

# Henry VII, 1485-1509

## Securing the Kingdom: Rival claimants and rebels



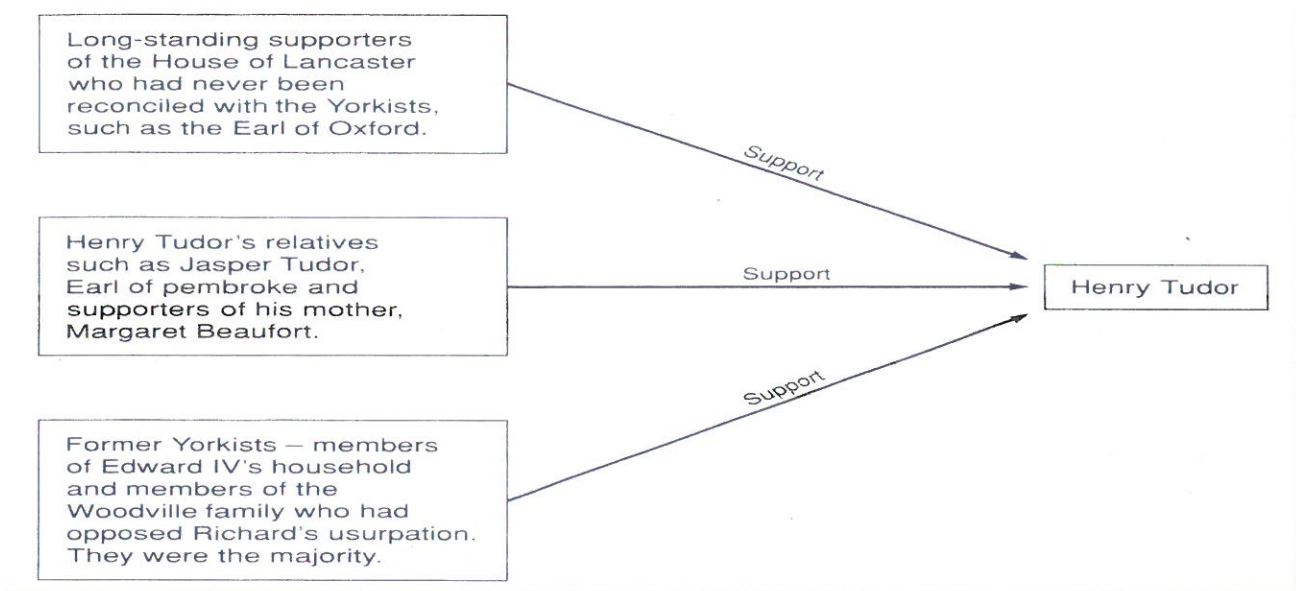
### Key Topics and Questions

1. Henry VII's claim to the throne and reasons for his victory at Bosworth, 1485
2. Yorkist Opposition – Lovell, the Stafford brothers, Earl of Suffolk
3. The pretenders – Simnel and Warbeck
4. Tax Rebellions in Yorkshire and Cornwall
5. How serious were these challenges to Henry VII?
6. Why did the challenges fail?
7. How secure was Henry VII by 1509?

## HENRY TUDOR'S EARLY LIFE AND THE STAGES BY WHICH HE BECAME KING

1457	Henry Tudor was born in Pembroke, North Wales. His father had been captured by Yorkists and had died in prison a couple of months before his birth and his mother, Margaret Beaufort, was only 13 years old. Henry and his mother were cared for by his uncle, Jasper Tudor.
1461	At the age of four Henry was placed in the care of William Herbert, a Yorkist supporter.  <i>Consider who was king at the time and the reasons why Henry, a Lancastrian, should be placed in the care of a Yorkist.</i>
1471	Henry VI died and Henry Tudor fled to Brittany. <i>Why had Henry Tudor's position now become so dangerous that he had to leave the country?</i>
1483	Richard III was King of England by this time but there were many amongst the nobility who were no longer prepared to support him. <i>What had Richard done which made him increasingly unpopular in the country?</i>  The Duke of Buckingham wrote to Henry and encouraged him to invade England from Brittany and take the crown from Richard III. Henry attempted this whilst Buckingham and his allies rebelled at home. The attempt failed. Buckingham was arrested and executed and Henry returned to Brittany having not even landed in England. However Henry continued to gain more and more support from English nobles and he declared that if he became King he would marry the daughter of Edward IV.  <i>How would this help him win even more support and what other advantages would it bring?</i>
1485	Richard III attempted to capture Henry when the Duke of Brittany became ill. Henry learnt of the plan and escaped to France. The King of France, Charles VIII, gave him money, a fleet of ships and some mercenary soldiers which he could use to invade England. <i>What reasons would there be for the French King to support a rival for the English crown?</i>
August, 1485	On 1 <sup>st</sup> August, Henry's small fleet of ships set sail from France; they landed on the Welsh coast a week later. On the 22 <sup>nd</sup> August Henry met Richard III at Bosworth and a battle was fought there. Henry's army was only about half the size of Richard's and Henry had never led an army into battle before, but against all the odds he won. Richard III was killed and Henry became King Henry VII.

## Increasing support for Henry Tudor



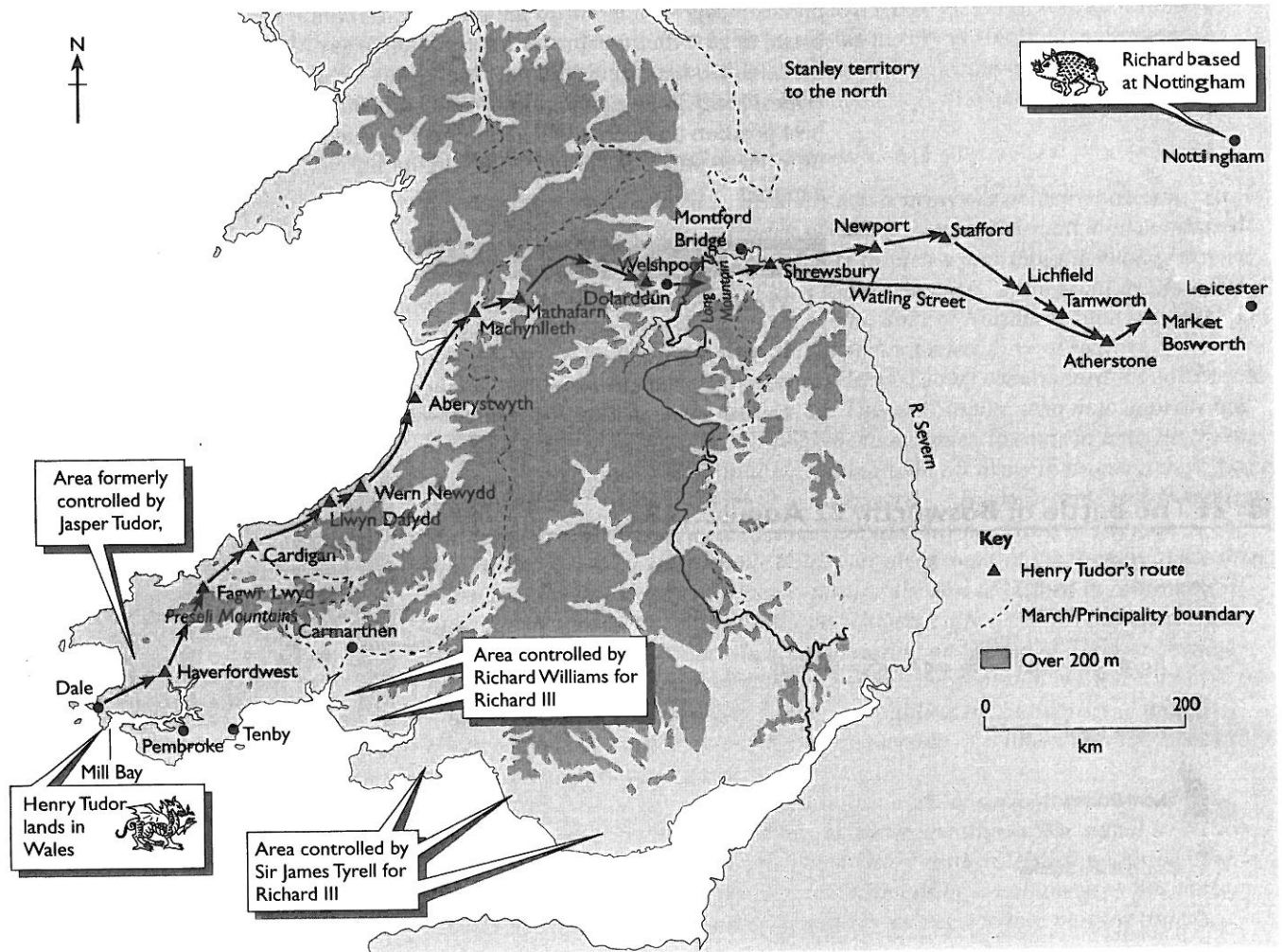
## Battlefield Walks – Bosworth (estream 469)

1. What did Richard say about the Battle of Bosworth?
2. Which plain fact suggests that Richard may well have murdered his nephews?
3. Who supported Henry in making his claim to the throne?
4. Richard's over reliance on Ratcliffe, Catesby and Lovell provoked which popular rhyme?

5. Who funded Henry's invasion of England?
6. Who formed the bulk of his army?
7. Why did he land in Wales?
8. Where was the Stanley's power base?
9. What was their attitude to Richard?
10. Why was Richard suspicious of Lord Stanley?
11. How big was Henry's army and why did this put him at a disadvantage?
12. What could he not win without?
13. Why was Richard a worried man?
14. Whom do Richard's supporters blame for his evil reputation?
15. Who were the most trusted nobles on each side?
16. Which noble was Richard not sure of and what did his soldiers show?

17. What evidence is there that the battle may have been turning against him even before his attack on Henry?
  
18. Whom did Richard succeed in killing?
  
19. What did Sir William Stanley then do and what was the effect of this?
  
20. What did Lord Stanley do?
  
21. What was the significance of the Battle of Bosworth in English history?
  
22. How was Richard's body treated after his death?
  
23. How did the outcome of the battle affect the way the story of it was written afterwards?

# Henry Tudor's March to Bosworth



## FORM GUIDE by RALPH THE BOOKIE

### Richard III

(10,000–15,000 runners) An examination of the position of Richard in 1485 shows how rash it would be to assume that Henry was always going to win.

- In 1483 there had been a rebellion led by the Duke of Buckingham. It had been suppressed and its leader executed. In the same year, Henry Tudor's invasion attempt had been easily repelled.
- Foreign powers treated him with respect: 'Indeed on the continent the general view seems to have been that he had attained a position of strength unprecedented in recent English history' (M. Bennett, *The Battle of Bosworth*).
- He had a reputation for generosity and of being a warrior-king.
- He had very nearly succeeded in getting Henry Tudor extradited from Brittany.
- He had made his peace with one of his most influential enemies, Elizabeth Wydeville (widow of the late Edward IV).
- He had at his disposal the immense resources of England (e.g. the ability to raise troops through the commission of array).

However, the fundamental weakness of Richard was his inability to make a political peace with the nobility (both Yorkist and Lancastrian), whom he had alienated by his usurpation, by his murder of the two princes and by his harsh treatment of opponents. In addition, his dynastic position was seriously damaged by the death of his son, Edward, in April 1484 and by the death of his wife in March 1485. (Again there were rumours that he had poisoned her in order to marry his niece, Elizabeth of York, whom Henry Tudor had already pledged to wed.) It was, though, the uncertainty of the support among the nobility that was Richard's biggest headache.



### Henry Tudor

(5,000 runners)  
Henry's position was far from strong.

- He was inexperienced both militarily and in English political life.
- His support base in Brittany was narrow. He had loyal support only from his uncle, Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Oxford and a small but impressive group of knights (including many Yorkists alienated by Richard's reign).
- When he returned to Britain, Henry was banking on the support of Lord Stanley (his mother's husband) and his brother Sir William Stanley. The Stanleys dominated the north-west and could provide substantial military support. However, Henry did not know if their promises would materialise into actual support.
- He was the political pawn first of Brittany and then of France. He was dependent on them for support and resources if he were to launch an invasion, but he could not be certain of the support they would provide.





## **REASONS FOR HENRY TUDOR'S VICTORY AT BOSWORTH IN 1485**

In 1485 Richard III was the crowned king of England; he had a good position on the battlefield at Bosworth and a much larger army than the challenger, Henry Tudor. The latter had a weak claim to the throne and spent almost all his early life in exile so he was virtually unknown to the English nobility so why was he able to seize the crown in 1485?

Some possible reasons are listed below. Read them and then add others.

### **1. Richard III's claim to the throne was never generally accepted.**

Edward V was only 12 years old in 1483 and it was easy for Richard to keep him and his brother in the Tower of London and to seize the throne. Richard claimed that they were illegitimate because their father had been pre-contracted to marry Eleanor Butler and so was not free to marry their mother Elizabeth Woodville. If this argument were accepted it would mean that Richard himself was the rightful heir of Edward IV. Most people did not believe this story.

### **2. Richard III had an evil reputation.**

He executed his own former supporters and relatives of Edward V. Lord Hastings, Earl Rivers, Sir Thomas Grey and the Duke of Buckingham all died without a trial.

He was considered by many to be a usurper and in addition he was suspected of murdering his two young nephews.

### **3. Richard III was unpopular in the South.**

He spent most of his life, up to 1483, in the North. Most of his supporters were drawn therefore from the Midlands and the North and the southerners' resentment of this was shown by the fact that rebellion

broke out in every county south of London in the autumn of 1483. Richard retaliated by giving land and power to his northern supporters in the South. This made him even more unpopular.

As far as we know no southern nobles fought for Richard at Bosworth.

#### **4. Richard III was not supported by the nobility.**

Richard is supposed to have been very popular in the North yet the two most powerful northern families, The Stanleys and the Percies failed to support him at Bosworth.

#### **5. Lack of loyalty and treachery on the battlefield at Bosworth**

At a decisive point in the battle Sir William Stanley intervened on Henry Tudor's side.

#### **6. Richard III's strategic errors on the battlefield.**

At a crucial stage in the battle Richard left his vantage point on the top of Ambien Hill. This made him vulnerable.

#### **7. Legacy of the Wars of the Roses.**

After 30 years of civil conflict fewer than half of the English nobility and gentry were prepared to commit themselves to either side. Respect and loyalty to the monarch had declined since the 1450s. The crown was weak and could not command the loyalty of the nobility. There had been frequent changes of monarch in recent years.

#### **8. Henry Tudor had French support.**

Charles VIII of France gave Henry the money and the army he needed to invade England in 1485. Henry attracted little English support before Bosworth as most nobles refused to commit themselves until they knew who had won so his army was mainly French.

#### **9. Henry Tudor had some Yorkist support.**

He had promised to marry Elizabeth of York, the daughter of Edward IV, once he was king. Other Yorkists joined him.

#### **10. Henry Tudor had a claim to the throne.**

He was the only surviving male heir. His claim was very weak but all other male Lancastrians were dead.

#### **11. Richard III was killed during the battle.**

Of those who were loyal to Richard many were also killed including the Duke of Norfolk.



## Task 1

- Put this list of reasons for Henry Tudor's victory in order of priority and explain your choices.
- Divide the list into long term factors and short term factors.

## Task 2

### HENRY VII'S FIRST STEPS TO SECURE THE THRONE

DATE	ACTION	SIGNIFICANCE
<b>21st August 1485</b>	Henry declared that his reign had begun the day before the Battle of Bosworth.	
<b>30<sup>th</sup> October, 1485</b>	This was the date of Henry's coronation ceremony. Only after this did he summon Parliament.	
<b>From August 1485 onwards</b>	Henry restored Lancastrian nobles who had lost land and titles under Richard III.	
<b>January 1485</b>	Henry married Elizabeth of York.	
<b>Spring 1486</b>	Henry went on a progress to the North of the country.	
<b>September 1486</b>	Prince Arthur was born.	

**Task 3**

**If you were involved in the planning of a rebellion against Henry VII what would you consider to be essential to your success?**

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

## MINOR RISING, 1486

Henry VII faced a minor rising within months of his accession.

Since Bosworth, Francis Lord Lovell, one of Richard III's most loyal supporters, and the Stafford brothers, Thomas and Humphrey, had been in sanctuary at Colchester. (Sanctuary is the Church's protection from the law.)

As Henry travelled North on his progress in April 1486, they broke sanctuary in order to raise rebellion. Lovell headed north and the Staffords travelled westwards to Worcester. Henry sent an armed force to meet Lovell and the rebels dispersed. Lovell fled to Burgundy which was a centre of Yorkist support as Edward IV's and Richard III's sister Margaret was married to the Duke of Burgundy. The Staffords went into sanctuary again but this time they were arrested and sent to the Tower. Humphrey was executed but Thomas was pardoned and remained loyal for the rest of his life. This was an example of Henry calculating the value of showing mercy to some individuals.

### Task 4

*What do you learn about the state of England from this rising?*

*Measure this rising, against your list of key ingredients for a successful rebellion and give it a mark out of 10 for the level of danger it posed to Henry VII. 10 indicates a very high level of danger.*

### Task 5

Research the rebellion involving Lambert Simnel - Write about 800 words.

Give precise detail about what exactly happened, who was involved and how the rebellion ended.

Use Pendrill and at least one other source. Name the extra sources you have used at the end of your research.

## Task 6

# The Simnel Rebellion, 1486-87

### **Additional Information**

The Battle of Stoke is considered by many to be the last battle in the Wars of the Roses. It was not an easy one for Henry VII, coming as it did less than two years after the Battle of Bosworth and when England was still unsettled. The battle showed Henry that he could still not rely on his nobility as whilst the battle was in progress the two wings of Henry's army held back and did not commit themselves until it was clear that the king would win. Also Henry wanted Lincoln to be taken alive so that he could discover who had supported the Earl and was behind the conspiracy but this order was not obeyed. Perhaps the Earl was killed so that there would be no danger of his secret backers being discovered by Henry VII.

### **Questions**

- Which of the key ingredients for a successful rebellion was present in this rising?
- Apart from the factors identified above which elements of the rising demonstrate most clearly Henry's weak hold on the crown?
- Why do you think Henry acted so leniently towards Simnel?
- Give the rising a mark out of ten to indicate the danger to Henry.



**Perkin Warbeck 1491 – 1499**

Warbeck was danger mostly due to the length of time he was at large and his foreign support. He shows that it took time for those who stood against Henry to give up on thoughts of restarting the civil war.

1491 – Warbeck arrived in Ireland (Cork) and claimed to be Richard Duke of York, the second son of Edward IV. Evidence is scarce but some historians have suggested that the key player backing him was Margaret of Burgundy. However most Irish lords refused to back him (had Henry taught them a lesson with Simnel?) so Warbeck travelled to France when Henry sent troops to Ireland.

1492 – Warbeck was in France with Charles VIII. The French may have been hoping to limit English intervention in Brittany. However Henry dealt with this in the Treaty of Étapes – Chalres agreed not to aid rebels against Henry. Warbeck fled to Burgundy.

1493 – 1495 Warbeck was in Burgundy and travelled to Vienna with Maximilian, Holy Roman Emperor, who acknowledged him as Richard IV. Maximilian was displeased by the Anglo-French treaty of Etaples. This prompted Henry to announce a **trade embargo** in 1493.

1494 – Continued support from Maximilian hoping that Warbeck as king would aid him against the French. Merchants in England and Burgundy keen to recommence trade.

Henry sent administrators (including Sir Edward Poynings) to Ireland to enforce control.

Spies identified an English plotter leading the arrest of Sir William Stanley, Chamberlain of the Royal Household.

1495 Warbeck recognised Maximilian as heir to the English throne. Warbeck attempted an invasion at Deal in Kent, failed to get support and fled to Ireland and then Scotland.

Stanley was executed despite his services to Henry at Bosworth.

1496 James IV married Warbeck to his cousin Lady Catherine Gordon and supported an unsuccessful invasion of England.

End of the trade embargo with Burgundy.

Projected Anglo-Spanish marriage was threatened by all these political uncertainties in England. Henry sought peace with Scotland through the marriage of his sister to James IV.

1497 Cornish rebellion made war with Scotland impossible and so the Truce of Ayton signed with Scotland – James IV agreed not to support English rebels and Warbeck left Scotland for Cornwall via Ireland to profit from Cornish Rebellion. However he got little support and was captured at Beaulieu in Hampshire.

1498 Warbeck attempted to escape from custody. Henry treated Warbeck carefully as he was not an English citizen.

1499 Warbeck was executed for treason. Henry also executed Warwick at the same time for conspiring with Warbeck. This may be true or opportunism by Henry but he wanted the Spanish marriage to go ahead and the presence of Yorkist claimants was a problem.

Task 7

Track Warbeck's travels on this map





Task 8

Complete the table and then answer the questions which follow.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Warbeck's Location</b>	<b>What support did Warbeck receive and why?</b>	<b>Henry VII's reaction</b>



Task 9

**Debate – Simnel v Warbeck**

**Who was the greater threat to Henry VII?**

<b>Simnel</b>	<b>Factors for debate</b>	<b>Warbeck</b>
	A strong cause which would unite the rebels	
	A charismatic leader with a strong, genuine claim to the throne.	
	Support from the nobility	
	Foreign support	
	Money and financial backing	
	Arms, weapons	
	Organisation and good strategy	
	Dislike, disapproval of current ruler.	
	Any other factors.	

## Task 10

### Tax rebellions

#### 1. The Northern Rebellion, 1489 (Pendrell p 102-103)

- a. What were the causes of this rebellion?
  
- b. What was Henry's reaction?
  
- c. What did Henry learn from this?
  
- d. Give a mark out of 10 to indicate the seriousness of this rebellion.

#### 2. The Cornish Rebellion. 1497 (Pendrell 109-110)

- a. List the causes of this rebellion.
  
- b. What happened?
  
- c. Describe Henry's reaction to the rebellion.
  
- d. What did Henry learn from this?
  
- e. Give a mark out of 10 to indicate the seriousness of this rebellion.

## The Earl of Suffolk

### Edmund De La Pole, Earl of Suffolk

Following Warwick's execution in 1499 the only remaining Yorkist with a reasonable claim to the throne was Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk. As the brother of the Earl of Lincoln (killed at Stoke) he was treated with suspicion and he fled to Burgundy in 1499. It is not clear what prompted this (possibly something surrounding Warbeck or Warwick) however it seems to have surprised Henry as well. Henry persuaded Suffolk to return (an example of 'keep your enemies closer' perhaps). Nevertheless Suffolk fled again in 1501. His brother Richard went with him and they sought refuge with the Emperor Maximilian in Burgundy. This time Henry acted more decisively and imprisoned Suffolk's relations in England and in 1504 passed acts of attainder against those with links to him. In 1506 a storm forced Archduke Philip of Burgundy (Maximilian's son) and his wife, Joanna of Castile, to take shelter in Weymouth, Dorset. Henry made the Treaty of Windsor with Philip and Suffolk was returned from Burgundy in return for a promise not to harm him. Henry agreed to support Philip in his attempt to become King of Castile. Henry VII kept this promise regarding Suffolk however Henry VIII had him executed in 1513.

Therefore it was not really until 1506 that the Yorkists' threats were effectively ended. However there are levels of threat and, arguably, after Stoke the immediate threats were gone and after Warbeck and Warwick's execution the most persistent threats were ended.

### Task 11 - Deaths in the Family

Date	Event	Significance
1500	Henry VII's third son, Edmund died	
1502	Prince Arthur died. Prince Henry was only 10 years old	
1503	Queen Elizabeth died	

## Task 12 - Danger levels of each rebellion or potential rebellion

For a rebellion to succeed certain factors need to be in place. Evaluate the extent to which these were indeed in evidence for each rebellion Henry faced. Give marks out of 10 – 10 indicates that the given factor was fully in place and a low number indicates that it wasn't.

<b>For a rebellion to succeed you need:</b>	<b>The Lovell rebellion (1486)</b>	<b>Lambert Simnel's rebellion (1487)</b>	<b>Tax riots in Yorkshire (1489)</b>	<b>Perkin Warbeck (1491-9)</b>	<b>Cornish rebellion (1497)</b>	<b>Earl of Suffolk</b>
1. An army						
2. Foreign backing						
3. A charismatic leader with a good claim and a strong cause						
4. Acceptance and support from nobles.						
5. Discontent with the current ruler.						
6. Money and financial backing						
7. Organisation and a good strategy						
<b>Totals</b>						

Further reading:

Jez Ross, *Henry VII, Pretenders and Rebellions* (Published in History Review 2012) Hard copies available in the History Book Case and also available on GOL.

Mary Dicken, Nicholas Fellows, *England 1485-1603* (Hodder 2015)

Roger Turvey, *Henry VII to Mary I 1485-1558* (Hodder Education)

C.S.L. Davies, *Peace, Print and Protestantism* (1995)

N. Fellows, *Disorder and Rebellion in Tudor England* (2001)

Thomas Penn, *The Winter King*

Ian Arthurson, 'The Rising of 1497 – A Revolt of the Peasantry' in J.Rosenthal and C. Richmond (eds), *Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages* (Sutton, 1987)

Ian Arthurson, *The Perkin Warbeck Conspiracy, 1491-1499*

Susan Brigden, *New Worlds, Lost Worlds* (Penguin, 2000)

S.B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (Methuen, 1987)

Sean Cunningham, *Henry VII* (Routledge, 2007)

Desmond Seward, *The Last White Rose* (Constable and Robinson, 2010)

### **Past exam questions on rebellions and securing the throne**

1. To what extent were the Yorkists a serious threat to Henry VII's security throughout his reign?
2. How far had Henry VII consolidated his hold on the throne by 1489?
3. How accurate is it to say that Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck were both serious threats to Henry VII's security?
4. To what extent was Henry VII's weak claim to the throne the most important reason for the rebellions and challenges that were mounted against him?



