**Foreign relations with Ireland**

Henry’s power in Ireland only extended as far as the “Pale” – the land which surrounded Dublin.

Power in the rest of Ireland lay with the descendants of the Anglo=Norman barons with the most important ones being the Fitzgeralds (or Geraldines) and the Butlers.

The dominant figure was the Earl of Kildare (leading member of the Irish nobility and leading member of the Geraldines. Said to be the uncrowned King of Ireland) who had been Lord Deputy of Ireland since 1477.

He was feared by Henry due o his Yorkist sympathies. This was reinforced with his support for Lambert Simnel whom he crowned King in 1487, and his support for Perkin Warkbeck in 1491.

Kildare’s actions forced Henry into action:

* Instead of relying on the Irish aristocracy, who were cheaper but unreliable, he appointed an Englishman for of the “Pale” which was backed by armed forces.
* He appointed his infant son, Prince Henry, as lieutenant of Ireland, with Sir Edward Poynings as his deputy.

Poynings was initially successful through his use of bribery and force. He:

* Forced Ireland to pass “Poynings Law” in 1495 which entailed that no Irish laws could be passed without the approval of the English Crown.
* Attempted to implement English laws in Ireland.

This proved too expensive for Henry: his financial situation was made worse when Warbeck returned to Ireland in 1495 and besieged the town of Watford as well as the treat of invasion from the Scots.

Therefore, Henry had to withdraw Poynings and instead rely on the cheap option, Kildare, as his deputy.

By this stage in 1496, Kildare had decided that there was no point in supporting the Yorkist cause so decided to serve Henry loyally. This also meant he secured the submission of Irish chieftains.

By around 1500, Henry had eventually secured some level of peaceable and cheap authority over Ireland though he was undoubtedly fortunate that Kildare was co-operative.

Kildare’s support and loyalty may have been as a result of his ability to use his office for rebuilding family fortunes.