

TALKING POINT

Was Henry right to use Acts of Attainder against opponents from Bosworth? They had, after all, only been showing loyalty to the man whom they saw as their rightful king. The Crowland Chronicler at the time deplored Henry's attainting of those loyal to Richard III:

'Oh God! What assurance from this time forth are our Kings to have that in the day of battle they will not be deprived of the assistance of even their own subjects when summoned at the dread mandate of the sovereign?'

In a modern context, are we right to pursue in the courts those people who have followed the policies of dictators?

FOCUS ROUTE

Make notes on how the history of the Willoughby de Broke family shows:

- a) Henry's loyalty to those who had fought with him in 1485
- b) Henry's policy towards those new to power.

Case study: The Willoughby de Broke family

The following case study is adapted from the article 'The rise and fall of a noble dynasty: Henry VII and the Lords Willoughby de Broke' by Dominic Lockett, which appeared in *Historical Research* (October 1996).

Over the years leading up to the battle of Bosworth, the Willoughby de Broke family accumulated substantial estates in the south-west of England. The story of the family's subsequent history reveals much about Henry VII and his relationship with his nobility.

Robert Willoughby

Robert Willoughby de Broke was the first baron of the family. The following is a history of his service from 1470 to 1502.

- 1452 Born.
- 1470 Commissioned by Edward IV to raise troops against the Dukes of Clarence and Warwick.
- 1472 Commissioned by Edward IV to raise troops against France.
- 1478 Appointed sheriff of Cornwall.
- 1480 Appointed sheriff of Devon.
- 1483 One of the key leaders of Buckingham's revolt against Richard III. Fled to Brittany with his brother William to join Henry Tudor.
- 1484 Richard III passed an Act of Attainder against him (and others). His lands were taken away from him and distributed among Richard's supporters. Followed Henry Tudor to France.
- 1485 Joined in Henry's invasion of England, fighting at Bosworth. August: Entrusted with the arrest of the Earl of Warwick. August–October: Gained a seat in the King's Council; took his seat in the House of Lords; became JP for Devon, Cornwall, Dorset and Wiltshire. Became steward of the Crown's gold/silver mines in Devon and Cornwall. Became steward of the Duchess of York's Wiltshire possessions.
- 1486 Accompanied Henry in his tour round England. Part of the King's household.
- 1493 Became steward of the Warwick and Salisbury lands in Wiltshire.
- 1494 Became steward of the Duchy of Lancaster manors.
- 1502 Died.

Robert Willoughby II

The case of Robert Willoughby demonstrates that in the late fifteenth century opportunities existed for rapid personal promotion. However, the subsequent history of the Willoughby family only serves to indicate that, for so long as Henry VII was king, sustaining such advances was a lot more difficult. Why?

Much of the answer lies in how Henry's personality developed in the years after 1485. Throughout his life, Henry retained a special place in his affections

ACTIVITY

- 1 What evidence is there of Robert Willoughby de Broke's political loyalties from 1470 to 1483?
- 2 Put forward possible reasons why Robert may have decided to resist Richard III.
- 3 What evidence is there of his loyalty to Henry VII?
- 4 What conclusions can you reach about how Henry treated Robert from August 1485 to 1494?
- 5 Complete this sentence: 'Robert died on 28 September 1502. His career exemplifies [shows]...'

Check your own answers against extracts from the Lockett article which are reproduced on page 322.