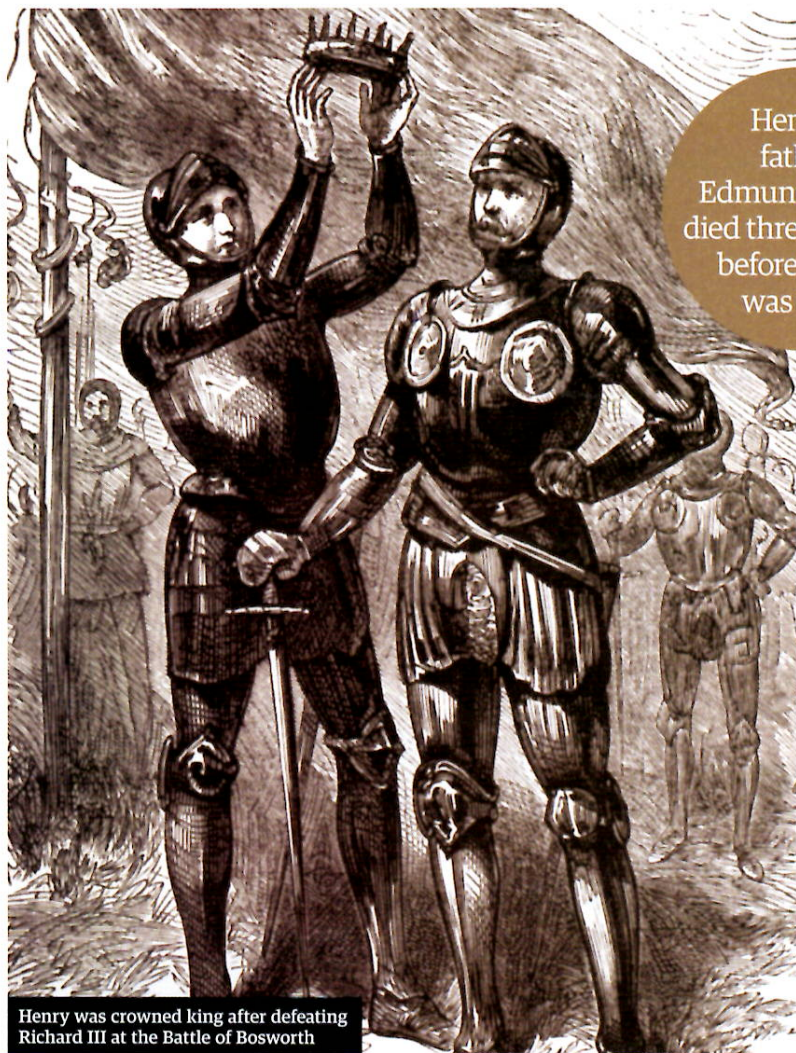


The key figures



Henry was crowned king after defeating Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth

Henry's father, Edmund Tudor, died three months before Henry was born



"Henry's forces were in danger of being overwhelmed when William Stanley threw his men into battle and instructed them to attack Richard"

Wales and said his prayer to God while kneeling on the wet sand of the beach.

Henry's invasion force didn't stay secret for long and soon Richard's larger army was in pursuit and eventually intercepted Henry's forces south of Market Bosworth in Leicestershire. On 22 August what would turn out to be the last confrontation of the Wars of the Roses took place as the two rivals met each other on the battlefield. Henry's forces were in danger of being overwhelmed when William Stanley, who had been watching from the sidelines, threw his men into battle and instructed them to attack Richard. This action by one of the most powerful men in the land was the decisive moment in the battle and the King of England was cut down, murdered by common men, battered to death and then stripped naked and taken to Leicester, where his dead body was exposed to

the public glare. Against all odds, the man who had been living in exile for most of his life had won. The crown was his, but Henry knew that if he had won it in battle then he could also lose it in battle. The struggle to keep hold of his crown and establish a legacy had only just begun.

All the years that Henry had spent in exile had robbed him of an intimate knowledge of the workings of a royal court, but had made him a sharp observer and his keen mind immediately grasped how important appearances were; it was not enough to just be king - he had to look, act and sound like a king. It is often said that history is written by the victors and following his coronation on 30 October, that is exactly what Henry did. He used his first parliament to change the date that he became king to a day before the Battle of Bosworth, thereby making Richard the attempted

usurper and ensuring that everyone who had opposed Henry could in the future be tried for treason. His marriage to Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV, united the warring houses of the white rose of York and the red of Lancaster and led to the creation of a powerful symbol: the Tudor rose, which incorporated the two colours. Henry commissioned the first ever pound coin, a gold sovereign with an image of Henry sitting on a throne in all his splendour on the obverse and the Tudor double rose on the reverse.

While these symbols were powerful propaganda tools, important in trying to legitimise the new Tudor rule, they were nothing compared to the importance of producing a male heir. So when in 1486, Prince Arthur was born to Henry and Elizabeth, the new king could breathe a little. While the nation rejoiced at the birth of the prince who had been named after the mythical King of Camelot, there were still those who weren't buying into Henry's image of the legitimacy of the Tudors. In 1487 a rebellion began in Ireland around a man called Lambert Simnel who claimed to be the Yorkist Earl of Warwick, son of Edward IV's brother George, Duke of Clarence. The force invaded England but was no match for Henry's battle-