However the nobility did not pose a threat to Henry as a group, as they mostly aimed to avoid confrontation throughout the Wars of the Roses, other than some overmighty nobles such as Richard, Duke of York and Richard, Earl of Warwick. After the battle of Bosworth there were no overmighty subjects who were likely to rebel against him. Supporters of Richard III such as the Duke of Norfolk had been killed at Bosworth so posed no threat.

2. a) On average around \(\frac{1}{4}\) of noble lines died out every 25 years, and whilst other monarchs would replace the families and increase the size of nobility, Henry limited the number of replacements, as a limited number of nobles would be easier to control, and it also increased the prestige of being given a title due to its rarity, meaning those who gained titles would be more loyal and obedient to Henry. Furthermore, creating peerages would grant land and estates to the nobles, which would be from crown estates and therefore lead to less rent and a loss of income for the king. Therefore, Henry made it clear that patronage came as a result of loyal service, rather than in the hope of it.

Henry had some nobles, such as Thomas, Lord Stanley, whom he trusted, and he was rewarded through being made Earl of Derby. Jasper was made Duke of Bedford and powerful Yorkists such as Thomas Grey, Marquis of Dorset, had opposed Richard III’s cruel, murderous nature and supported Henry. However, Henry created very few peerages and of these only three were genuinely new, involving grants of land. Overall, Henry reduced the number of noblemen with titles from 62 in 1487 to 45 in 1509, and excluding the less powerful barons there had been 23 Dukes, Marquises, Earls and Viscounts in 1485, compared to only 12 by 1509, showing his reluctance to give titles and land away.

Instead, he created the Order of the Garter, which was an ancient honour awarded to the highest ranking knights. It involved no financial obligations, instead giving merely prestige, and Henry awarded it to 37 of his closest allies during his reign, rather than provide land and lose income.

b) Henry’s small immediate family meant fewer demands for titles and land from them, reducing an aspect of potential instability. He had one uncle, Jasper, who he trusted, and none of his sons were adults during his lifetime so they did not attempt to build up a powerful court for when they gained power, which meant Henry did not have to worry about overmighty noblemen in his immediate family.

Henry’s reluctance to redistribute patronage when noble families went extinct, especially the powerful Yorkist families of Warwick, Clarence and Gloucester, meant that fewer subjects had enough power to be classed as overmighty, but also that the crown grew more powerful. The powerful subjects of Northumberland and Buckingham were closely monitored, and when the adults died, as the Duke of Buckingham did in 1485 and the Earl of Northumberland did in 1499, Henry did not allow the children to come into possession of their property until later, when Henry had been able to collect taxes from their estates and was convinced of their loyalty. Henry also imposed fines when he felt people were growing overly powerful. To prevent powerful blocs forming he controlled the marriage of nobles, fining them if they did not get his permission, and he fined Bishop Stanley £245,680 for illegally retaining, as Henry felt that the Stanley family were getting too powerful.
4. a) Henry did not attempt to gain loyalty of the nobles through distributing patronage, instead reserving the favours for those who had given service to the Crown over a long time. Therefore it was not always given to nobility, with some of Henry’s most trusted advisors, such as the lawyer Edmund Dudley, becoming King’s Councillor, and military allies such the Earl of Oxford becoming peers. This showed that Henry awarded favours for loyalty, rather than it being provided automatically to the nobility.

b) Henry’s Acts of Attainder were used to convict noblemen of crimes against the Crown, such as treason, and therefore he could imprison them or take their land and titles, making their family illegitimate. Henry used attainders much more than previous monarchs, with the previous Yorkist king Edward IV having issues 27 after 1463, whereas Henry issued 51 in 1504 alone, showing that even when major threats had been removed and there was relative stability, he was fearful and paranoid. However they could be revoked after a period of time and Henry would gradually give the lands back for loyalty, although it took much longer to regain his loyalty and so reversals were much rarer than under previous monarchs. As smaller nobles could not offer the king as much support or service they were forced to pay large sums of money for reversals.

Bonds were the recognition forced upon a noble that they owed a lump sum to Henry unless they observed the conditions he set, which usually involved loyal conduct. As with attainders, they were used to a much greater extent than under previous monarchs, as he gave out 46 to nobility, roughly two a year, compared to the rough’s 20 under previous monarchs. They were given to people even if they had not done anything wrong, in order to gain their future support, and a recognisance when a person recognised an obligation, usually enforced by a bond. Henry often used if he was suspicious of a noble but could not prove they had committed a crime, as the victim could not appeal outside of the law, and Henry could choose the level of the fine. The greater their power and threat to Henry, the more likely he was to use fines on them, such as when Lord Dacre was forced into and bond of £2000, and even religious leaders were not spared, with the Bishop of Worcester promising to pay the same amount if he was ever disloyal, and banned from leaving England. Part of the reason that these bonds were given so frequently was that the Council Learned, who gave these fines, was controlled by Dudley and Empson towards the later parts of Henry’s reign, and as non-nobles they were particularly eager to cripple nobles. They later admitted that many of the charges had been false but due to the king’s authority people paid the fines out of fear.

Henry also had prerogative rights, traditionally held by medieval kings, but utilized by Henry to increase his control. These included the right to wardship of the children of landowners, which meant that when the landowner died and the heir was still a child, they became the ward of Henry. This meant that he could control their income, taking a cut of their taxes, and when they came of age he would charge an entry fee for them to take control of the lands, and he could sell their hand in marriage as well. These changes meant that in 1487 wardship brought in about £350, but this increased to £1600 by 1494 and then to £600 by 1507.
However Prince Arthur died in 1502, leading to a collapse in relations as Henry tried to convince them that Catherine could marry his second son, Henry. Ferdinand resisted as he did not need an alliance at a time when his relations with France were improving, and papal dispensation would be expensive. However as the Franco-Spanish relations deteriorated in 1503 Ferdinand accepted the proposal, but Isabella died in 1504, leading to a Spanish power struggle, and Henry became less keen on the match. He claimed the dispensation did not count as Henry was under 12, retracted the marriage and backed Burgundy’s claim in the Castilian succession. This backfired when Philip died in 1506, and Ferdinand took control. He signed the Treaty of Blois in 1505, which set him up to marry Louis’ niece Germaine de Foix of Navarre, which would give him control of the region.

The Holy Roman Empire and Burgundy- England had traditionally good relations with Burgundy due to a mutual hatred of France and many English exports, such as wool, going through Burgundian ports and markets such as Antwerp and Bruges. However the death of Charles the Bold in 1477 meant it came under the control of Margaret, who was the sister of Edward IV and Richard III. She was therefore a Yorkist, plotting against Henry, and after Maximilian married her step-daughter, Mary of Burgundy, she encouraged him to plot against Henry. Henry first learnt about the dangers of alliances in 1489, after signing the Treaty of Dordrecht, in which Maximilian promised to send troops to defend Brittany in exchange for 3,000 troops to help Maximilian against French and Flemish troops. However Maximilian did not fulfill his promise, thinking peace with Charles VIII to focus on his border with Hungary. In 1493 he became Holy Roman Emperor, and made his Philip, his son, Duke of Burgundy, leading to a deterioration of relations with England as they sheltered Perkin Warbeck and ignored Henry’s letters to hand him over. This led to a trade embargo against Burgundy in 1493, which lasted until Henry and Philip signed the Intercursus Magnus in 1496, a year after Warbeck left.

Relations were then steady for a few years, with Philip marrying Joanna of Castile, but in 1504 the death of Isabella of Castile led to a succession crisis, in which Henry decided to support Philip over Ferdinand, as he wanted to protect English trade, saw it as an opportunity to negotiate a marriage between Prince Henry and Philip’s daughter Eleanor, and negotiate the handing over of Edmund de la Pole, a leading Yorkist pretender. As Philip and Joanna sailed to Spain they were caught in a storm and forced to stop in England in 1506, leading to Henry negotiating the secret Treaty of Windsor, and Intercursus Malus.
These led to Philip handing over de la Pole and gave more advantageous trading terms respectively, in return for Henry recognising them as rightful rulers of Castile. He was also to marry Philip’s sister, Margaret of Savoy, however after Philip died in 1506 and Ferdinand gained control of Castile, she refused, leading to Henry being isolated in Europe. However his relations with Maximilian remained strong due to a mutual fear of France, and there were discussions of a marriage between Henry’s daughter Mary and Maximilian’s grandson Charles. But Henry never fully trusted Maximilian, and the Treaty of Cambrai made clear his isolated position.

Scotland- England and Scotland were traditionally enemies, with the Franco-Scottish alliance a common theme at the time, and frequent conflicts on the border were common. However the start of Henry’s reign was quite calm due to monarch, James IV, being a minor, and the regent, the Earl of Angus, being an anglophile who looked to avoid conflict. However in 1495 James came of age and looked to gain glory through spending more on weaponry, especially artillery, and also offered royal hospitality to Perkin Warbeck. This included sheltering him, offering him a pension and arranging an aristocratic marriage to James’ cousin, Lady Catherine Gordon. Furthermore in 1496 they sent him to invade England with an army, although it failed due to the small size of the army and lack of support from those in Northumberland. They also retreated when word came of an English army coming over the border, although the army turned into Henry’s plan to raise an army to invade Scotland. This invasion was led by the Earl of Surrey, however in 1497 it was called after a tax rebellion in Cornwall, against the taxes for the war, led to him having to quell this and therefore make the Truce of Ayton. After this relations improved, with Warbeck executed in 1497 and a formal peace treaty in 1502. A year after it was agreed that Henry’s daughter Margaret would marry James. The marriage took place the following year, leading to peaceful relations for the rest of Henry’s reign.

Ireland- Although Ireland was technically part of Henry’s kingdom, he only controlled the areas around Dublin, ‘The Pale’. The rest of Ireland was ruled by the Anglo-Irish lords and barons, most importantly the Fitzgeralds and the Butlers. The leader of the Fitzgeralds was the Earl of Kildare, who had been Lord Deputy of Ireland since 1477. Henry feared him due to his Yorkist sympathies, but even after they crowned Lambert Simnel the king of Ireland in 1486, Henry did not punish them harshly. He forced them to sign oaths of allegiance to the English monarchy, however Henry was forced to act after they broke the oath by supporting Perkin Warbeck in 1491. He dismissed the Earl of Kildare and sent an army to Ireland, which led to Warbeck fleeing to France. Henry then decided to rule through an Englishman rather than the established Irish aristocracy, and appointed his son Prince Henry as Lieutenant of Ireland and Sir Edward Poynings as his deputy.