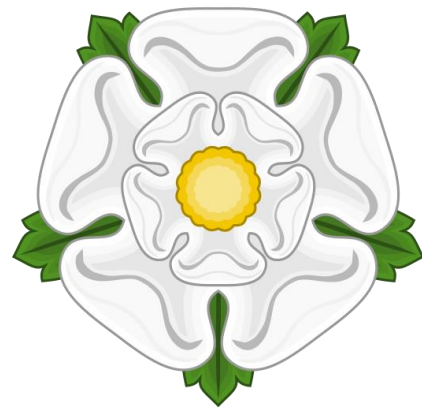
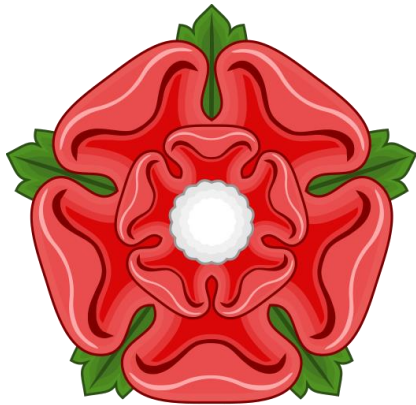




History Summer Reading

Tudors



Welcome to Tudor History!

We want you to start in September with some understanding of the background to the Tudor period. The reading will introduce you to the Wars of the Roses- a civil war fought between the rival houses of York and Lancaster. The better your understanding of these events, the better you will understand the reign of the early Tudors.

Your Tasks:

1. Complete the reading on the Wars of the Roses. Read, highlight and annotate carefully. When annotating you need to pick out key details such as key dates, terms, people and events. You should not highlight everything. This is an important skill to practice at A-Level. Then, complete the table adding examples.
2. Then read through the article on Henry VII and the Battle of Bosworth and complete the questions. This will help your understanding on how Henry VII, an ultimately the Tudors, came to power.
3. Read through the reading by Richard Rex and start completing the mind map on the problems Henry faced after the Wars of the Roses. Then, complete your own research and find more problems adding to your mind map. Finally, complete the question explaining which problem you think was the greatest and why.

Please bring this to your first lesson in September and will form the basis for your understanding of the background to Henry VII's reign which will be the focus of your first lessons in September.

It's a long summer so why not...?

You will receive a reading list created by the exam board but in addition here are some suggestions from us:

- Bosworth: The Birth of the Tudors by Chris Skidmore
- Winter King by Thomas Penn
- New Worlds, Lost Worlds by Susan Brigden
- Peace, Print and Protestantism by C.S.L. Davies

If you would prefer some lighter historical fiction which will still give you a sense of the period:

- Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel
- Anything by Philippa Gregory

Film/ TV Alternative:

- Wolf Hall
- The Other Boleyn Girl
- The White Queen- available on Amazon.
- The Winter King (available on YouTube-
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmHhqVGTHhA>

Have a great summer and enjoy ☺

Miss Becker and Miss Reece.

The invasion of '85 – how did Henry VII become king?

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

It was during a period of great instability in the later fifteenth century that a little-known boy, Henry Tudor, was born. Often imprisoned or on the run, this virtual orphan managed to achieve one of the most unlikely successes in British history by defeating Richard III at Bosworth and becoming King Henry VII. But who was he? How did he get away with it? And what were the Wars of the Roses – the events that provided the backdrop to Henry's dramatic bid for power?

In this chapter the following questions will be answered:

- A** What did Henry VII have to learn from the Wars of the Roses? (pp. 11–16)
- B** How strong was Henry VII's claim to the throne? (p. 17)
- C** How well did Henry VII's background prepare him for kingship? (pp. 18–19)
- D** Should Henry have won the battle of Bosworth? (pp. 20–24)
- E** Review: The invasion of '85 – how did Henry VII become king? (p. 25)

FOCUS ROUTE

This symbol represents Henry VII. When you see it

- note how Henry was involved in
- consider what action he should have taken or what he should have learned from

the Wars of the Roses.



A

What did Henry VII have to learn from the Wars of the Roses?

The phrase 'Wars of the Roses' is one that still rings with meaning today. It conjures up images of destruction, lawlessness and irreparable division. The Wars of the Roses were a long series of civil conflicts as the Houses of York and Lancaster battled for the Crown. The Wars of the Roses provide the crucial context for Henry VII's successful usurpation in 1485, and it is important to understand the wars if we are to assess both the reception and the task that Henry would face when he became king.

■ 2A What were the Wars of the Roses?

- 1 It was essentially a period of political instability at the top of the ruling system, involving the king and the NOBILITY.
- 2 The instability flared into open civil war on a number of occasions. The principal outbreaks were:
1459–64
1469–71
1483–87.
Note that the third period of civil war lasted two years into Henry VII's reign.
- 3 The participants cannot be clearly divided into Yorkists and Lancastrians; many members of the senior nobility were involved and some changed sides. Henry VII was a Lancastrian on his mother's side, although he bore the Tudor name from his father.
- 4 Henry VII played no active role in the conflict until his first invasion attempt in 1483.



NOBILITY

Nobles, or peers, had titles and could sit in the House of Lords. The five ranks of the nobility in descending order are: dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts and barons.

ACTIVITY

How many kings had lost their thrones through natural deaths



- (a) in the 160 years
(b) in the 30 years

before Henry VII came to the throne?
What obvious lesson did Henry VII need to learn from these statistics?

FOCUS ROUTE

Copy Chart 2C and, as you read through pages 12–16, identify the causes of the Wars of the Roses and list examples to support each cause.

MINORITY

A minority exists when a monarch has not yet come of age. Until that happens, the government is run by a regent or a regency council.

OVERMIGHTY SUBJECTS

'Overmighty' subjects were members of the nobility whose power and wealth had grown so great that they could challenge the position of the king.

ACTIVITY

How would bastard feudalism affect Henry VII?

- 1 According to Pollard (Source 2.1), what kind of personality would Henry VII need if he were to control the nobility successfully?
- 2 What level of loyalty and security should Henry VII assume he has from the nobility?
- 3 If he wanted to increase his control over the nobility, what would he need to do?
- 4 Does recent historical revision of bastard feudalism worsen or improve Henry VII's position as regards the nobility?

2B An uncomfortable throne?

King	Reign	Fate
Edward II	1307–27	Deposed by Parliament. Murdered by being disembowelled with a red-hot iron.
Edward III	1327–77	Died peacefully.
Richard II	1377–99	Usurped by Henry. Died in prison.
Henry IV	1399–1413	Died peacefully.
Henry V	1413–22	Died peacefully.
Henry VI	1422–61	Usurped by Edward.
Edward IV	1461–70	Usurped by the Lancastrians.
Henry VI	1470–71	Usurped by Edward. Murdered by stabbing in the Tower of London.
Edward IV	1471–83	Died peacefully.
Edward V	1483	Usurped by Richard. Murdered in the Tower of London.
Richard III	1483–85	Killed at the battle of Bosworth.

What caused the Wars of the Roses?**2C Causes of the Wars of the Roses**

	Long term	Short term	Immediate
First and Second Civil Wars, 1459–71	Bastard feudalism Change in balance of power between king and nobility	Economic and financial pressures on the Crown and the nobility Faction fighting and feuding among the nobility Defeat in the Hundred Years War	Weak character of Henry VI
Third Civil War, 1483–87		Weakness of MINORITY rule	Political ambition of Richard III

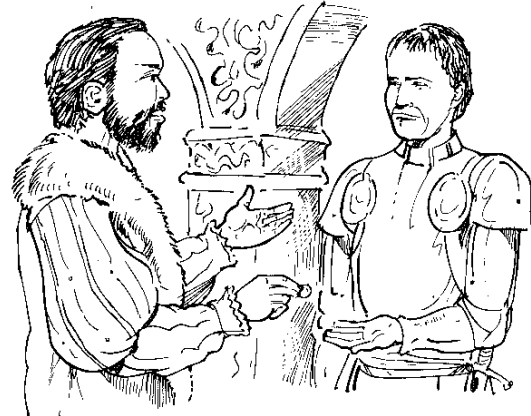
How did relations between the king and the nobility cause problems in medieval England?

The relationship between the Crown and the nobility was at the crux of the problems leading to the Wars of the Roses. To understand the changing relationship between the Crown and the nobility it is necessary to examine the wider social and economic forces that were gradually shifting power away from the monarchy. In particular, it is important to establish the nature and significance of bastard feudalism. And to understand the origins of bastard feudalism, the historian must look back to the creation of feudalism after the Norman Conquest.

Some historians have seen bastard feudalism as the root cause of the Wars of the Roses, since it allowed nobles to increase their power. These OVERMIGHTY SUBJECTS were then able to take the law into their own hands. According to R. L. Storey, 'The civil wars were the outcome of this collapse of law and order' (*The Reign of Henry VII*). This interpretation has since undergone some revision. It is recognised that bastard feudalism was rife under Henry V and Henry VI, but it is suggested that it would not inevitably lead to conflict. Indentured retaining did not necessarily create large private armies, since many of the retainers were administrators and not soldiers.



After the Norman Conquest, the legal and social system was known as feudalism. Under feudalism, the king ultimately held all landed property. The land was granted in turn to the tenants-in-chief, then to the knights and then to the serfs. In reciprocal arrangements, each group was obliged to perform duties for the group above it.



By the thirteenth century, feudalism had been replaced by bastard feudalism. This was a contract system in which annuities (annual payments) were given instead of land grants by the tenants-in-chief to knights in order to retain them. In times of need, the knights would be employed to give advice or military service.



Some retainers were kept in service by an indenture. This was a contract in which both parties kept half of the parchment, which had been cut along an indented line.

The replacement of permanent land deals (feudalism) with temporary financial ones (bastard feudalism) was a crucial factor in the changing relationship between the Crown and the nobility, for two reasons.



1 It would allow the nobles to build up an affinity (a following of men), which gave them wide influence in both politics and society.

SOURCE 2.1 A. J. Pollard, *Wars of the Roses*, 1988, p. 53

Bastard feudalism was in essence neutral. It could be a force for stability or for instability; it could be a vehicle for disorder and corruption or for order and legality. It very much depended on the local circumstances, on the personality of the lord and above all on the power and authority of the monarch. A commanding and inspiring monarch such as Henry V could co-ordinate and channel the energies of lords and their affinities into directions which were not self-destructive. A feeble and ineffective king like Henry VI stood by hopelessly as lords and their affinities turned on one another.



2 It would allow the nobles to raise an army quickly in time of war or rebellion, which might ultimately be used to threaten the king.

How did the Wars of the Roses begin?

Fourteenth-century politics was dominated by the long reign of Edward III (1327–77). He brought success and harmony to the country through his victories against the French in the Hundred Years War and through his policy of granting concessions to the nobility in order to win their support. This harmony, though, was bought at a price.

Edward's policy of conciliation towards the nobility was to result in problems for future monarchs. His successor, his grandson Richard II, tried to rule in a more autocratic fashion, but never succeeded in winning the trust of the nobility. Richard II was deposed by Henry, Duke of Lancaster, who became Henry IV.

Henry IV's son, Henry V, was successful because of his inspirational victories against the French. He returned as a hero after the overwhelming defeat that his archers inflicted on the French at Agincourt. But even he was not successful in restoring a balance of power that was more favourable to the Crown than to the nobility.

■ 2E The two sides

Lancastrians	Yorkists
HENRY VI	Richard, Duke of York
Margaret of Anjou (wife of Henry VI)	EDWARD IV (son of Richard of York)
Edward (son of Henry VI)	Richard, Duke of Gloucester (son of Richard of York; the future RICHARD III)
	George, Duke of Clarence (son of Richard of York)*
	The Earl of Salisbury
Lady Margaret Beaufort (mother of Henry VII)	The Earl of Warwick (son of Earl of Salisbury)*
HENRY VII (Earl of Richmond)	EDWARD V (son of Edward IV)
	Richard (son of Edward IV)

*Changed sides.

The story of the Wars of the Roses themselves must start with the Lancastrians and Henry V's only son, Henry VI. He inherited the throne when he was only nine months old. The Government was well run by the regency council during the period of his minority rule. The real problems began when Henry took personal control in 1437. He was a weak and vacillating monarch, easily dominated by his advisers, by the nobility and by his strong-willed and formidable wife, Margaret of Anjou. Henry VI's failure to provide leadership at the centre of government left a power vacuum that members of the nobility at court attempted to fill. This instability was heightened by the fact that, until the birth of Edward in 1453, Henry had no heir.

This tense political situation finally reached breaking point with two events in 1453:

- The French defeated the English at Castillon in France, effectively bringing the Hundred Years War to a humiliating end.
- Henry began suffering from a mental illness, catatonic schizophrenia, and was unable to communicate with anyone.

Although Henry VI recovered physically in 1455, he was not able to establish control. The court was now dominated by Queen Margaret and she was locked in rivalry with Richard, Duke of York, the leader of the Yorkist family. This tension spilled over on 22 May 1455 with the battle of St Albans. This battle is



best seen as a murderous preliminary round in the conflict. But the war itself began when Richard of York was forced to flee abroad with the powerful Nevilles (the Earl of Salisbury (father) and the Earl of Warwick (son)).

It was into this political storm that Henry Tudor, the future Henry VII, was born in 1457.

Stages of the war

The war can be divided into three stages.

Stage 1: 1459–61

The Yorkists returned to England and marched successfully to London, where Richard of York claimed the Crown. A quick series of fierce battles followed. During the battle of Wakefield, Richard, Duke of York, was killed and his son, after winning the battle of Mortimer Cross, seized the initiative and marched on London. He took the throne to become Edward IV.

After this Henry Tudor was separated from his mother and put under the guardianship of a Yorkist, William Herbert.



Stage 2: 1469–71

Edward IV established himself on the throne and successfully resisted the early challenges to his Crown. However, a powerful and very unlikely coalition of Lancastrians and former Yorkists (Margaret of Anjou, the Earl of Warwick and George, Duke of Clarence) unseated him in 1470. The pathetic Henry VI was reinstated as the figurehead monarch.

Edward IV returned in 1471 and the royal Lancastrian line was extinguished when the seventeen-year-old Lancastrian Prince Edward was murdered on the battlefield at Tewkesbury and his father, Henry VI, was stabbed to death in the Tower of London.

The only remaining Lancastrian candidate was the relatively insignificant Earl of Richmond, Henry Tudor. He had to flee to Brittany with his uncle, Jasper Tudor.



Stage 3: 1483–87

Edward IV's reign from his restoration in 1471 was one of achievement and consolidation. His position was strong for a number of reasons:

- His acquisition of the lands of the duchies of York and Lancaster and the confiscated lands of the Earl of Warwick made him the pre-eminent landowner in the country, so he had nothing to fear from other mighty nobles.
- An heir, Edward, was born in 1470.
- Lady Margaret Beaufort and her son, Henry Tudor (later Henry VII), were the only 'Lancastrians', but Edward had no reason to regard them as a serious threat because of the weakness of their claim.
- He provided law and order, and effective, authoritative government.
- He was sufficiently wealthy to have the means to 'live of his own', and so he was able to avoid introducing unpopular, heavy taxation.
- He governed through a council of his own choosing and stamped his personality upon the Government.
- He was a man of great stature (6ft 4in) and had an imposing presence. He had two sons and five daughters, and so there seemed to be no threat to his inheritance.



By 1483 Henry Tudor had been in Brittany for twelve years. As he looked across the Channel, what hope could he have had of deposing the formidable Edward IV?

Suddenly, though, in March 1485 Edward IV fell ill with pneumonia (a French chronicler at the time attributed his illness to the consumption of too much fruit at the Lenten dinner). He died from a massive stroke on 9 April, aged only 40. His young son, Edward V, succeeded him, but within three months Richard III had become king.

So why did Richard become king?

Edward IV's death should not have threatened the stability of the Yorkist inheritance. He had an heir (his son, Edward V, who was twelve years old) and a reliable regent (his brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who had proved himself to be a loyal and effective servant for Edward IV in the north).

The explanation of why the Wars of the Roses flared up again in 1483 must lie with Richard. No one predicted Richard's next moves. In a devastating three-month period he:

- took the young Edward V into custody
- executed Lord Hastings (a loyal servant of Edward IV and the strongest supporter of Edward V)
- gained possession of Richard, Duke of York (the nine-year-old brother of Edward V)
- made Parliament proclaim him King Richard III
- probably ordered the murder of the two princes (Edward V and his brother, Richard) in the Tower of London.

The usurpation and, in particular, the widely held belief that he had murdered the princes took him beyond what was seen as acceptable political behaviour. Contemporaries were horrified by what he had done and he made many enemies, lost crucial friends and brought plans for rebellion into being. This made it harder for him to survive and throughout his reign he was waiting for the challenges that he knew would come.



One important conclusion that can be drawn from the reign of Richard III is that Henry's triumph in 1485 had as much to do with the lack of support for Richard as it had to do with the appeal and strengths of the would-be usurper.

Lessons for Henry

Henry VII did not just follow the Wars of the Roses and have to deal with their aftermath; the early years of his reign were *part* of the civil war. Henry Tudor used his Lancastrian credentials to help to stake his claim to the throne and through his usurpation he reopened the Wars of the Roses. Henry knew that the dynastic instability that he had helped to perpetuate might haunt him in his reign. It is therefore vital that we establish the lessons Henry had to learn from the Wars of the Roses if he were to govern successfully.

ACTIVITY

Use the text you have just read to find examples from the Wars of the Roses to support the points in the table below. Look particularly at the reigns of Edward IV and Richard III.

Lessons for Henry VII to learn from the Wars of the Roses	Supporting example or explanation
1 Support is very fragile, even among the monarch's close family and advisers.	
2 The monarch's position is insecure.	
3 It is important that the monarch has a strong personality and is a strong ruler.	
4 It is important to establish a strong and legitimate claim to the throne.	
5 The king must create an effective working relationship with the nobility.	
6 Actions and decisions must be taken carefully because the political situation is tense, unpredictable and unstable.	
7 The feelings, anger and ambitions of both sides run very deep.	

What should Henry VII learn from the Wars of the Roses?

Lessons for Henry VII to learn from the Wars of the Roses	Give an example from the Wars of the Roses to support this point and then explain why this is important.
Support is very fragile, even among the monarch's close family and advisors.	
The monarch's position is insecure.	
It is important that the monarch has a strong personality and is a strong ruler.	
It is important to establish a strong and legitimate claim to the throne.	
The king must create an effective working relationship with the nobility.	
Actions and decisions must be taken carefully because the political situation is tense, unpredictable and unstable.	
The feelings, anger and ambitions of both sides run very deep.	

Bosworth: the dawn of the Tudors

Chris Skidmore | Published in BBC History Magazine June 2013.

From childhood imprisonment in Brittany to the violent execution of Richard III in a Leicestershire field, Henry Tudor's passage to the throne was lengthy and labyrinthine. Chris Skidmore charts the origins of the Tudor dynasty.



Wales, 7 August 1485. As the sun lowered beneath the horizon across the Milford estuary, a flotilla of ships drifted across the mouth of the Haven. It had been a week since the fleet had sailed from the shelter of the Seine at Honfleur, but the ships had made fast progress in the balmy August weather. Onboard, the soldiers waited. They included a rabble of 2,000 Breton and French soldiers (many only recently released from prison and, according to the chronicler Commynes, “the worst sort... raised out of the refuse of the people”). There were also a thousand Scottish troops and 400 Englishmen, whose last sight of the country had been two years previously, when they had fled in fear of their lives.

The ships entered the mouth of the estuary where, looking leftwards, the dark red sandstone cliffs, several hundred feet in height and impossible to scale, gave way to a small cove hidden from sight from the cliffs above. High tide had passed an hour previously, enabling the ships to creep silently to the edge of the narrow shoreline, allowing the troops to disembark. Their arrival stirred no one. The waters soon clouded with sand as the men began to heave cannon, guns and ordnance from the boats, leading horses from the ships and onto land.

From one of the boats stepped a 28-year-old man. Pale and slender, above average height with shoulder-length brown hair, he had a long face with a red wart just above his chin. Yet his most noticeable feature to those who met him was his small blue eyes, which gave out the impression of energy and liveliness whenever he spoke.

Stepping from his boat, the man took a few steps forward on land upon which he had last set foot 14 years before. Kneeling down in the sand, he took his finger and drew a sign of the cross, which he then kissed. Then, holding up his hands to the skies, he uttered words from the first line from the 43rd Psalm: "Judge and revenge my cause O Lord," which the soldiers now began to sing. As the words of the psalm echoed around Mill Bay in the darkening evening, one line in particular must have stood out above all others: "O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man."

Moment of reckoning

The journey across Wales to win a kingdom had only just begun. For Henry Tudor, his arrival to claim the crown of England was the end of a journey that had lasted his whole life. The moment of reckoning had arrived.

The remarkable rise of the Tudors to prominence is shrouded in fable. Long before Henry Tudor's landing in 1485, the family had nearly driven itself into annihilation due to their support of Owain Glyndwr's disastrous rebellion in 1400. It would take a scandalous affair to trigger a remarkable turnaround in the Tudors' fortunes.

Owen Tudor was a household servant in Henry V's court. After the king's premature death, his widowed queen, Katherine of Valois, took a shine to the handsome Welsh page, supposedly after he had drunkenly fallen into her lap dancing at a ball. Their illicit union, later formalised by a secret marriage, produced several children, including Edmund and Jasper Tudor, recognised by Henry VI as his half-brothers when he created them the earls of Richmond and Pembroke.

Edmund had his own ambitions for self-enrichment: his means would be marriage, namely to the wealthiest heiress in the land, Margaret Beaufort, the sole inheritor of the Beaufort family fortune, who had her own claim to the throne. Margaret was just a child, but when it came to marriage, land took precedence over love for Edmund. Aged just 12, Margaret found herself pregnant. Edmund, however, would not live to see the birth of his heir.

Although Edmund Tudor is reported to have died of the plague, this obscures the fact that he had been recently arrested by adherents of the king's rival, Richard, Duke of York; his treatment in prison, many suspected, hastened his death. Already divisions between the houses of Lancaster and York had been exposed to full glare at the first battle of St Albans in 1455, where Jasper Tudor himself witnessed the Lancastrian king Henry VI being injured in the fight. Civil war would soon erupt as the Duke of York claimed the throne for himself.

With Edmund's death, Jasper Tudor would assume the mantle of the head of the family. He had Margaret swiftly married to Henry Stafford, the second son of the wealthy Duke of Buckingham. But any newfound stability was to be short-lived. Despite an attempt at reconciliation, factionalism between the Lancastrian court and York's supporters erupted into open warfare in the late 1450s and into 1460, when the Yorkists secured a crushing victory at Northampton, capturing Henry VI. York was declared Henry's successor, only for a dramatic reversal in fortune when the duke was executed after the battle of Wakefield in December 1460. York's son and heir, Edward, Earl of March, wreaked his revenge two months later when, at the battle of Mortimer's Cross in early 1461, he routed the Lancastrian forces, killing 3,000 Welshmen. One of the victims was an elderly Owen Tudor, who was executed at the market cross in Hereford, his last words reportedly being "That head shall lie on the stock that was wont to lie on Queen Katherine's lap". Jasper was forced to flee, promising to avenge his father's death "with the might of the Lord."

Vengeance would be a long time coming. Edward's crushing victory at the battle of Towton a month later heralded a decade of Yorkist rule, as Edward acceded to the throne as Edward IV. In exile first in Wales and later France, Jasper was stripped of his earldom, while his young nephew Henry was placed in the charge of the new Earl of Pembroke, William Herbert, where he was brought up at Raglan Castle, under the care of Herbert's wife, Anne. His mother, Margaret, paid occasional visits to her son. However, mother and son weren't reunited until 1470, when the defection of Warwick 'the Kingmaker' forced Edward IV from power and returned Henry VI to the throne. Margaret could now pay for a bow and sheaves of arrows to keep Henry amused. She even arranged for an audience with Henry VI, who is reported to have foretold that Henry Tudor would one day inherit the kingdom.

Jasper was restored to his earldom and given extensive powers under the restored Lancastrian regime, but it was not to last. In March 1471, Edward IV launched a remarkable comeback, returning from exile in Holland. Within the space of a month, two critical battles at Barnet and Tewkesbury resulted in the deaths of Warwick, Margaret Beaufort's husband Stafford and Henry VI's son Prince Edward, shortly followed by Henry VI's own suspicious end in the Tower. The Lancastrian dynasty had run into the sand. Through the brutal consequences of war, Henry Tudor was rapidly becoming one of the last remaining members of the royal family, although his claim to the throne was hardly taken seriously at the time.

Blown off course

After the crushing defeat of the Lancastrian forces at Tewkesbury, Jasper had no choice but to flee into exile again. This time, sailing in a small boat from Tenby bound for French shores where he hoped to enlist the support of Louis XI, he took his 14-year-old nephew Henry with him. Yet when a storm blew them off course, they found themselves washed up on the shores of Le Conquet in neighbouring Brittany. At the time, Brittany was an independent duchy

separate to France and relations between the two were openly hostile, perfectly understandable given French ambitions to unite the two countries.

The Breton ruler, Duke Francis II, recognising the value of the Tudors as diplomatic pawns, welcomed Jasper and Henry to his court. Francis understood that these new arrivals could be used to bargain with Edward IV, who was desperate to have both returned to England. He remained determined to keep both under close supervision, separating uncle and nephew, with Henry sent to the isolated Tour d'Elven, where he was imprisoned on the sixth floor of its keep. Henry's exile in Brittany over the next 14 years would be spent as a prisoner, albeit with household expenses totalling £2,000, along with £620 for his own personal use.

Edward IV made repeated failed attempts to entice Francis to hand over the Tudors. In 1476, he persuaded the duke that he intended for Henry to marry his daughter Elizabeth and requested his return. Francis fell for the trap and Henry was taken to St Malo, ready to be boarded onto a ship to transport him back to England. But Henry feigned illness and, in the ensuing delay, managed to escape into sanctuary in the town.

Edward IV's death in April 1483 marked a turning point in Henry's fortunes. Following the mysterious disappearance of Edward V and his brother in the summer of 1483, together with Richard III's seizing of the crown, a massive rebellion led by the Duke of Buckingham broke out in October 1483. Spurred on by his mother, Margaret Beaufort, who appears to have been strongly involved with the organisation of the rebellion, Henry decided to sail to the English coast with a fleet of Breton ships in the hope of invading. But the rebellion collapsed and, with Buckingham's execution, Henry had no option but to return to Brittany.

Silver linings

Henry's aborted attempt to claim the crown may have ended in disaster, but its consequences were to prove highly advantageous. Hundreds of exiles fleeing from England soon arrived at Henry's 'court', many of whom were former household men of Edward IV, distraught at Richard's usurpation. They had now switched sides, backing the Lancastrian Henry Tudor. Henry also pledged an oath on Christmas Day 1483 to marry Elizabeth of York, Edward IV's eldest daughter, thereby uniting the houses of Lancaster and York.

But Henry's time in Brittany was soon to be cut short. When Richard offered to provide a force of several thousand archers to aid Brittany in their conflict with France, in return Henry and Jasper were to be arrested. Henry was tipped off about the plan with just hours to spare and managed to flee to France where he was received by the French court of Charles VIII. As a pawn in the diplomatic chessboard played out between France, Brittany and England, Henry's arrival was a gift for the French regime, who agreed to equip Henry with money, ships and mercenaries "of the worst sort" to launch an attack on Richard. At the last moment, though, they held back

on their promises of funding, forcing Henry to borrow from brokers in Paris. He set sail with his army on 1 August 1485.

Richard III was reportedly “overjoyed” at news of Henry’s landing. Yet, as Henry’s march along the coastline of Wales went unhindered, Richard grew nervous, becoming suspicious of the involvement of Henry’s step-father, Thomas Stanley (who had become Margaret Beaufort’s third husband), and his brother Sir William Stanley in the lack of resistance to Henry’s growing band of men as he travelled through north Wales and to the gates of Shrewsbury. The key defections of Welsh landowner Sir Rhys ap Thomas and Sir Gilbert Talbot provided Henry with the momentum he needed to push forward towards London, planning to march down Watling Street, the current-day A5.

Richard had spent the summer at Nottingham, waiting to see where Henry might land, but now he hurried down to Leicester where he amassed a force of some 15,000 men – at the time, one of the largest armies ever assembled on one side. On 21 August, both armies drew closer, camping the night overlooking the marshy terrain known as ‘Redemore’ near the villages of Dadlington, Stoke Golding and Upton.

Still, Henry could not be sure of the Stanleys’ final support at Bosworth. Suspecting treachery, Richard had kept Thomas Stanley’s son, George Lord Strange, imprisoned as a hostage to ensure his father’s good behaviour. Henry held a clandestine meeting with both brothers the night before, and when morning came, Stanley refused to march his forces into line, preferring to remain upon the brow of the surrounding hills, between both armies.

Richard, meanwhile, had slept badly, supposedly haunted by nightmares. He woke to find that his camp was unprepared to hear mass or eat breakfast. As both sides lined up for battle in the early hours of 22 August, it was clear that Richard’s army was vastly superior, with his “countless multitude” of men. In contrast, Henry had at best 5,000 men, of which his French mercenaries had to be kept apart from his native soldiers, for fear of them falling out.

Henry’s vanguard was led by the Earl of Oxford, the Lancastrian commander who had managed to escape imprisonment to join Henry in France. Oxford’s expertise saw Richard’s vanguard routed and the death of its commander, the elderly Duke of Norfolk. By now, Richard had begun to realise that many on his own side, particularly those led by the Earl of Northumberland in his rearguard, were standing still, refusing to fight. He was offered the chance to flee yet refused, preferring to fight to the death.

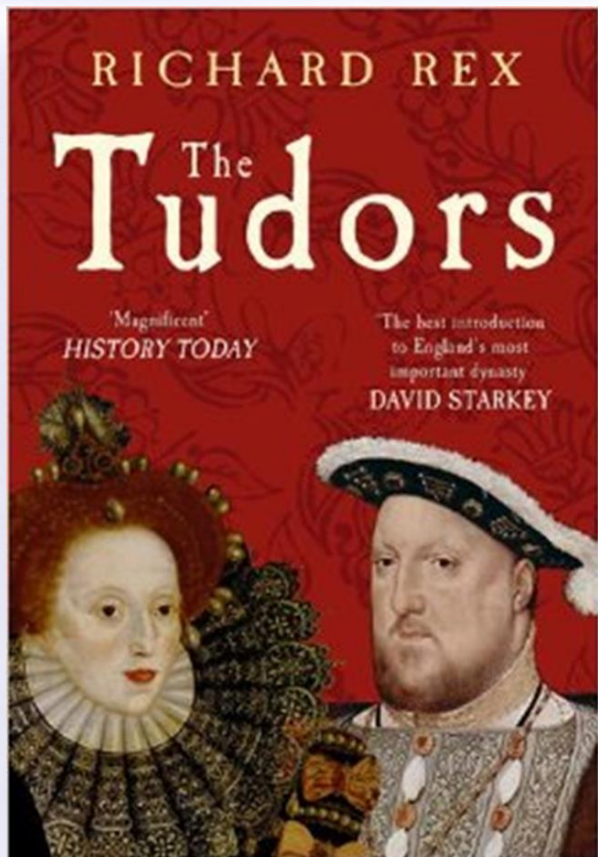
Spotting Henry at the back of the battlefield, surrounded only by a small band of soldiers, Richard charged on horseback towards its ranks. After unhorsing Sir John Cheney, at 6ft 8ins one of the tallest soldiers of the day, Richard’s men managed to kill Henry’s standard-bearer, Sir William Brandon, while Richard’s own standard-bearer, Sir Percival Thirlwall, had both his legs hacked away beneath him.

With Henry fearing imminent death, the sudden charge of Sir William Stanley's 3,000 men saw Richard swept into a nearby marsh, where he was killed as the blows of the halberds of Henry's Welsh troops rained down on him. Thanks to Richard's remains having recently – and finally – been discovered under a Leicester car park, we know that the king suffered massive trauma to the head, including one wound which cut clean through the skull and into his brain. With the king dead, after two bloody hours the battle was over: on the nearby 'Crown Hill', Henry was proclaimed king by Thomas Stanley.

Two months later, Henry was officially crowned Henry VII at Westminster Abbey. The following January, he married Elizabeth of York, thereby fulfilling his promise to unite the houses of Lancaster and York. After decades of uncertainty and exile, the Tudor dynasty was finally born.

Questions:

1. Which side of the Wars of the Roses were the Tudors on?
2. Why did Henry Tudor spend so long in exile in Brittany?
3. Who took the throne in 1483?
4. Where did Henry land in 1485?
5. Which key figures decided to join Henry?
6. What do you think was the most important reason for Henry's victory?



too many things really, but perhaps these will do: interesting me in the past, and teaching me two of the things every historian needs to learn – when to believe, and when to doubt. Thank you.

*Richard Rex
Queens' College, Cambridge*

HENRY VII

ACCESSION

Henry Tudor was one of the unlikeliest men ever to ascend the throne of England. Royal blood ran thin in his veins – drawn ultimately from illegitimate origins and filtered through the female line – and he was one of the few men in late medieval England with absolutely no claim to the throne whatsoever: his Beaufort ancestors, John of Gaunt's bastards by Catherine Swynford, had been legitimised by an Act of Parliament, but had subsequently been specifically excluded from the succession. Nevertheless, this trickle of Lancastrian blood was a valuable political asset in that intermittent series of dynastic struggles we call the 'Wars of the Roses', especially once the blood of the last direct heir of the House of Lancaster, the young Prince Edward, had been spilled on Tewkesbury Field in 1471.

After that final and catastrophic defeat for the Lancastrian cause, Henry's powerful and ambitious mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, had spirited him away from England. For the next dozen years he was sheltered in the relative security of the court of Brittany, over which presided Duke Francis, a prince almost independent of his notional sovereign, the king of France. The insecurity of Henry's early life, measured out in plot and intrigue, left a permanent mark on him. By the time he launched what would turn out to be his triumphant bid for the throne in 1485, he was for all the world a sorry figure, a nobleman long separated from his domains, a refugee who knew more of France than of his native Wales or of the England he hoped to rule. His accession owed less to the innate strength of his claim or of his position than to the staggering ineptitude of his predecessor, Richard III, in dissipating within just a couple of years the legacy of political consensus which Edward IV had painstakingly accumulated for the Yorkist dynasty.

For all the trouble Henry took to bolster his dubious legitimacy, his reign was always overshadowed by the fact that he was little more than a noble adventurer who got lucky: the first dozen years of his reign were spent scheming and fighting against pretenders whose claims were only slightly more ridiculous than his own.

Henry VII was haunted by an awareness of the political realities of his own success, as we can see in the suspicion, verging at times on paranoia, with which he viewed the governing class of his own country.

The family name of Tudor was of course Welsh, and the male line which Henry represented was of princely descent. After the destruction of the Glendowers (thanks to their disastrous revolt against Henry IV), the Tudors became the focus of the almost messianic political hopes and dreams (still preserved in a mass of bardic literature) with which the Welsh compensated themselves for military defeat and political impotence. Henry's Welsh ancestry, though of doubtful worth in English politics, was to prove invaluable in his bid for power in 1485. It was no accident that Henry landed in Milford Haven, and that Welshmen were numerous in his army. The troops brought to his banner by his uncle, Jasper Tudor, and by the Welsh magnate Rhys ap Thomas were the core of the force which faced Richard III at Bosworth Field. Indeed, much of the general success of the Tudor regime in Wales can be attributed to the Welsh origins of the new dynasty, and this loyalty, subsequently bolstered by the twin processes of union with England and religious reformation, was maintained under the Stuarts. Welsh troops were a major factor in the Wars of the Roses, and Henry's Welsh ancestry certainly helped him recruit the support of this crucial military constituency. Much later, Welsh troops were to be the core of Charles I's army in the first English Civil War, from the recourse to arms in 1642 to final defeat at Naseby in 1645.

Welshness was less of a recommendation to Henry's English constituency, although the evergreen Arthurian legends provided a useful way of bridging the cultural gap. 'Arthur' was a well-chosen name for his eldest son. Thomas Malory's hugely popular *Morte d'Arthur* had recently revived the Arthurian cycle's appeal to an English audience. Nor, thanks to his long exile, did Henry in fact bring with him the sort of personal following of Welsh hangers-on that might have offended English sensibilities in the way that James VI and I's band of Scottish freeloaders and carpetbaggers managed in the early seventeenth century. All Henry brought with him was a handful of English exiles.

Richard's reckless squandering of the political resources carefully built up by his brother opened the door to Henry. His first raid, launched from Brittany in 1484, achieved nothing more than to cause Richard to pursue his elimination through diplomatic manoeuvres. Henry had to flee Brittany for France. But in 1485 he had another go. His mother, whose various marriages had brought her a huge personal fortune along with a vast web of useful family connections, had negotiated an informal agreement with Edward IV's widow, Elizabeth Woodville, by which elements of the Yorkist connection would support Henry Tudor on the understanding that he would take Edward's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, as his wife. Encouraged at least by the evident lack of enthusiasm for Richard's regime, Henry set sail with a small band of loyal friends and mercenaries.

Landing in Milford Haven on 7 August 1485, Henry moved north and east through Wales, calling upon the Tudor connection in Pembrokehire but also recruiting from

the clients of the late Duke of Buckingham (executed by Richard III in 1483) and eventually securing the allegiance of the powerful Welsh magnate Rhys ap Thomas, who held Carmarthen Castle. His large Welsh force came together at Shrewsbury and then marched across the Midlands, encountering Richard's predominantly northern army near Market Bosworth in Leicestershire. Although most of the English peerage refrained from committing itself to either side, two large forces from the north also converged on this area: Yorkshiresmen and Borderers under Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and men from Lancashire led by Thomas Lord Stanley (Margaret Beaufort's third husband and thus Henry Tudor's stepfather). In the ensuing battle, Stanley's decision to support Henry was no great surprise. Percy's refusal to commit himself to Richard was the decisive moment. It cost not only the king's but also his own life. Four years later the Earl of Northumberland, left conspicuously undefended by his own retainers, was lynched at Topcliffe in Yorkshire by a mob protesting against tax assessments. The underlying bitterness of the north against his betrayal of a man who, for all his faults, was certainly a northerners' king fuelled both the rage of the mob and the indifference of the retainers.

Richard III's death in action (outcome of a characteristic recklessness) made Bosworth Field a decisive battle. Henry took possession of London, summoned Parliament, and backdated his reign to the day before Bosworth: a legislative sleight of hand which enabled him to pass an 'act of attainder' against those who had opposed him. (An act of attainder was a statute declaring named individuals guilty of treason, and subjecting them to a range of penalties, most importantly the confiscation of all their property and goods.) The vast majority of the peerage had studiously held aloof from the Bosworth campaign. The Wars of the Roses had taught them that the risks of fighting on the losing side outweighed the benefits of fighting on the winning side. But they now thronged to demonstrate their loyalty by attending Henry's coronation on Sunday 30 October 1485.

Throughout his reign Henry was anxious to establish continuity with both of the preceding dynasties, the Yorkist as well as the Lancastrian. His marriage to Elizabeth of York, celebrated on 18 January 1486, sealed the loyalty of many of those Yorkists who had supported him against Richard III. More importantly, it added considerably to the perceived legitimacy of their children. The reconciliation of Lancaster and York in Tudor through this royal marriage was a recurring note of Tudor propaganda, vividly expressed in the full title of Edward Hall's chronicle, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and York*, and ultimately canonised in Shakespeare's history plays.

Henry also emphasised his affiliation with the Lancastrian house by encouraging the cult and canonisation of Henry VI (who, like Charles I after him, was far more esteemed after his tragic death than he had ever been in his lifetime: bad kings make good martyrs, and the incessant stream of miracles reported by his hagiographer, John Blacman, contrasts strangely with Henry's lifetime record of passivity and detachment). Indeed, the story was put about that when the young Henry Tudor was paying a visit to Henry VI's court, the saintly king prophesied that one day the

What problems did Henry VII face after the Wars of the Roses?

Populate this spider diagram with information from the reading and complete your own research.



What was the biggest problem Henry faced and why?

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing.

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing.