

kinswoman, Lady Catherine Gordon, daughter of the Earl of Huntley. Despite the diplomatic pressure on him from France and Spain, James was determined to back Warbeck. By 1496, James IV had made preparations for the invasion of England, which was duly launched in September of that year. Warbeck's proclamation, issued as the Scots forces crossed the River Tweed, sounded ominously confident and showed a good grasp of propaganda techniques:

Richard by Grace of God, King of England, Lord of Ireland, Prince of Wales: to all those who will see or read our present letters, greeting.

It hath pleased God, who putteth down the mighty from their seat and exalteth the humble and suffreth not the hopes of the just to perish in the end, to give us means to show ourselves armed unto our lieges and people of England ... Our mortal enemy, Henry Tudor, a false usurper of the crown of England, knows in his heart our undoubted right [to the throne], we being the very Richard, Duke of York, younger and now surviving heir male of the noble and victorious Edward the fourth, late King of England. This Tudor, our mortal enemy, agreeable to the meanness of his birth, hath trodden under foot the honour of this nation, selling our best confederates for money, and making merchandise of the blood, estates and fortunes of our peers and subjects by feigned wars and dishonourable peace, only to enrich his coffers.

Despite the confident tone, the actual invasion was something of a damp squib. It lasted all of four days and the Scots decided to retreat in the face of an English force led by Lord Latimer.

Warbeck and the Cornish Rising, 1497

Despite this apparently easy success, Henry remained unconvinced. He took the threat from Scotland and from Warbeck very seriously indeed and, as with France, decided to retaliate by raising his own invasion forces. He raised great sums of money from Parliament and spent the early months of 1497 raising troops for the largest invasion of Scotland ever seen. Despite the continued presence of the Earl of Surrey on the Scottish border, Henry now planned a great two-pronged attack on the Scots. Lord Willoughby de Broke was given command of a naval force to assault the

Scots by sea, while **Giles, Lord Daubeney** was to take charge of an army of 10,000 to invade across the border. However, just as these forces were being marched north, Henry faced the most serious rebellion of his reign.

In the West Country, in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, there was a great rising in protest at the huge taxes that Henry was attempting to raise to fund a seemingly unnecessary war at the other end of the kingdom. The rebellion was also about Henry's methods of government as well as the level of taxation. Men like John Oby, Provost of Glasney (who was murdered by the rebels) and **William Hody** were among a growing number of Henry's agents in the south-west. For many years there had been complaints about misgovernment at the hands of the King's men and the demand for high taxes, which some of these men now attempted to collect, was the spark for widespread rebellion.

The scale and geographical extent of the rebellion against misgovernment was spectacular. In the summer of 1497, the rebels raised some 10,000 armed men, across much of the south-west, who marched all the way from Cornwall to London. To make matters worse, Henry had been caught out by the timing of the rebellion, since his army was marching north to deal with the Scots. However, the rebellion makes it clear that the great landowners in the south were not loyal to the new Tudor regime. Like Sir **William Stanley**, they might not join in rebellion but at the same time they did **nothing to stop it**. The rebellion was also serious for Henry because it had support from the gentry and landowners as well as the masses. Indeed, it was led by **Lord Audley**, who objected to what he saw as Henry's harsh regime and general misgovernment. The rebels reached Blackheath on the outskirts of the capital but were routed by royal forces under the Earl of Oxford and Lord Daubeney. About 200 rebels were killed and Lord Audley and several other leaders of the rebellion were executed.

A second Cornish Rising, 1497

The Cornish Rising, however, did not end there. Though the rebels were pursued to the West Country, royal forces decided it would be unwise to enter Cornwall. Perkin

KEY PEOPLE

Giles, Lord Daubeney

One of Henry VII's most loyal supporters and one of the few who was thought to have had real influence over the king. He was in exile with Henry and became one of the regime's top military commanders. He finally arrested Perkin Warbeck.

William Hody

Hody, in particular, used his connections with the king (he was Chief Baron of the Exchequer) to make a career out of obtaining land under false pretences.

KEY THEME

Nothing to stop it

Standing on the sidelines was the natural response of the nobility to a king they disliked and whose title to the throne was doubtful.

KEY PERSON

Lord Audley (1468–97)

James Touchet, fourth Baron Audley of Heleigh. He joined the rebellion and became its leader when the rebels reached Wells in Somerset. After the defeat at Blackheath, he was taken before the king and condemned to death. Nine days later, he was beheaded and his head placed on public view on London Bridge.

KEY PEOPLE

Perkin Warbeck
 Henry VII's most loyal
 supporter and one of the few
 nobles thought to have had
 influence over the king.
 Exile with Henry
 VI, one of the
 top military
 commanders. He finally
 joined Perkin Warbeck.

Hodby Hodby, in
 used his
 influence with the king (he
 was Baron of the
 Marches) to make a career
 out of gaining land under
 the king's patronage.

KEY THEME

to stop it
 on the sidelines was
 a response of the
 nobles to a king they
 doubted whose title to the
 throne was doubtful.

KEY PERSON

Richard III (1468–97)
 Duke of York, fourth Baron
 of Hereford. He joined
 the rebels and became its
 leader when the rebels reached
 Hereford. After the
 battle of Tewkesbury, he was
 killed by the king and
 beheaded. Nine
 months later he was beheaded
 and placed on public
 display in London Bridge.

KEY PERSON

Catherine of Aragon
(1485–1536) The daughter
 of Ferdinand and Isabella of
 Spain. She first married
 Arthur Tudor and, after his
 death, his younger brother,
 Henry VIII.

Warbeck decided to seize his chance. He landed in Cornwall in September 1497, where his forces rallied many of the rebels. Together, they assaulted and nearly took the city of Exeter in a two-day battle, after which they moved to Taunton in Somerset. Here the second rebellion ended when the rebel forces fled at the approach of the royal army under Daubeny. Warbeck was caught and sent to the king. He made a confession of his imposture and seems to have been kept under house arrest at court until he apparently attempted to escape in June 1498. After that, he was sent to the Tower, where he joined the unfortunate Earl of Warwick, who had been there since the reign began. The next year, probably under pressure from the Spanish monarchs, who were unwilling to send Catherine of Aragon to England while there were still pretenders to the throne alive and well, Henry decided to put both men on trial for treason. Warbeck was hanged on 23 November 1499 and the pitiful Earl of Warwick beheaded five days later.

The Spanish ambassador on Warbeck

Writing to Ferdinand and Isabella, the King and Queen of Spain, their ambassador wrote in optimistic mood in the aftermath of Warbeck and Warwick's executions:

The English have not always remained in peaceful obedience to their king. This is because there were too many heirs to the kingdom. The claims of these heirs were so strong that there were disputes between the two sides. Now it has pleased God that all should be thoroughly and duly purged and cleansed. Not a doubtful drop of blood remains in this kingdom except the true blood of the king and queen and above all of the Lord Prince Arthur. And all this has come about since the execution of Perkin and the son of the Duke of Clarence.

How serious was Warbeck's threat to the regime?

There is no doubt that Warbeck, despite being an impostor, posed a most serious threat to Henry's person and to his continuance as King of England.

- Warbeck gathered support from every country in close proximity to England. He showed that the nobility of England had little enthusiasm for their new king and that many might welcome 'regime change'.