

## What immediate problems did Henry VII face after his coronation?

His claim to the throne was weak; in fact it was the **weakest claim** since William the Conqueror. He was descended from the offspring of John of Gaunt (Edward III's 4th son) and his mistress (Katherine Swynford). Therefore his claim was through an illegitimate line and he was technically barred from the throne.

Other claimants included

1. **Edward, Earl of Warwick** – Nephew of Richard III and Edward IV (Father was Clarence Ed IV's brother)
  2. **John de la Pole**, Earl of Lincoln – Nephew of Richard III and Edward IV (Mum. Eliz, Ed IV's sister). Nominated by Richard III as his heir.
  3. **Edmund de la Pole** – Nephew of Ed IV and Richard III. (Mum. Eliz, Ed IV's sister)
  4. **The Princes in the Tower** - Ed V and his brother Richard. Sons of Ed IV
- **The Yorkists still had support in the north** of England and in Ireland and had a powerful ally in Richard III's sister Margaret, dowager duchess of Burgundy. This made it inevitable that other claimants would crop up and challenge Henry for the throne
  - Many of the **barons/nobles** still possessed armies (retainers) that were a constant threat to Henry and peace in the country. (Overmighty subjects)
  - The crown's **treasury was nearly empty** after the 100 Years War and the subsequent War of the Roses.
  - England **did not enjoy good relations with** many countries of **Europe**. There was a constant threat of invasion from Europe on behalf of the Yorkists. All the powers of Europe doubted Henry's ability to survive, and most were willing to shelter claimants against him.
  - **Portugal and Spain** were busily carving up the New World between them. English trade and exploration needed motivating

Henry was determined to **restore order to the nation**. England needed **stability** and Henry had to redress the balance of power in England. He wanted to be wise and firm. In Henry's mind there was no doubt that his major problem were his rivals to the throne and the overmighty subjects who might support them. Many of the nobles with whom he was going to have to deal with were greedy, selfish power seeking men who changed sides at the drop of a hat. (Stanley brothers) They were untrustworthy and had little moral conscience. This was a '**New Monarchy**' and Henry would have to fight fire with fire and would often have to employ **bullyboy tactics** against them in order to achieve his aims. His green and white dressed retainers were going to be busy. Henry was only too aware that he had won his crown in battle. If he wasn't extremely careful the same could happen to him!

## HENRY VII – HOW HE DEALT WITH RIVALS TO THE THRONE.

### Rivals and Rebellions

- In 1486, he married **Elizabeth of York** (daughter of Edward IV) and in doing so he united the houses of Lancaster and York. Some wavering Yorkist supporters were now on his side.
- Edward, **Earl of Warwick** (Duke of Clarence's son) was placed in the Tower. John de la Pole, the **Earl of Lincoln** was made to submit to Henry and recognise him as King.
- The fate of the **Princes in the Tower** is uncertain. However, there are an increasing number of historians who believe that Henry arranged for them to be killed. (Titulus Regius had been repealed – therefore they were legitimate again)
- The first rising, that of **Lord Lovell**, in 1486 was ill prepared and unimportant.
- In 1487, a **Yorkist plot** put forward **Lambert Simnel** pretending he was the Earl of Warwick. John de la Pole, earl of Lincoln, was behind the plot with additional help from many Irish chieftains, and of 2,000 German mercenaries paid for by Margaret of Burgundy. Henry immediately took the real Earl of Warwick out of the Tower and paraded him around the streets of London. There was little support for Simnel's army and it was crushed at the **Battle of Stoke** on 16th June 1487. All the Yorkist leaders, including the Earl of Lincoln, were killed except Simnel who was captured. Henry realised that he was just a pawn and he was made to work in the royal kitchen for the rest of his life.
- In 1491, The Yorkists again put forward another imposter. This time it was **Perkin Warbeck** claiming to be Richard, Duke of York, the younger of the two princes, kept/murdered in the tower. (He was coached by Margaret) An invasion in 1495, failed and Warbeck was captured and held custody in the Royal household. Henry discovered that a number of his so called supporters had been involved in the plot, including Sir William Stanley. They were all executed. Warbeck remained in custody until he escaped in 1498. He invaded again in 1499, when Henry who decided enough was enough, had Warbeck executed. Edmund de la Pole who supported the invasion fled to the Netherlands. Warbeck had received help at some time or other from France, James IV of Scotland, Maximilian I of Austria as well as powerful figures in England and Ireland.
- In 1499, Henry negotiated the marriage of his son Arthur to a Spanish princess, Catherine of Aragon. Ferdinand, the Spanish King, fearing for his daughter's safety, would not agree to the marriage until all rivals to Henry's throne had been eliminated. The Earl of **Warwick** suddenly found himself facing a charge of treason and subsequent **execution**.
- Invasion from Wales, Scotland and internally from the North were always possible. Henry set up **King's Councils** for both Wales and the North of England. Wales was of little threat because of Henry's Welsh roots. Both these councils help maintain order.
- It was not until 1506, when he imprisoned Edmund de La Pole in the Tower of London, that Henry could at last feel safe.

Henry had now effectively and successfully achieved one of his objectives.

# HENRY VII AND HIS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

## Restoring the Wealth of the Crown

Henry wanted to make the crown financially independent of Parliament, in other words he didn't always want to have to rely on Parliament granting him sums of money. He received an annual sum from Parliament (Tunnage and Poundage). Therefore, it was Henry's policy to gather up as much money as humanly possible. How did he go about this?

- Henry persuaded Parliament to pass a law which backdated the start of his reign to the death of Edward IV. Anybody who had supported Richard III was a traitor and had their lands confiscated. Henry made money from these lands.
- The collection of **forced loans**. (Morton's Fork). Henry had his own retainers dressed in their green and white livery that 'visited' selected persons. In reality, Henry was running a protection racket.
- He accepted 'free' gifts from rich subjects - called **benevolences** and seen as a sign of goodwill and respect for Henry.
- He **encouraged efficiency in administration**. Most of the royal revenue to be paid into the chamber of the household, run by able and energetic servants and supervised by the king himself.
- He used Richard **Empson** and Edmund **Dudley** ('two ravening wolves') who reintroduced many old laws which has gone out of use. Any law breakers were heavily fined.
  
- He used the **Star Chamber** to impose fines.
- He owned the **custom duties** on **wool exports**.
- The heir to a manor had to pay a succession fee on taking over his dead father's land. Known as **relief**.
- Lord's had to pay fees when their daughters married. Known as **aid**.
- Henry **sold offices** and positions to suitable buyers.
- In 1491, Henry invaded France. The French quickly agreed a **Treaty at Etaples** that gave Henry an instant £149,000. Parliament has agreed to finance the war. An instant profit for the crown.
- When Arthur married Catherine of Aragon, Henry received a **huge dowry** from Ferdinand of Spain.

Henry checked all the accounts himself and signed to that effect. He even changed his signature from time to time to avoid any fraud. Once again Henry was successful in achieving his financial aims. He is often portrayed as a miser. He was cunning and secretive and kept lists of those people who he thought were trustworthy or not. He avoided expensive wars that would have drained his treasury.

- During his reign **he increased his annual income** from £50,000 to £140,000.
- He also **accumulated a treasury** worth about £1½ million – £2 million
- He was the last King to die **leaving a surplus** in the treasury.

## HENRY VII - CONTROLLING THE POWER OF THE 'OVERMIGHTY SUBJECTS'

Fortunately for Henry many of the nobles (magnates) had been killed during the War of the Roses. There had been a policy of 15th Century ethnic cleansing/sectarianism practised by both the Yorkists and Lancastrians. However, the few who remained were extremely rich and powerful. Warwick the Kingmaker had held double the land of any previous man and had a personal army of over 30,000. Men such as Warwick, Lovelace, the Stanley Brothers and Lord Grey had been powerful enough to shift the balance of power at will during the Wars of the Roses. If Henry and the Tudor dynasty were going to survive he had to do it on his own two feet and needed to destroy such men and the threat that they posed.

### WHAT ACTIONS DID HENRY TAKE AGAINST THESE POWERFUL NOBLES?

- **The Act of Livery** was passed in 1503: This banned the keeping of armed retainers. This removed the threat of rebellion. (also called the Statute of Retainers)
- **The Statute of Maintenance** was passed:

This prevented nobles from

1. Bribing judges and juries
  2. Frightening judges and juries into giving false decision by crowding court rooms with retainers.
  3. Causing riots.
  4. Holding unlawful meetings.
- Henry gave himself the sole monopoly of **gunpowder**. Without it the nobles would not be able to defy the King in long sieges. Henry had the ability to destroy their castles.
  - **No castle building** was allowed without Henry's permission
  - Henry employed **middle-class men** and respected **churchmen** as his advisers and appointed them to the important offices in the land. Men such as Edward Poyning, Empson and Dudley and Cardinal Morton and Bishop Fox were involved.
  - **The Star Chamber Court** brought to trial any nobles who had broken the Acts of Livery and Maintenance. Juries were not used but instead a panel of judges consisting of the Lord Chancellor, Treasurer, Keeper of the Privy Seal, a bishop, two chief justices and a lord of council. Offenders were fined heavily and often had their lands confiscated.
  - Henry **refused to show favouritism**. Even his friend the Earl of Oxford was fined £15,000 for breaking the Statute of Livery and Maintenance.



Gradually, Henry struck at the wealth of the nobles. He took back all the land that had been given away. With their power broken, Henry appointed nobles who he felt he could trust to important positions. However, there was now an important difference. Henry was running the show not the nobles. Henry had once again achieved all he had set out to do.

- The nobles were now under control, less threatening and considerably less wealthy. Henry was richer and safer.

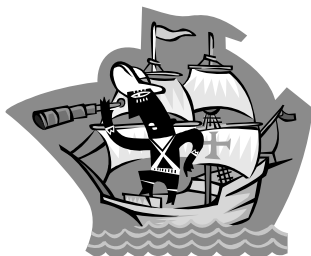
## Henry's Foreign Policy

The Hundred Years War and The War of the Roses had resulted in a breakdown of relationships and trade with Europe. Henry realised the importance of good foreign relations and healthy trade. Henry was poor and his position insecure. Peace reduced the threat of imposters and rivals finding support abroad and it was cheaper than war. Spain and France were the two powers in Europe and Henry was to play one off against the other. Support abroad would also ensure the continuance of the Tudor Dynasty.



- In 1501, he married his eldest son Arthur to **Catherine of Aragon**, thus establishing peace with Spain. The fact that Ferdinand allowed his daughter to marry a Tudor, clearly shows the growing respect that Spain had for Henry and England.
- After the death of Arthur in 1502, Henry arranged for his second son, Henry to marry Catherine of Aragon, thereby **maintaining the peace with Spain**.
- With Scotland the long tradition of hostility was harder to overcome; but Henry eventually succeeded in concluding in 1499 a treaty of peace, and in 1503, he **married one of his daughters, Margaret, to James IV of Scotland**. This reduced the French influence in Scotland and therefore also made sure there was no rebellion from over the border.
- He agreed the Treaty of Etaples, in 1492 with Charles VIII and he made arrangements for his daughter **Mary to marry Louis the Dauphin**.

## Trade



- In 1485, he passed the **Navigation Act** in order to build up the **Merchant Navy**. Wines from France were only to be carried aboard ships manned by English, Welsh or Irish sailors.
- He made **treaties** with Italian States and **encouraged English** ships to trade in the Mediterranean.
  - He made treaties with Denmark and the Port of Riga. This gave English ships valuable access to the Baltic Sea area and allowed them to compete with the powerful Hansa League of Northern Germany.
  - In 1496, Henry agreed the **Magnus Intercursus** with Flanders. This allowed the trade of English cloth and wool without a hindrance.
  - In 1497, Henry paid for **John and Sebastian Cabot's** voyages of exploration. Newfoundland claimed for England. If these had paid off, Henry would have been considerably wealthier.

## In conclusion

Henry was unattractive, hard-hearted, mean, crafty and often cruel yet he could be courteous. However, Henry appears to have achieved all he attempted to do. His success can be summed up in the important fact that when he died, his son Henry succeeded to the throne without any dispute or rivals. The House of Tudor had been established. Henry's methods may have appeared to be those of a gangster or thug. However, he lived in difficult times, surrounded by difficult people who would often not listen to reason and who were more concerned with themselves than the interests of the country. His achievements were beneficial to England and led to greater things. Many would argue that the **'end justified the means'**.

