



Elizabethan country houses

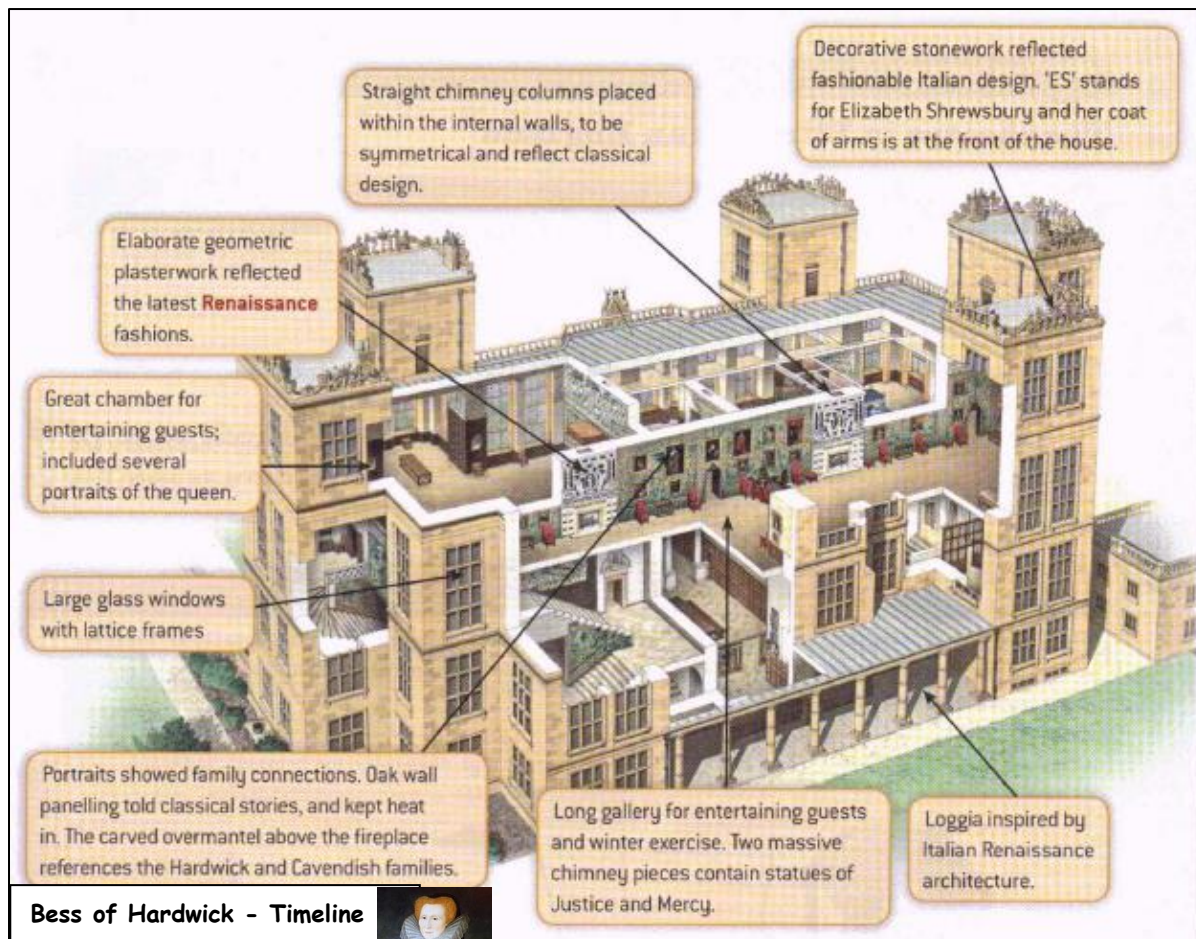
- How could the gentry afford such homes?

Who were the Elizabethan gentry?

By the 1590's there had been a rise in members of society who classed themselves as the gentry.

These were people who had made a successful career from trade and had become very wealthy. They began to fill powerful positions by becoming members of Parliament and Justices of the Peace.

Our historic site for the 16 mark question is Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire. Built between 1590 and 1597 by Elizabeth Shrewsbury (more commonly known as Bess of Hardwick) it was one of the grandest houses in Elizabethan England and used by Bess to show her great wealth and position in society.



Hardwick Hall - Four Key Rooms!

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>The Great Hall</b>          | Built on the ground floor and different to other houses in that it ran throughout the house from front to back allowing the servants to get better access to the rooms of those they were serving. They also allowed a staircase to connect the ground floor to the upper floors. |
| <b>The Long Gallery</b>        | Placed on the top floor of the house, this was once the longest gallery in England. Used for entertaining guests at balls and dinners as well as exercise in the winter. Plenty of natural light was allowed in due to the amount of windows at Hardwick ('more glass than wall') |
| <b>The Withdrawing Chamber</b> | Where Bess would entertain guests after their meal. The expensive oak wall panelling and furniture would again have been placed there to impress Bess' guests with her wealth and status. Bess and the nobility were only allowed in these rooms.                                 |
| <b>The High Great Chamber</b>  | Bess' area for welcoming guests. The room would have had paintings of Queen Elizabeth as well as the Queen's coat of arms to show Bess' loyalty to her. This room separated Bess from the rest of the household and gave her even more privacy.                                   |

Bess of Hardwick - Timeline

