

"Henry, who normally had a strong poker-face, could not contain his grief and shut himself away for six weeks. He was mentally and physically exhausted"

Henry ensured Philip had everything he wanted at the royal court, but through this thin veneer it was clear that Philip was effectively a prisoner until he agreed to release to Henry's care the Duke of Suffolk, who had been agitating on the continent for a rebellion in England. Philip agreed and when the boat containing Suffolk arrived, he was promptly escorted to the 'Tower of London.

In his last few years, Henry became increasingly ill and withdrew from public life. All eyes turned to his prince and heir Henry, who seemed to be very different from his father - where the king was cold and calculating, the young prince was a fine physical specimen interested in honour and chivalry. After the paranoid regime of his father, the people were looking forward to a more traditional king, but it hadn't been for Henry VII's shrewd actions, there would have been no crown to pass down. When in 1509 the light in Henry was fading fast, he could reflect on a job well done: a man who had spent much of his early life on the run had won the English crown and been able to hold onto it. His people may have celebrated the passing of the penny-pinching king, but the fact that there was no opposition towards his son becoming monarch was probably his greatest achievement and one that was won through cunning, hard work, greed, ruthlessness and ambition.

oured a union with a Spanish princess, by uniting two enemies of France, and as ck as 1489 (when Arthur was just three) the of Medina del Campo had betrothed him to fine, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella in. By the time of Warbeck's death, Arthur earing the age when he could marry and so rations for the lavish wedding could begin. 14 November 1501 the two were married by Archbishop of Canterbury in St Paul's Cathedral. was a momentous occasion for Henry; the ng legitimised his rule, as it meant a foreign such as Spain saw him as the true king. assured that his dynasty would continue after his death. The lavish two-week wedding actions turned London into a party city and mmented on how beautiful Catherine 1. Henry's joy would be short-though, as mere months later r contracted an illness and something that caused mense political impact. would come for Henry in 1503 Elizabeth died days after childbirth, with by also not surviving. had supported Henry out ally to Elizabeth and with ming Arthur in the grave it id that the king's crown, which he orked tirelessly to secure, was slipping zph his fingers like grains of sand. ry, who normally had a strong poker-face, not contain his grief and shut himself away weeks. He was mentally and physically sted, but when he returned to normal

The marriage of his daughter Margaret to James IV of Scotland meant their descendants would have a claim to both thrones

government life he was even more ruthless than before. He saw conspiracy theories everywhere and decided that if his subjects would not love him then they would fear him. He used a series of large financial bonds on leading citizens and merchants to ensure their good behaviour - for many the cost of betraying the king became financially impossible - as well as the Council learned in the Law.

possibly the most notorious expression of his rule. This council had unprecedented powers and was answerable only to the king. It could overrule normal legal proceedings to look at any cases it wished and was not above extorting money, either as a punishment or simply to swell the king's coffers. From 1503 the council was run efficiently and ruthlessly by Edmund Dudley, who later wrote that the king wanted, "Many persons in danger at his pleasure... bound to his grace for great sums of money."

Genuine fear and unease swept the country at this repressive regime, but Henry's dynasty was further secured thanks to a stroke of outrageous good fortune: in 1506 a ship carrying Philip the Fair of Burgundy was shipwrecked in England.

Defining moment

Defeat of Warbeck

1497

Perkin Warbeck is a pretender to the English throne who claims to be Richard Duke of York, one of the Princes in the Tower. He first stakes his claim in 1490 in Burgundy and gains support from those who oppose Henry's rule. In 1491 he and a small force land in Ireland but receive little support and return to Europe. In 1495 he lands in Kent, but is soon forced to flee to Scotland. He is welcomed by James IV, but their attempted English invasion of 1496 soon fails. Captured after landing in Cornwall in 1497, Warbeck is eventually executed in 1499.



The pretender Warbeck was captured in 1497 and executed two years later

Defining moment

The king is dead, long live the king

1509

On 21 April, Henry, who has been suffering from an unidentified illness (now thought to be tuberculosis), dies at Richmond Palace and is buried in Westminster Abbey next to his wife Elizabeth. Henry leaves behind a prosperous country with money in the coffers and a number of successful peace and trade agreements. It is believed that on one of the last nights of his life he calls his son Henry to him and instructs him to keep the alliance with Spain strong by marrying Catherine of Aragon, the widow of Arthur. The mere fact that his son Henry enjoys such a peaceful accession to the throne, with no hint of rebellion or other candidates, illustrates what a good job his father has done to establish the Tudors as kings and queens of England.



Scottish union

Henry marries his daughter Margaret off to the Scottish king James IV. This is an attempt to end the fighting between the two nations and the marriage is part of an agreement called 'The treaty of Perpetual Peace.'



Death of a prince

Arthur, Henry's first-born, dies just six months after his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. He is just 16 years old.

Intercursus Magnus

This trade treaty with the Netherlands, a key market for the export of British wool, is seen as one of Henry's most important achievements.

Namesake born

Elizabeth gives birth to their second son on 28 June. He will go on to become Henry VIII, one of the most famous British monarchs of all time.

1491