

Gateway to the Stuarts, 1603

England's position in Europe

- England defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588 and two other fleets in the 1590s.
- England was still at war with Spain.
- France was just emerging from a period of religious civil war.
- The northern provinces of the Netherlands were involved in a struggle with Spain for their independence.

James VI of Scotland and I of England

- When James came to the throne of England he had already been king in Scotland since 1567, albeit initially as a minor.
- He believed that England was very wealthy.
- James was a believer in the Divine Right of Kings.
- His succession was smooth and he was welcomed by most people.

The economy and finance

- The income of the monarch had not risen at the pace of inflation in the sixteenth century.
- Elizabeth had left debts of £350,000.
- War against Spain and in Ireland had been costly.
- Inflation in the 1590s had been particularly severe.
- Assessment for parliamentary taxation had not been reformed.

The government of England

- The personality of the monarch was important in ruling the country.
- Parliament was called when the monarch wanted and could also be dissolved or prorogued when they wished.
- Parliament had failed to gain power during Elizabeth's reign although there had been some clashes with the Queen.
- The court moved with the monarch, entertained the monarch and tried to influence the monarch.
- Law and order in the locality was maintained by Justices of the Peace.

What was England like in 1603?

Religion in England

- Elizabeth's reign brought religious stability. Her religious settlement was a compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism.
- Catholicism appeared to be in decline in England and was discredited by its link with rebellion.
- The Church of England appeared to be secure as Presbyterianism was crushed and there were few separatists.
- The Puritan threat appeared to have been silenced both in parliament and in the localities through the work of Elizabeth's last archbishop, John Whitgift.

The Elizabethan legacy

- The period after 1588 is often seen as a crisis period because of social and economic problems caused by inflation, unrest at home and in Ireland and clashes in parliament.
- A cult had developed around Elizabeth, who was seen as a Virgin Queen.
- Her rule had brought stability in contrast to the reigns of previous monarchs.
- Her reign was often seen as a 'Golden Age' due to the cultural achievements of the period, with men such as William Shakespeare writing plays; but it was also a recognition of her popularity.

Chapter 1

James I and parliament

This chapter concerns the nature of James I's relationship with his parliaments. It considers how far James' belief in the Divine Right of Kings contributed to his difficulties with parliament. It analyses the reasons why finance was such a constant cause of disagreement. It examines the means whereby the treasurers tried to increase revenue and the reasons, such as the King's extravagance, why they found it hard to do so. It outlines royal hopes for a peaceful foreign policy and the difficulties James faced in realising such a policy in a Europe which was more and more divided by religion.

This chapter focuses on a number of key issues:

- What did James mean by Divine Right?
- Why did James have such problems over finance?
- How did James try to solve his financial problems?
- Why did James and parliament disagree?
- What were the aims and actions of James' foreign policy?
- Why was parliament critical of James' policy?

This chapter will also explain how to understand the wording of a question and then how to plan a response to the question. It will focus on identifying the key words within the question and then explain how to ensure that you address the key demands of the actual question, rather than simply writing all you know about a topic.

Timeline

1603	March	Accession of James I	1614	April to June	'Addled Parliament'
1604	March	Parliament meets		December	Cockayne's scheme
	August	Treaty of London with Spain	1618	May	Outbreak of Thirty Years War
1605–06		Second session of parliament	1619	November	Acceptance of Bohemian Crown by Frederick
1605	March	Robert Cecil created Earl of Salisbury	1621	January	Parliament meets
1606	July	Bate's Case		March	Cranfield made Lord Treasurer
1606–07		Third session of parliament		December	Protestation of the Commons
1608	March	New Book of Rates and impositions levied	1623	February	Buckingham and Prince Charles travel to Madrid
1610	July	Fourth session of parliament	1624	February	Parliament meets
1610	November	Great Contract rejected		June	Marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria agreed
1611	February	Dissolution of parliament	1625	March	Death of James
1612	May	Death of Salisbury			
1613	February	Marriage of Princess Elizabeth and Frederick of the Palatinate			

The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth; for kings are not only God's lieutenants on earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods. Kings are justly called gods for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of divine power upon earth, for if you will consider the attributes of God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a king. God hath power to create or destroy, make or unmake, at his pleasure: to give life or send death, to judge all and to be judged not accountable to none: to raise low things and to make high things low at his pleasure. And the like power have kings: they make and unmake their subjects; they have power of raising and casting down; of life and of death; judges over all their subjects and yet accountable to none but God only.

This sounded very much like absolutism. Yet at the end of the speech James added that:

a king governing in a settled kingdom leaves to be a king and degenerates into a tyrant as soon as he leaves off to rule according to law....I shall ever be willing to make the reason appear of all my doings, and rule my actions according to my laws.

(Stan Houston, *James I*, 1995, pages 121–22.)

This speech is a good illustration of the problems over Divine Right. James was prone to making these apparently excessive general claims, yet he ruled within the law. He took his coronation oath to cherish the law seriously. He never raised taxes without consent from parliament and he recognised that he could not make laws on his own. In 1610 parliament claimed he was abusing his powers by creating new crimes by proclamations. James consulted his Chief Justices and they agreed, whereupon he ceased to issue such proclamations, thus showing his respect for the law.

In the later years of his reign James became embroiled in a dispute with Sir Edward Coke, his Chief Justice, who saw the common law as sovereign and James as trying to defy the law. Coke was dismissed in 1616 but continued his campaigns in parliament.

Activity

- 1 Explain why parliament was wary about the Divine Right of Kings.
- 2 How far does the evidence suggest James was aiming at absolutism? Copy and complete the following table with your thoughts.

Evidence for	Evidence against

Sir Edward Coke

Sir Edward Coke, born 1552, was a lawyer and MP. He had been **Speaker** of the House of Commons and Attorney-General (the Crown's chief legal officer). He told James 'His Majesty was not learned in the laws of England'. In 1621 he helped draw up the Protestation (see page 26) and he supported **impeachment** of royal ministers. His opposition continued into the next reign.

Why did James have such problems over finance?

The reasons for financial problems for individuals, kings and governments change little across the ages. Too little income and too great expenditure are the basic causes and James suffered from both of these. As we shall see, the underlying reasons were a mixture of unfortunate circumstances and unwise actions.

Why did James not have enough income?

James came to the English throne in March 1603, on the death of Elizabeth I, and journeyed south to take up his inheritance happily anticipating richness and ease.

He discovered that he had been bequeathed a substantial debt of about £420,000. This was considerably more than the average annual Crown income. However, it was not as serious a problem as it appeared. There was still £300,000 of the grant made by parliament in 1601 to come in and £100,000 of the debt was owed to the landowners who had paid a forced loan in the 1590s and who had long given up any expectation that it would be repaid. Elizabeth had also lent large sums to Henry IV of France and to the Dutch and when she was a creditor her expectations were that there would be repayment.

However, there were other issues which would have a real impact on James' revenue. The main parliamentary tax was the **subsidy**. It was often accompanied by grants of **fifteenths and tenths**. It was irregular as it could be collected only when parliament agreed and was meant to be only for

emergencies like war. For the rest of the time James was meant to 'live of his own'; that is to subsist on the income from Crown lands and other sources. Unfortunately for James, the amount brought in by a subsidy had declined drastically. In 1558 Elizabeth had received about £137,000 from each subsidy. By 1621 this had fallen to £72,500, a drop of nearly half the value. To make matters worse there had been inflation over Elizabeth's reign which meant that James could buy about a fifth of what Elizabeth had been able to fund from a subsidy. The reason for the decline in the value of the subsidy was that the householders who paid it were assessed by commissions often consisting of their neighbours. Hence estates and possessions were under-valued as commissioners had no desire to court local unpopularity. The Duke of Buckingham, whose income was close to £400,000 a year was assessed at £400. In Sussex, 78 gentry families paid an average of £48 in 1560. By 1626 this had fallen to £14. To expect taxpayers to reverse this situation voluntarily would be foolish. James wrote to his Council in 1607 that 'the only disease and consumption which I can ever apprehend as likeliest to endanger me, is this canker of want, which being removed, I could think myself as happy in all other respects as any other king or monarch that ever was since the birth of Christ' (Stan Houston, *James I*, 1995, page 14). Sadly this situation could not be achieved.

James contributed to his financial problems by his growing and apparently uncontrollable extravagance. James had been brought up in unusual circumstances in Scotland with the death of his father in 1567 and the enforced abdication of his mother in 1567, when he was one year old. The Scottish lords responsible for his education saw that he was well taught and his physical needs were all met, but emotionally he was insecure. He seemed unable to accept that he could be liked for himself and so needed to give lavish presents to his friends to maintain their friendship. His generosity began on his journey to London in 1603 and he gave Elizabeth an impressive funeral. One of James' Scottish friends was James Hay, Earl of Carlisle, whose catchphrase was 'Spend and God will send.' Hay invented the ante-supper where a whole meal would be prepared and then removed and discarded before the real supper was served. In 1621 an ante-supper at a Twelfth Night feast cost over £3000, which was about the annual income of a wealthy landowner. One estimate was that Hay received gifts from James totalling £400,000, a year's royal income. Hay was in charge of the royal wardrobe, where expenditure quadrupled. When economies were needed it was decided the only way to stop Hay was to buy him out, even though this cost £20,000.

This pattern was repeated with other friends and supporters. Where Elizabeth had been frugal, James was magnanimous and generous. By 1610 he was giving away £80,000 a year as compared with £30,000 under Elizabeth. Admittedly, Elizabeth had been very sparing in her gifts in her later years so there was some pent-up demand to satisfy, but James went much too far. He was fond of jewels and spent £185,000 in this way over nine years. James expanded the personnel in the royal household, possibly adding as many as 200 extra courtiers, all of whom had to be fed and many of whom pilfered regularly from household provisions. Then he liked lavish court entertainment. The Accession Day Tournaments were held on 24 March, with plenty of pomp and pageantry. In 1621 it cost nearly £7000 to kit Prince Charles out for his debut in the tiltyard. When tournaments became less fashionable, James moved on to masques, elaborate spectacles using music, dance and tableaux, which had originally been encouraged by his wife. His architect, Inigo Jones, was used to design sets, while some of the organisation fell to the playwright, Ben Jonson. A few thousand pounds were seen by participants as a small price for such magnificence.

James did have one justification for spending more than Elizabeth had done: he was a married man with a family. His wife, Anne of Denmark, and his eldest son, Prince Henry, both had their own households. Henry seems to have followed in his father's footsteps and over a decade his expenditure rose tenfold. When he died from typhoid in 1612 he was given an elaborate funeral, while the next year James had to pay for the wedding of his daughter, Elizabeth. These two events cost him £116,000.

One of the side-effects of James' extravagance was that it cloaked the very real issue of lack of regular income. As MPs and others witnessed James' excessive spending, they were able to argue that if he was more frugal then there would not be a problem. This was not true but there was no way of proving this to James' critics while he was such a spendthrift.

Activity

- 1 Copy and complete the following table to make a list of the reasons why James could not increase his income.
- 2 For each of the reasons explain how far James was in a position to overcome it or how far it was beyond his control.

Reasons why James could not increase income	How much control did he have?

How did James try to solve his financial problems?

James was able to make some savings from his peaceful foreign policy. Once the war with Spain was over and intervention in Ireland much reduced he could spend less. He went on to avoid war as much as he could. As England and Scotland now had the same ruler there was less need for border patrols, although it was some time before the **reivers** on both sides of the border abandoned their lawless ways. He also tried to increase his income in various ways.

How did James get more money from trade?

One of the more steady sources of revenue was customs duties. These were charged on selected imports and exports and were known as 'tonnage and poundage' from their origins as taxes on wine and dry goods. The right to collect these taxes was conferred by parliament at the start of each new reign. The rates were laid down in a Book of Rates. This had last been updated in the reign of Mary I and had resulted in increased revenue for Elizabeth I. As trade expanded so did the income from duties. It also meant that the merchants paid their share of taxes and the whole burden did not fall on landowners. By the 1580s about a third of royal revenue came from customs duties.

James tried two ways to get more money from trade. First, his Lord Treasurer, the Earl of Dorset, and his secretary, Robert Cecil, decided to collect the duties in a different way. Instead of using government agents, they decided to farm out the collection process. This meant that the right to collect was sold to a group of financiers for a set figure. They then collected the duties and kept any profits they made over and above what they had paid. This encouraged them to be diligent in collection and discouraged smuggling. For the treasury the big advantage was that they knew for certain exactly how much money was coming in from the customs and they could budget more effectively. They could also borrow on the security of the revenue. The disadvantage was

Robert Cecil

Robert Cecil, born 1563, was the son of Elizabeth's chief minister, William Cecil. He was a short, hunch-backed man, possibly resulting from being dropped by his nurse as a baby. He had been secretary to Elizabeth I and continued to serve James. He was instrumental in ensuring James' succession was smooth. James enjoyed visiting Cecil at Theobalds, his country house in Hertfordshire, and so Cecil gave it to James and in return was given Hatfield, where he built himself a new house and where his descendants still live.

Thomas Sackville

Thomas Sackville, born 1536, had been made Lord Treasurer in 1599 and James kept him on in the post and made him Earl of Dorset. He was nicknamed 'Lord Fillsack' because he enriched himself from his position. He died in 1608, when he had a stroke at a Council meeting.

that, if trade boomed, then the farmers would benefit at the expense of the government. This is what happened when the Great Farm of Customs was sold to a merchant syndicate in December 1604 on a seven-year lease. The farmers paid £112,400 per year. By 1607 they were making so much money they agreed to pay £120,000, for fear of losing the lease. In 1614 the next lease for seven years cost them £140,000. By this time half of James' revenue was coming from customs duties. It could be argued that it would have been more profitable to revert to direct collection of customs, but James did not have enough reliable collectors and, in any case, they had to be paid. The second method was to increase the rates and in 1604 the Book of Rates was reissued with higher charges and adjustments to recognise changing patterns of trade.

There were other ways in which an astute treasurer could supplement the royal income. Some customs duties were not imposed to provide revenue for the Crown but to regulate trade. These did not need parliamentary consent but could be granted from the royal prerogative. The Levant Company imported currants from the Levant and such a duty had been charged to provide funds to help the merchants keep a representative at the court in Constantinople. This was necessary to ensure they were able to trade unhindered. By this period the duty, known as an imposition, was going to the Crown. In 1606 a merchant, John Bate (or Bates), refused to pay on currants he was importing through London. Alerted by Dorset, Salisbury (Robert Cecil was made Earl of Salisbury by James in 1605) pursued Bate in the **Court of Exchequer** and Judge Fleming, the chief baron of the Exchequer, found that the Crown's prerogative allowed it to impose impositions on selected goods. This was very welcome news for the ministers, although the merchants were most concerned at the possible implications. Salisbury drew up a list of over 1000 luxury items on which impositions could be charged in a new Book of Rates published in 1608. This was revenue which came in much more rapidly than the money from the Great Farm and in a single year £70,000 was raised.

How did Salisbury increase James' income?

After James' first Lord Treasurer, Dorset, died in 1608, Salisbury was given the job in addition to his secretaryship and was very proactive in increasing income. He saw that existing sources could be exploited and he had the skills and patience of a good bureaucrat. A few days with the records in the Exchequer soon gave him plenty of information about debts to the Crown which were outstanding, from **recusants** for example. He also followed up on subsidy collectors who had not yet paid in their takings. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Julius Caesar, was full of admiration for his boss who in a single day's work was capable of finding as much as £9000 due to the Crown.

Salisbury went on to look at Crown lands. These had been diminished in size in the previous century, both in the rewarding of faithful service and in necessary sales in time of war. Reduction in the amount of land held by the Crown obviously reduced the income. Cecil managed the royal woods more effectively, harvesting timber, but also conserving stocks. He sold off some small properties which were uneconomic and persuaded James to entail more land so it could not be sold. Crown tenants had to pay higher **entry fines** when they took on leases. Salisbury tried to stem James' generosity by drawing up a Book of Bounty where lists of grants available to courtiers were written. Those interested could then apply through the Exchequer, where Salisbury ensured they did not get special terms. All these measures bore fruit and an extra £100,000 per year was added to the royal coffers.

Why did the Great Contract fail?

Salisbury believed that the only way to deal with the 'canker of want' was to find some permanent source of revenue for the King. Inflation was continuing to erode the value of his income and Salisbury was seriously concerned that there was no reserve fund to meet emergencies. He gave James some very frank advice and suggested he should take Henry VII, the first Tudor king, from whom James derived his claim to the throne, as his model. As Henry was renowned for his meanness, this was an unlikely outcome. James was beginning to be disturbed by the amounts that were spent, but was apparently unable to curb his generosity. It is said that when he asked for £20,000 for one of his friends, Salisbury assembled the money in cash and then showed it to James. The King soon amended his request to £3000, but the respite was only temporary. By 1610 one calculation suggests that eleven Scottish friends had amassed over £200,000 between them.

Salisbury saw the solution in parliamentary revenue. He persuaded James to summon parliament in 1610 and put his proposals before them. This is known as the Great Contract. His suggestion was that parliament should pay off the royal debts, calculated at £600,000 and agree to give James £200,000 each year. This would need parliamentary sanction for the first payment and would continue automatically after that. In return Salisbury offered concessions over wardships and the end of purveyance and some legal privileges enjoyed by the Crown. The advantages of this proposal for the King were obvious. To convince the House of Commons that they had got a good deal was harder. In the early negotiations Salisbury had to offer the abolition of the Court of Wards, rather than reforms. He tried hard to preclude arguments about royal extravagance being the cause of the crisis, at least in public. He pointed to the expense of Elizabeth's funeral and the coming of ambassadors to see the new King. He noted that the security of the country depended on it being solvent and he referred to the stinginess of Elizabeth in her last years and the welcome contrast provided by James' open-handedness.

The House of Commons was not convinced. Their views on taxation were conservative and, indeed, outdated. In their eyes there was no war, the King was far too generous, especially to Scotsmen, extra taxes were only justified if the national interest demanded them. One MP was unkind enough to compare James I with a 'leaky cistern'; as fast as money was poured in, it came out again. They had a point in that most of them were landowners who ran their own estates and lived within their incomes.

James was not pleased with their comments and resented the slow progress over the Great Contract. He was even less happy when the Commons diverted into discussions about absolute monarchy (see page 8). Salisbury hoped to put the MPs in a more compliant mood. The popular heir to the throne, Prince Henry, was created Prince of Wales in an impressive ceremony. Salisbury hoped this would warm the hearts of MPs. He appealed to another emotion, that of fear, when he took advantage of the assassination of Henry IV of France and the consequent instability in France, as the heir was a minor. Salisbury emphasised the good fortune of England with an experienced king and an adult heir.

But it did not work. The MPs took up the issue of impositions, questioning their legality and asserting that Bate's Case (see page 14) did not provide a sufficient precedent for other impositions to be levied. After several weeks of debate an exasperated James agreed that no impositions would be initiated in future without the consent of parliament. This was a blow to Salisbury, who had been counting on the emergence of new luxury imports which he could then tax.

Prince Henry

Prince Henry, born in 1594, was a keen Protestant and happier in the public eye than his father or his brother. He was a perceptive patron of the arts, especially painting. His death, probably from typhoid, in 1612 was seen as a disaster since the shy and unconfident Charles now became heir to the throne.

Sir Francis Bacon

Sir Francis Bacon, born 1561, was Robert Cecil's cousin but there was little affection between them. Bacon was a lawyer but had not won promotion at court under Elizabeth. James knighted him and in 1613 made him Attorney-General, and later Lord Chancellor, the chief legal officer of the Crown. In 1621, Bacon's rival and enemy, Sir Edward Coke, accused him of taking bribes and he was impeached and disgraced. He claimed he was no more corrupt than other judges and did not always find innocent those who had bribed him. He concentrated on academic pursuits in retirement and published his *Essays*. There is a body of opinion which contends he was the author of some of the plays generally attributed to William Shakespeare. He died in 1626, supposedly from catching pneumonia when experimenting in the snow to see if a chicken could be preserved by refrigeration.

Sir Julius Caesar

Sir Julius Caesar, born 1558, was of Italian descent and trained as a lawyer. He held various legal posts under Elizabeth and acquired extensive estates. He was known for his ambition and desire for wealth. He became an MP and was knighted by James in 1603. By 1607 he was a member of the Privy Council. He wrote a history of the Exchequer and of the Council.

By the summer of 1610, the Commons had agreed in principle to the annual levy of £200,000, but not to any compensation for the lost revenue from the Court of Wards, nor had the payment of the royal debts been discussed. They had also granted a subsidy and one-fifteenth, far short of what James needed. The MPs then had their summer break. Reporting back to their friends and neighbours, they soon discovered great reluctance to pay a regular annual tax and increasing objections to impositions. James and Salisbury became anxious that the concerns about impositions would hold up the negotiations and removed nearly 900 articles from the list of items on which impositions could be charged.

Parliament reassembled in October, but in much diminished numbers. MPs simply did not want to have to shoulder the blame for agreeing to extra taxes and feared the wrath of the gentlemen of the shires. James made his last offer. He would take £500,000 instead of £600,000, but he needed it quickly as interest rates were crippling him. He would not compensate members of the Court of Wards who would lose their jobs, even though some of them were MPs, unless he got the money from the Commons. They refused to negotiate any more. James was further infuriated by a rumour that the House was about to petition the King to send all his Scottish friends back to Scotland and he dissolved the parliament.

The Great Contract was never to be revived.

Why the Great Contract did not satisfy James or parliament

The underlying reasons for the failure of the Great Contract can be found in the distrust between the King's subjects and the King. They feared that with an independent income he would call no more parliaments. They disapproved of his extravagant and 'immoral' court. They saw no foreign threat against which there needed to be defences. There were also vested interests. Purveyance was mostly a burden on the south-eastern parts of the country where the King spent most of his time, so abolishing it was not of universal benefit. Ending wardships was only relevant to the greater landowners. James also came under some pressure not to agree to parliament's terms. Sir Francis Bacon, always an enemy of Salisbury, told him it was unkindly to haggle with his subjects. Sir Julius Caesar argued that £200,000 was not that much more than the revenues being given up and would soon be reduced further in value by inflation. Courtiers who were officials from the Court of Wards were against the Contract too.

Arguably the Great Contract was a great missed opportunity. It recognised that royal finances could no longer produce sufficient revenue to run the country and it envisaged grants from parliament as the best solution. It even saw that the Crown would need to make concessions in order to get its money. This is, indeed, what occurred later in the century, but only after disruption and bloodshed on a scale that could not have been foreseen by James and his opponents.

What other ways were used to raise money?

Salisbury had one further idea to bring in money. He embarked on the selling of titles and invented a new one, the baronet. These were sold for £1095 and between 1611 and 1614, £90,885 was collected. In 1611, 88 purchasers came forward, of whom over 20 had Catholic connections and took this chance to show themselves as loyal subjects. James agreed that only 200 should be created, but, even so, the value fell with time and by 1622 a baronetage cost a mere £220, to the annoyance of those who had paid the full price. Much of the money raised this way went to meet the costs of keeping an army in Ireland. This was Salisbury's last contribution to James' finances. By the end of 1611 he was ill with terminal cancer and he died in 1612.

James also sold peerages, so that the number of earls increased from 27 to 65 in 1628. The revenue was often earmarked for special purposes, but was rarely

as much as James had hoped, because the courtiers who were the go-betweens in negotiations took their own cut. This devaluing of the peerage annoyed holders of ancient titles who despised the up-and-coming new noblemen.

In 1614 the Earl of Suffolk, Thomas Howard, became Lord Treasurer, but no fresh ideas for solving the financial problems emerged. He asked the King's wealthier subjects for a benevolence, a gift to the King out of their good-will. There was some grumbling as this non-parliamentary tax had last been raised in 1546, but £65,000 came in, almost as much as a subsidy.

In December 1614 James allowed himself to be persuaded to agree to a project put forward by a rich merchant and royal creditor, Alderman Sir William Cockayne. The justification for the scheme was that the profit made from cloth exports could be much increased if the cloth was exported in a finished state. Much cloth was being sent to the Netherlands unfinished and the dyeing and other processes were carried out there. Cockayne claimed that at least an extra £40,000 a year could flow to the treasury if his syndicate took over the trade. The dyeing industry would be developed, with further profits. James was taken in and he cancelled the **charter** of the **Merchant Adventurers**, who controlled the cloth trade to Germany and the Netherlands. Cockayne's company then turned out to be unable to find the capital to develop the dyeing industry or even sufficient skilled dyers and by 1615 had to ask for permission to export unfinished cloth again. It appeared that Cockayne's aim had been to seize the trade of the Merchant Adventurers. In 1616 the Dutch, whose cloth markets had been disrupted, refused to accept any more English cloth. The bales piled up in warehouses, weavers became unemployed and there were riots in the West Country wool towns. In 1617 James was forced to end Cockayne's scheme and return to the Merchant Adventurers. His only gain came from the bribes they distributed to recover their privileges. The cloth trade took time to recover as the Dutch remained resentful of the needless disruption.

In 1615 the Dutch ambassador suggested the Dutch should buy back Brill and Flushing, the towns the English held as security for the loans made to the Dutch. James eventually agreed in May 1616, even though the price – £250,000 – was less than half the outstanding debt. But he needed ready money to pay for Prince Charles' household as the prince would soon be of age and have a separate establishment.

Towards the end of his reign James also made money from the granting of **monopolies**. These were usually sold to courtiers who then had the sole right to import goods or sell licences and articles. The holders could make substantial profits as they could set their own prices as there was no competition. Hence these were very attractive purchases, even though inducements had to be paid to officials to acquire them. But monopolies put up prices and so were unpopular. They had caused serious trouble for Elizabeth I in the parliament of 1601 and James came under similar criticism in 1621 and revoked 20 of them as a concession.

Hence, taken as a whole, these various methods produced quite limited amounts of revenue, but generated a considerable degree of discontent and complaint. This helps to show how the Great Contract would have been a better alternative.

How successfully did Lionel Cranfield deal with royal finances?

Lionel Cranfield was a successful merchant, who had started in business at the bottom as an apprentice and made a fortune in the City. He had served as Surveyor General of the Customs and was brought in by the Privy Council in 1617 to supervise an austerity programme to include economies in the departments of state. Superfluous personnel were removed and perquisites of office, like the right to take away barely used and expensive wax candles, clamped down on. Even top

Thomas Howard

Thomas Howard, born 1561, had commanded a vessel fighting against the Spanish Armada. He was knighted in 1597 and enjoyed royal favour as a friend of Cecil's. His wife had Roman Catholic sympathies. James made him Earl of Suffolk and, in 1614, Lord Treasurer. But he fell from power once Buckingham supplanted Somerset in James' affections and was tried for corruption, along with his wife, Bacon being the prosecutor. He was imprisoned and fined heavily but later released by James.

The murder of Sir Thomas Overbury

The murder of Sir Thomas Overbury was one of the great scandals of James' reign. Overbury was a friend of Robert Carr, James' favourite, later Viscount Rochester and then Earl of Somerset. Overbury assisted Carr in his pursuit of Lady Frances Howard, but once Carr had married her, found she was his enemy. He was dismissed from royal service and imprisoned in the Tower in 1613, where he died from poison, possibly administered by the Countess. In 1615 details began to leak out and in 1616 the Somersets were tried for murder and found guilty, although James reprieved them from a death sentence.

Royal favourites

Royal favourites were an issue in James' reign because of his devotion to them and his homosexual tendencies, deplored by the Puritans. He had numerous Scottish friends who came with him to England. In 1607 Robert Carr, a good-looking, young, blond Scotsman caught his fancy, after being injured in a jousting match. He was followed by George Villiers. James used both as advisers and secretaries and both built up a party of supporters at court. Both controlled access to James through the bedchamber, to which only a few were admitted and through their near monopoly of patronage, so that anyone wanting a position at court or in the government needed to pay them bribes and win their support.

Inigo Jones

Inigo Jones, born in 1573, was the son of a Welsh clothworker. He joined the Duke of Rutland's household and then was patronised by James. He drew up the designs for over 500 theatrical performances and introduced movable scenery. He visited Italy and was influenced by the classical architecture of Palladio. In 1613 he became Surveyor of the King's Works. He is thought to be the first British architect of the classical style.

officials were not safe from the new broom. In July 1618 Suffolk was charged with corruption and dismissed. The downfall of his son-in-law, the Earl of Somerset, over the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury had weakened his position. His profits from office had enabled him to build Audley End House in Essex, one of the most magnificent Jacobean mansions and the largest private house in England. When James visited him there he remarked that it was too grand a house for the King but just right for the treasurer, showing a touch of irony.

The treasury came under another commission and in 1621 Cranfield was made Lord Treasurer. Like Cecil, Cranfield had a two-pronged policy: to increase revenue and to cut down expenditure. He was able to get more money out of the Court of Wards, he got the **customs farmers** to pay an extra £4000 a year and he increased impositions. On the expenditure side his economies in the Household, Wardrobe, Navy and Ordnance budgets saved over £100,000 a year. He cut military expenditure and made drastic reductions in the pensions and gifts that flowed from the King. He achieved what had seemed impossible. He balanced the books. But there was one thing he could not do. He could not stop the King spending money and he could not reduce the size of the royal debt, now approaching a million pounds. As fast as new revenues came in James gave much of them away, £500 regularly in New Year gifts to each of his Scottish friends. In 1622 James promised Cranfield that no more grants would be made without approval from the treasury and then, almost at once, began to make exceptions, especially for Buckingham, who needed £20,000 for his new house and £10,000 to prepare, with his wife, for the birth of his first child. James was also spending heavily on his building projects, notably the Banqueting House in Whitehall, designed by Inigo Jones.

It was the problems in foreign policy which ruined Cranfield's achievements. By the 1620s defence costs had tripled from ten years earlier. The trip to Madrid by Buckingham and Charles from February to October 1623 cost nearly £50,000. Buckingham returned from Spain intent on war. Cranfield, created Earl of Middlesex in 1622, was totally opposed to a war which would undo all his work. But resisting the royal favourite was a risky undertaking. Middlesex made a crude attempt to undermine Buckingham by putting his own handsome nephew forward in a ploy to attract the attention of the King. This turned Buckingham from a friend and supporter to an implacable enemy. In April 1624, Middlesex was accused of taking bribes and defrauding the Crown. He was impeached, found guilty and imprisoned in the Tower. Since his income in 1614 had been about £2500 and ten years later it was about £28,000, it seems likely that he had been as ready as the treasurers before him to fill his own pockets. But his error was to antagonise Buckingham and thus let loose all those who had suffered from his cuts, who clamoured for his downfall. James was less vengeful. He released Middlesex as soon as the parliamentary session ended and he warned his son and his favourite that they would live to regret their eager embracing of impeachments of faithful royal servants.

George Villiers

George Villiers, born 1592, was from a minor landowning family. He was very good-looking and was brought to court in 1614 in the hope that he would eclipse the Earl of Somerset, the current favourite. He went on to become even more dominant. He was knighted in 1615 and rose through the peerage to become Duke of Buckingham in 1623, the only non-royal duke in 100 years. James called him Steenie, after St Stephen, who had the face of an angel and lavished affection and gifts on him and his family. In 1617 James told the Privy Council, 'Christ had his John and I have my George.' The letters they exchanged suggest the relationship was sexual.