

## **Treasury Book Exhibition 'Queen Elizabeth's Successor: The Tudor Dilemma'**

It is now over a year since we have held public exhibitions of books from the Ancient Library. The first was in the South Transept last May, but since the opening of the new Treasury there have been three more: 1611 Bible; St Edmund; and 1662 Prayer Book.

Since the beginning of August there has been a new exhibition - Queen Elizabeth's Succession: The Tudor Dilemma. This is in part inspired by the Jubilee but also gives us the opportunity to display some of the books in the library printed in England during Elizabeth I's reign or directly referring to her reign. There were over thirty to choose from and all but four are in English, quite a few being dedicated to Elizabeth - 'To the Most excellent, mightie and religious Princesse, Elizabeth' and, even, - 'To the most High, Noble, and Renowmed Princesse, our most dread redoubted, Souveraigne Lady Elizabeth.'

We took as our starting point an account of the proceedings of both Houses of Parliament in her reign compiled by Sir Simonds D'Ewes, who only just managed to be an Elizabethan as he was born in 1602. Sir Simonds lived at Stowlangtoft, was High Sheriff of Suffolk, a member of the Long Parliament and was excluded with forty others in Pride's Purge in 1648. His *Compleat journal ... of the House of Lords and House of Commons* was not published until some forty years after his death in 1650. During much of Elizabeth's reign the Lord Keeper of the Seal was Sir Nicholas Bacon, the son of the Sheep Reeve of the Abbot of Bury, who attended the monastic grammar school in the town. His office required him on a number of occasions to speak on her majesty's behalf in answer to parliamentary petitions on the delicate matter of the Queen's marriage and the succession. As Elizabeth remained the 'virgin queen', this issue seemed an appropriate focus for the exhibition.

Books have been chosen to show Parliament's determination that England should remain Protestant and to illustrate those favourites of the Queen who caused some speculation. One book, which was banned at the time for even discussing the succession, was used as evidence against Essex when he was tried and subsequently executed for treason in 1601.

The exhibition includes books donated at the foundation of the library and subsequently by rectors of Great Livermere and Sandcroft and by Charles Trimmell, Bishop of Norwich.

There are good examples of the art of Elizabethan printing, strips of illuminated manuscripts used as bookmarks and evidence that carrots can do more than make you see in the dark.

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