Britpolitics Fact Sheet: King Henry VII

## Who was Henry Tudor?

On 28th January 1457 Henry Tudor was born at Pembroke Castle in Wales. His 13 year old mother was Margaret Beaufort, a descendant of Edward III. His father was Edmund Tudor, the son of Owen Tudor and Catherine of Valois, widow of Henry V. Edmund Tudor had died before Henry’s birth so Henry was taken in by his uncle Jasper Tudor. When the Yorkist Edward IV took back the throne after the Battle of Tewkesbury, Henry Tudor and his uncle Jasper were forced to flee to France.

## What was Henry Tudor’s claim to the throne?

Henry Tudor had only a weak claim to the throne of England. His claim came through his mother Margaret Beaufort, as a descendant of Edward III’s son John of Gaunt. The Beaufort line descended from John Beaufort the illegitimate son of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford.

## How did Henry Tudor take power?

In 1485 Henry Tudor sailed from France and landed with his army in Wales. On 22nd August Henry defeated King Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field, Leicestershire. With Richard killed in the battle, Henry was crowned King. In 1486 Henry united the Houses of York and Lancaster with his marriage to Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV.

## What were the main characteristics of the reign of Henry VII

* During his reign Henry strengthened the power of the King and initiated a more centralised system of Royal administration.
* Laws were enacted to prevent the nobles from retaining large private armies.
* Justices of the Peace, councils in Wales and the North and the Court of Star Chamber were used to enforce law and order.
* Trade agreements and the rigorously enforced collection of Royal taxes helped to increase revenues from an average of £52,000 to £142,000 per year by 1509.
* Henry’s daughter Margaret was married to James IV of Scotland giving their descendants, such as Mary Queen of Scots, later executed by his granddaughter Elizabeth I, a claim to the English throne.

To find out more about the Tudor Dynasty visit [www.britpolitics.co.uk/the-tudors](http://www.britpolitics.co.uk/the-tudors)