

Burghley

Lord Burghley

Who was Lord Burghley?

William Cecil was an important person in the court of Queen Elizabeth 1st. He started off working for Elizabeth when she was a young Princess, and her older sister Mary was Queen. When Elizabeth became Queen, she made William her Lord High Treasurer and he became her trusted advisor, working for her for 40 years.



Where did he come from?

William was born in Bourne (get it?) in Lincolnshire. His father was called Richard and his mother Jane. His father worked for King Henry VIII as 'Groom of the Wardrobe.' William went to school in Grantham then to Cambridge University where he met and married his Tutor's daughter Mary Cheke and never finished

What happened next?

William went to seek his fortune in London, by studying Law. He then got a job in the Royal Court working for King Henry VIII.

DID YOU KNOW THIS ABOUT LORD BURGHLEY?

In 1558, Elizabeth became Queen and William her trusted advisor

William worked for Princess Elizabeth as her Surveyor

He became rich and owned 3 huge houses

He saw five Monarchs: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Lady Jane Grey, Mary I, Elizabeth I

William spent a short imprisoned in the Tower of London

The Tudor Court was a very dangerous place to work

How important was William?

Once Elizabeth became Queen, she appointed William her Principal Advisor. He reorganised the Government and advised the Queen on everything from religion, to how to run the country and avoid war, to personal matters like who to marry, (although she never did!). He made sure Elizabeth stayed safe and had people he could trust to watch over the country – he became the first 'Spy Master!'

What about his family life?

Sadly, William's first wife Mary died after she had a son called Thomas who became the 1st Earl of Exeter and lived at Burghley House. Later William married again to a lady called Mildred Cooke and she gave him 5 more children, including Robert, who became the 1st Earl of Salisbury and adviser to King James 1st.

In later life, William and the Queen fell out about the death of Mary Queen of Scots.

William retired and became ill.

On his death bed the Queen visited and fed him by hand.

He died, aged 77, having served the Queen for 40 years.



Burghley Challenge:

- Find out the names of all the titles and roles William Cecil had.
- What were the names of the houses he owned?
- What else can you find out about Wiliam Cecil?