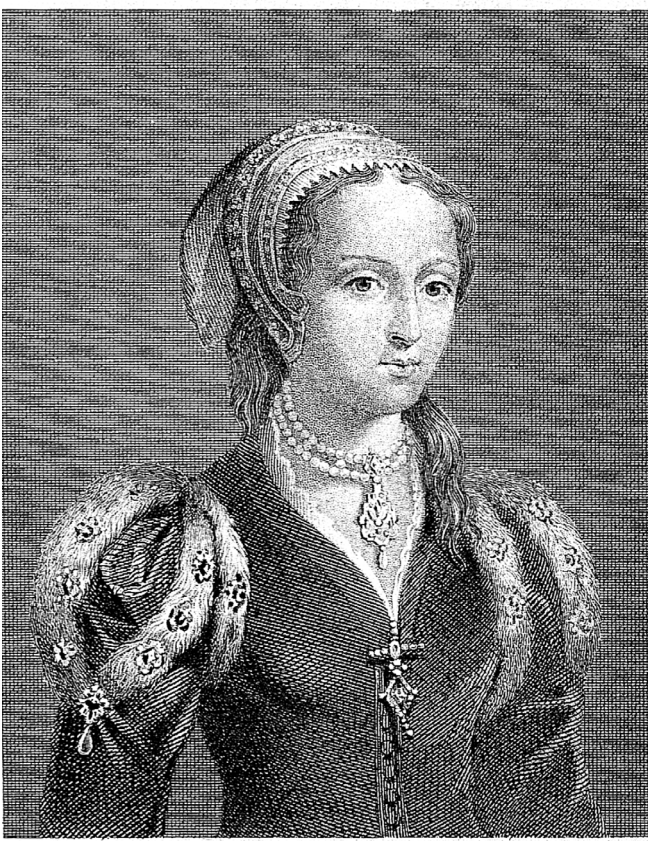


**LADY JANE GREY  
NINE DAY QUEEN  
OF  
ENGLAND**

Faith Cook





*From an Original Picture by Hans Holbein.*

JANE the Queen

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by

**Faith Cook**

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DEDICATION

To  
Kim Fisher  
my American friend, whose enthusiasm for  
Lady Jane's story has been  
a great encouragement



To visit Bradgate Park leave the M1 at Junction 22 and take the A50 in the Leicester direction. Turn left at the 1st roundabout for Newton Linford.

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## Preface and Acknowledgements

**B**radgate Park—Leicestershire’s premier country park! For almost twenty years this spacious country park with its riverside walk, its rocky outcrops, its undulating bracken-covered hills, and its mildly inquisitive deer, formed a significant part of our family life. From the mid-1960s until we left the Midlands it was to Bradgate that we returned again and again for family outings. And always the sight of the crumbling old ruins—all that remains of the palatial manor where Lady Jane Grey was born and brought up—lent a strange sobering ethos to the scene. Her pitiful and heroic story has long fascinated me and yet despite several requests I have hitherto felt unable to write about it.

Part of my reluctance to tackle such a record has lain in the complicated political intrigue that surrounded Lady Jane’s life. For one who has often been called the ‘Tudor Pawn’, no simplistic story of the life and death of a sixteen-year-old would be adequate. To understand the tragedy and triumph of Jane’s life it would be vital therefore to grasp the far-reaching political and religious changes that were shaking England at the time, as the effects of

the Reformation touched a whole population, from the palaces strewn along the River Thames, to the Universities, the emerging towns and even the peasant cottages. I must therefore apologize in advance if some of my chapters appear at first to have little to do with Lady Jane. But, like a complicated jigsaw, with a degree of patience the pieces will all be found to fit together, giving a picture of a girl with outstanding natural abilities whose strength of character and remarkable faith shine out despite the darkness that often surrounded her.

Many accounts have appeared over the years; some present her in terms of stirring heroism, others as a sweet and innocent victim and more recently as an unfortunate but misguided religious prig. A number of novels have also been written, and also a film made, embroidering her story both with credible and often less than credible detail. In this account I have attempted to sift fact from fiction and present a sympathetic though realistic assessment of Lady Jane's personality and the events of her life.

I have been grateful for the help of my local library in obtaining books long out of print and to the Records Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland which houses much material difficult to obtain elsewhere. I am grateful also to Ralph Ireland for his careful checking of my work; to David Davies for his enthusiasm for this attempt and encouragement to persevere; and my particular thanks to Jack Milner for his visits to Bradgate Park on my behalf to take some of these evocative photographs. I would also wish to acknowledge the assistance given by Michael Harrison, Land Agent & Surveyor for the Park, whose detailed knowledge of the history of Bradgate has been most helpful. My grateful thanks also to the Evangelical Library for the historical portraits, to the British Library for the picture of Lady Jane Grey's prayer book, to Lara Eakins for the photograph of the engraving in

the Tower, and to my daughter Esther Bennett for the photographs of the Tower sites. As always I would wish to acknowledge the invaluable help of my husband Paul.

Because the year 2004 marks the 450th anniversary of the death of Lady Jane, a new record of her life has also seemed appropriate. In days when absolute truth has become a casualty of our post-modern society, with its tolerance of everything except strong Christian convictions, the faith of Lady Jane Grey remains a challenge to us all. Her unswerving courage, even when the alternatives of life or death were set before her and depended upon the answers she gave, should not be forgotten.

**Faith Cook**

September 2004



# **Chapter One**

## **Born a Tudor**



**O**n a mild Saturday afternoon in late spring the car park at Bradgate Park in the Charnwood Forest is crowded with vehicles: few spaces remain. Families with young children, the elderly in wheelchairs, energetic youths with footballs at their feet: it seems that the whole population of Leicester has converged on this one spot in the village of Newtown Linford. Here we may wander beside the slow-flowing River Lin, which winds its way through the park. We may stop to gaze at the red deer, with their deep brown coats and sharp antlers; or the smaller fallow deer with their dappled brown and fawn coats that roam fearlessly on the banks of the stream, or hide among the bracken that clothes the farther bank.

The gentle greens of spring add hopefulness and vitality to the scene. Even the gnarled old oaks appear to have a new lease of life. Amid the boundless acres of woodland and undulating hills there is room for everyone to relax and delight in the fresh springtime air. Only the strange old ruins of Bradgate Manor set apart on rising ground and the odd shape of some of the oldest of the oaks appear to tell another story.

How surprised would young Lady Jane Grey have been at such a scene. For Bradgate Manor, with its wide sweep of surrounding parkland, was once the home of a girl whose short life would leave



Ruin of Lady Jane's Tower

her name stamped on the history books for many generations to come. More than four hundred and fifty years have elapsed since Jane studied, wrote letters and prayed in a small room in one of the ruined turrets—still to be seen today and known as ‘Lady Jane’s Tower’—or rode on horseback along these same paths and among these same woods. Called by some the ‘Tudor pawn’, maligned by others, or else depicted in terms of unrealistic eulogy, Jane remains one of the least understood figures of Tudor history. The scenes of her life were played out in the arena of a frightening array of self-seeking, power-hungry noblemen, many involved in political intrigue with plot and counterplot merging to confuse and obscure the truth.

On the other hand, Jane was privileged to live in days when new light was dawning on Britain as the Reformation truths increasingly gained sway in the hearts of the people. Although the Reformation of the English Church was inextricably interwoven with events taking place in the royal courts and noble houses of the day, there was at the same time a secret and yet more significant work of God moving the minds and consciences of men and women which had its spring some twenty years before Jane was born in 1537.

In March 1516 Desiderius Erasmus,<sup>1</sup> a Rotterdam scholar, had published the New Testament for the first time in its original Greek language. Hitherto Latin translations of the Scriptures, derived from Jerome’s<sup>2</sup> Latin Vulgate rendering, had been, in the main, the only versions available, and these were jealously guarded by the priests. Now hot off the Basel press, the Greek New Testament had been brought across the English Channel and had found its way into the English seats of learning—to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Side by side with an updated Latin version of the text, plus



explanatory notes, Erasmus had placed the Greek original. By this single publication Erasmus, called the ‘literary king’ of the new learning that was sweeping Europe, had done more than he could ever have imagined. He had unleashed a power both divine and awesome—the power of the Scriptures—a dynamism that would liberate Europe from the spiritual chains that had shackled the nations for many centuries.

As copies of the Greek New Testament were passed from hand to hand in the universities, a number of scholars were profoundly affected by the truths they discovered within its pages. In their private rooms, in the corridors, lecture rooms and refectories, groups of students and even university Fellows could be found discussing the Scriptures and pondering the implications of the principles of the Reformation both on the church and on their own lives. In this way the Scriptures alone, almost without any other agent, had led to the conversion of men of the calibre of Thomas Bilney, Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in 1521—and through him Hugh Latimer in 1524, a preacher whose thunderous messages powerfully influenced the royal courts of two Tudor kings.

Lady Jane Grey had Tudor blood in her veins—she was the great niece of that most controversial and shrewd of English kings, Henry VIII. Her grandfather, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, a contemporary and close friend of the young Henry, had married Mary Tudor, Henry’s youngest and favourite sister. Mary was attractive and spirited and it was no surprise that Charles Brandon had fallen in love with her. But marriage in sixteenth-century royal circles was not a question of choice or preference. Above all, it was a way of establishing power and prestige amongst neighbouring dynasties, securing the right allies and uniting against common enemies. And, in Henry’s view, what better alliance could England