



The Elizabethan in Question  
**SIR WALTER RALEIGH**

Thursday 30 January

Perhaps the most interesting (and most ruthless) Elizabethan poet, soldier, politician, courtier, spy and explorer, Sir Walter Raleigh was one of the greatest adventurers of English history. Not all of his actions were admirable. He suppressed a rebellion by the Irish against British rule then benefited from confiscated Irish estates. He was commanded by Elizabeth to "discover, search, find out, and view such remote heathen and barbarous Lands, Countries, and territories ... to have, hold, occupy, and enjoy" to become one of her earliest colonisers of America. Her vision was that from such a settlement Raleigh and his troops could attack Spanish treasure ships as they left the Americas, their ships laden with stolen gold treasures from indigenous people. He commissioned expeditions in the 1580s to settle Roanoke Colony in Virginia, which failed in mysterious circumstances, but left its legacy in Raleigh's introduction of the smoking of tobacco into England. In 1591 he secretly, without regal permission, married one of the Queen's ladies in waiting, Elizabeth Throckmorton. Disgraced, he was briefly imprisoned. On the death of Elizabeth I he was arrested again for treason and committed to the Tower. While there he wrote the first volume of his 'History of the World' and his long poem 'The Ocean's Love to Cynthia'. He was eventually condemned to death and beheaded in the Old Palace Yard in Westminster of 29 October 1618.

Culture in Question lectures take place in the Art Workers Guild, Queen Square, Bloomsbury, unless otherwise indicated. Coffee is served at 10.30, the lectures begin at 11, and a light lunch with wine is served at 1 pm. The event ends by 3.30 p.m. £90 members, £100 non-members.