London. She entered via the former St. Stephen’s Gate, passing through the market area to the Cathedral. Reputedly she stayed overnight in the Maid’s Head Hotel, which dates back to the 13th C. Matthew Parker (1504-1575) was born in Norwich. He played a special part in Elizabeth’s childhood. In 1535 he became her mother’s (Anne Boleyn) Chaplain. She entrusted Parker with the spiritual well being of her daughter. After Elizabeth became Queen she appointed him as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1559.

**Bickling Hall** (nr. Aylsham)
*Tel: +44 (0)1263 738030. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)*

Magnificent Jacobean house, built by Sir Henry Hobart from 1619. It is famed for its Long Gallery, fine tapestries, paintings and rare books. The building retains much of the earlier Tudor house on the site, which was inherited by Thomas Boleyn (1477-1539). He made a name for himself at Henry VIII’s court, capitalising on the King’s ardent interest in his daughters - Mary and her younger sister Anne. In 1533, Anne Boleyn became the second Queen of Henry VIII, giving birth to Elizabeth in the same year. Unfortunately she also became the first English Queen to be publicly executed just three years later.

**Oxburgh Hall** (Oxborough, nr. Swaffham)
*Tel: +44 (0)1366 328258. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)*

15th C. moated, red-brick manor house, with an 80ft high Tudor gatehouse. Mary Queen of Scott’s needlework and Catholic’s priest’s hole. Sir Edmund Bedingfeld built the hall in about 1482 - and his descendants would find themselves embroiled in the world of Tudor politics. The second Sir Edmund guarded Henry VIII’s first queen, Catherine of Aragon. Whilst his son, Henry (1509-1583) was Princess Elizabeth’s gaoler during the reign of Queen Mary. After Elizabeth became Queen, the family were increasingly persecuted for their staunch Catholic faith.

Suffolk

**Melford Hall** (Long Melford)
*Tel: +44 (0)1787 379228. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)*

This is one of the area’s most celebrated Elizabethan houses, little changed externally since 1578. The site was once the country retreat of the Abbots of Bury St. Edmunds Abbey - but after the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Henry VIII granted the manor of Melford to William Cordell, a wealthy lawyer. He rose to become Master of the Rolls (1557-1581) and Speaker of the House of Commons.

Cordell lavishly entertained Elizabeth I and 2,000 members of her Court here in 1578 - as part of her ‘Royal Progress’ through the region. Since 1786, Melford has been the home of the Hyde Parkers, one of Britain’s most distinguished naval families. Inside is 18th C. and Regency interiors with Chinese porcelain and Beatrix Potter memorabilia. A window in the East Gallery at Melford Hall has a portrait of the Queen in stained glass.
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As Elizabeth's cousin Mary Queen of Scots conspires with King Philip II of Spain to topple her from the throne, and restore England to Catholicism - Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's trusty advisor works tirelessly to protect her from the many plots and conspiracies against her. Preparing to go to war to defend her empire, Elizabeth struggles to balance royal duties with an unexpected vulnerability in her attraction to seafaring adventurer Walter Raleigh. Cate Blanchett (Elizabeth I) and Geoffrey Rush (Francis Walsingham) reprise the roles they played in the Academy-award nominated ‘Elizabeth’ (1998).

Film Locations

Ely Cathedral (Cambridgeshire)
Tel: +44 (0)1353 667735. www.cathedral.ely.anglican.org
The cathedral is built on the hilltop site of a religious community founded by St. Etheldreda in the 7th C. The present building dates from 1081. Known as the “Ship of the Fens”, and noted for its superb 14th C. Octagon and Lady Chapel.

The building doubled as a location for Whitehall Palace in London. In the Lady Chapel (used for the Great Hall), scenes were filmed for Walter Raleigh’s presentation at court, when he showed the Queen tobacco and potatoes for the first time. There is also a sumptuous and exotic banquet held in honour of the Archduke Charles of Austria - featuring stuffed peacocks, a monkey and zebra.

The main cathedral was also used - when we see Elizabeth’s reaction to the news that Mary Queen of Scots has been executed. She is shown storming across the nave between the north and south aisles.

River Cam, Cambridge (Cambridgeshire)
Scenes were filmed on the River Cam, which double for the Thames in London. Elizabeth, her ladies-in-waiting and Francis Walsingham are shown aboard the Queen’s barge.

Hatfield House (Hertfordshire)
Tel: +44 (0)1707 287010. www.hatfield-house.co.uk
In the film, Hatfield doubles for Chartley Hall, home of Mary Queen of Scots. A room inside is also used to shoot a scene of Francis Walsingham and his brother in the study of his house on Seething Lane in London.

St. John's College, Cambridge (Cambridgeshire)
Tel: +44 (0)1223 338600. www.joh.cam.ac.uk
Founded in 1511 by Lady Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry VIII (and Elizabeth I’s great grandmother). The oldest part of the college - ‘The First Court’ was used to shoot the famous scene where the Queen and Walter Raleigh meet for the first time. This location doubled for Whitehall Palace in London. Don’t miss the famous Bridge of Sighs.

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A Royal Progress of 2007

During the Summer months, Elizabeth I would undertake her ‘Royal Progresses’ around the Kingdom - herself and the court accommodated and entertained with lavish expense at the homes of her courtiers. One of these passed through the East of England region in 1578.

Why not recreate your own tour through the region... starting at Elizabeth’s childhood home - Hatfield House. Full information on the places mentioned on the map below can be found in this information sheet.

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