

A history of the 16th century england flashcard



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In the late 15th century England was torn by a series of civil wars between two dynasties, the Yorkists and the Lancastrians. The wars ended in 1485 when Henry Tudor won the battle of Bosworth and gained the throne of England. Henry Tudor (1457-1509) was crowned Henry VII on 30 October 1485 beginning a new dynasty. In January 1486 he married Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV, uniting the dynasties of York and Lancaster. However the Yorkists were unwilling to accept the situation. In 1487 they attempted a rebellion. They claimed that a man named Lambert Simnel was Earl of Warwick and tried to put him on the throne.

The Yorkists gathered an army in Ireland and landed in Cumbria. However they were crushed at the battle of Stoke on 16 June 1487. Simnel was captured. Henry VII could have executed him but instead he made Simnel a menial servant in the royal kitchens. Henry VII invaded France in 1492 but the French were preoccupied elsewhere and they quickly made peace. By a treaty of November 1492 they agreed to pay the English money and the French king agreed not to support any pretenders to the English throne. Afterwards Henry VII followed a policy of peace with France. Wars were expensive and Henry was a prudent man who avoided extravagant expenditure.

Henry also strengthened government by creating the Court of Star Chamber (so called because it met in a room with stars painted on the ceiling). The court dealt with 'unlawful maintenance, giving of licences, signs and tokens, great riots, unlawful assemblies'. Then in 1497 Henry VII faced two rebellions. First rebels from the West Country marched on London. However they were crushed by a royal army at Blackheath on 17 June 1497. Later that

year a man named Perkin Warbeck claimed be Richard, the nephew of Richard III (one of the two princes who was murdered in the Tower of London). He called himself Richard IV.

He landed in Cornwall in September 1497. However royal forces quickly defeated the rebellion and Warbeck was captured in October. He was finally executed in 1499. Meanwhile Henry VII was keen to make an alliance with Spain. In 1501 his oldest son Arthur married Catherine of Aragon. However Arthur died in April 1502. Henry VII's son Henry now became heir to the throne. Henry married Catherine of Aragon, his brother's widow on 11 June 1509. Normally such a marriage would not have been allowed but the Pope gave a special dispensation. Meanwhile in 1503 Henry VII's daughter Margaret married James IV of Scotland.

Among his other achievements Henry VII began the dockyard in Portsmouth. He also financed an expedition by Cabot to the New World. In 1497 Cabot found rich fishing grounds off Newfoundland. Henry VII died on 21 April 1509. Henry was a clever and active young man. He spoke Latin and French fluently. He also performed and composed music. He was good at tennis, wrestling, and casting the bar (throwing an iron bar). Henry also enjoyed hunting, jousting and hawking. He also liked archery and bowling. Henry was also keen to revive the glories of the previous centuries when England conquered much of France.

In 1511 he launched a warship the Mary Rose. In 1514 he launched the Henry Grace a Dieu. Meanwhile in 1512 he went to war with the French. In August 1513 the English won the Battle of the Spurs. (It was so called

because the French cavalry fled without fighting). However in 1514 Henry made peace with the French and his sister Mary married the king of France. Meanwhile the Scots invaded England to support their French allies. However the Scots were crushed at the battle of Flodden and their king was killed. In 1515 the Pope made Thomas Wolsey (1474-1530) a Cardinal.

The same year the king made him Chancellor. In 1520 Henry met the king of France at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Determined to impress the French king Henry had a temporary palace made and it was decorated with very expensive velvet, satin and cloth of gold. Not to be outdone the French king erected tents of gold brocade. At the beginning of 1511 Henry had a son. Unfortunately the boy died after only 7 weeks. Catherine had four miscarriages and she only had one child who lived - a girl named Mary born in 1516. Henry was desperate to have a son and heir and Catherine could not give him one.

Henry came to believe that God was punishing him for marrying his brother's widow. Normally that would not have been allowed but the Pope granted him a special dispensation. Henry now argued that the marriage to Catherine was not valid and should be annulled (declared null and void). Not surprisingly Catherine was totally opposed to any move to dissolve the marriage. Henry asked the Pope to annul the marriage. However the Pope would not cooperate. (He could not because Catherine's uncle Charles V of Spain had captured Rome and the pope was his prisoner).

In 1529 he formed an ecclesiastical court headed by Cardinals Wolsey and Campeggio to look into the matter. However the court could not reach a

verdict. In the autumn of 1529 Henry sacked Wolsey and banished him to York. In 1530 Wolsey was accused of treason and was summoned to London to answer the charges but he died on the way. Thomas More replaced him as chancellor. More ruthlessly persecuted Protestants. He also opposed the proposed relaxation of the heresy laws. However More resigned in 1532 and he was replaced by Thomas Cromwell. Meanwhile in 1527 Henry began a relationship with Anne Boleyn.

Henry was keen to get rid of Catherine and marry Anne. In 1529 Henry called the ' Reformation Parliament'. Ties between England and Rome were cut one by one. Finally he lost patience with the Pope and rejected his authority. In 1533 he obtained a decree of nullity from Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. (He had already secretly married Anne Boleyn). However Anne had two miscarriages. Henry tired of her and in April 1536 she was accused of committing adultery with 5 men, including her own brother. Anne and the five men were all executed in May 1536. Immediately afterwards Henry married Jane Seymour.

Jane did give Henry one son, Edward, but she died on 23 October 1537, leaving Henry devastated. Meanwhile in 1534 the Act of Supremacy made Henry the head of the Church of England. The same year the Act of Succession was passed. It declared that Anne Boleyn's child would be heir to the throne. Although Henry broke with Rome he kept the Catholic religion essentially intact. He had no intention of changing the English religion to Lutheranism. (In 1521 Henry wrote a book called *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* or *The Defence of the Seven Sacraments* in which he attacked the ideas of Martin Luther.

As a reward the Pope granted him the title Fidei Defensor or Defender of the Faith). However in 1538 Chancellor Thomas Cromwell did make some minor reforms. In 1538 he ordered that every church should have an English translation of the Bible. He also ordered that any ' idolatrous' images should be removed from churches. Nevertheless in 1539 Henry passed the Act of Six Articles, which laid down the beliefs of the Church of England. The Six Articles preserved the old religion mainly intact. However from 1545 Latin was replaced by English as the language of church services. Meanwhile Henry dissolved the monasteries.

Parliament agreed to dissolve the small ones in 1536. The large ones followed in 1539-1540. The monks were given pensions and many of them married and learned trades. many monastery buildings became manor houses. Others were dismantled and their stones were used for other buildings. The vast estates owned by the monasteries were sold and fearing foreign invasion Henry used the wealth to build a network of new castles around the coast. Yet the changes made by Henry caused resentment in some areas. In 1536 a rebellion began in Louth. (Although it was sparked off by religion the rebels had other grievances).

The rebels marched to Doncaster but no pitched battles were fought between them and the royal forces. Instead Henry persuaded them to disperse by making various promises. However in 1537 Henry hanged the leaders. Meanwhile Henry looked for another wife. Chancellor Cromwell suggested making an alliance with the Duchy of Cleves. The Duke of Cleves had two sisters and Henry sent the painter Holbein to make portraits of them both. After seeing a portrait of Anne of Cleves Henry decided to marry her.

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However when Henry met Anne for the first time he was repulsed and he called her ' the Flanders mare'.

Nevertheless Henry married her in January 1540 but the marriage was not consummated. Henry divorced Anne six months later but she was given a generous settlement of houses and estates. Anne of Cleves lived quietly until her death in 1557. Cromwell was accused to treason and executed in July 1540. Next, in 1540, Henry married Catherine Howard. However in December 1541 Henry was given proof that Catherine was unfaithful. Catherine was beheaded on 13 February 1542. Then in 1543 Henry married Catherine Parr (1512-1548). Meanwhile in 1536 Henry had an accident jousting.

Afterwards he stopped taking exercise and became obese. Worse a painful ulcer appeared on his leg, which his doctors could not cure. Nevertheless Henry went to war again. In 1542 he crushed the Scots at Solway Moss. In 1543 Henry went to war with the French. he captured Boulogne but was forced to return to England to deal with the threat of French invasion. The French sent a fleet to the Solent (between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight). They also landed men on the Isle of Wight. In a naval battle the Mary Rose was lost but the French fleet were forced to withdraw. Henry VIII died on 28 January 1547. He was 55.