

6,000 French troops along with the capture of a huge number of senior nobles, including the Duke of Orleans himself. Henry V was said to have lost as few as 400 men.

### **The Reign of Henry V**

Henry V's military success at Agincourt was a huge and unexpected victory that boosted his prestige both in England and in France. As a result, subsequent campaigns were launched in the years that followed and these, mainly focusing on Normandy, were only interrupted once when the king returned to England in the autumn of 1417 to deal with a further Lollard uprising, which led to the execution of his friend Oldcastle.

This renewed Plantagenet-Lancastrian thrust into France culminated in the capture of Rouen, the Norman capital, in January 1419, and this was to make Henry V the first English king to rule over Normandy since the time of King John two centuries before. This resulted in a huge shift in the balance of elite north European noble society, with the French cause further hampered by the temporary insanity of Charles VI, an affliction that had first visited him in the 1390s. This Plantagenet-Lancastrian resurgence in France ultimately led to the Treaty of Troyes, signed in May 1420, in which Henry V was formally accepted as Charles VI's heir. The new Anglo-French accord was sealed by the marriage of Henry V and Catherine of Valois, the French king's youngest daughter, a liaison that was soon to produce a son.

However, this was not a marriage that was to last very long with Henry V dying of dysentery soon after in August 1422. After this, Catherine of Valois quickly began an affair with Owen Tudor, a Welsh squire who she took into her household, and this led in the late 1420s to their clandestine marriage that defied an act of parliament issued by the royal Lancastrian elite who ruled on behalf of her son, the infant king. However, this liaison was to produce at least 4 children, including Edmund and Jasper Tudor, who were raised at Barking Abbey under the supervision of Abbess Katherine de la Pole, the sister of the future Duke of Suffolk, the king's closest adviser in the 1440s.

In 1452, the eldest of these royal children, Edmund Tudor, was raised to the title of the Earl of Richmond by his half-brother, Henry VI, but he was to die of the plague in November 1456 while a captive of Yorkist elements at Carmarthen Castle following the opening sorties of the War of the Roses. This unfortunate demise was to come just two months before the birth of his only son, Henry Tudor, at Pembroke Castle, in January 1457. Henry's mother, Margaret Beaufort, the Countess of Richmond, had married Edmund in 1455, and was just 13 years and 7 months old when she gave birth to the future king of England. After the Battle of Bosworth Field, it was to be Henry Tudor, the grandson of Owen Tudor and Catherine of Valois and the son of Edmund Tudor, the Earl of Richmond, and Margaret Beaufort who, as Henry VII, was to take the crown of England as the first Tudor king.

Henry V spent much of his time as king prosecuting war in France. The obvious motive for this lay in the restoration of claims first made by Norman and Plantagenet kings centuries before, but this was not Henry V's only purpose. At this time, Europe was just emerging from the Great Schism, a split within the Church that had seen the election of rival popes. One of these was supported primarily by the king of France and resided in Avignon. The other remained in Rome and found support from, amongst others, the kings of England and successive Holy Roman Emperors.

This half-century-long split was resolved in 1417 with the election of Pope Martin V. Henry's efforts in France were certainly motivated by these events and it also seems likely that Henry V viewed success in France as a springboard for more important conquests in the Holy Land that might reunite the Church. As such, Henry V's motives in the Normandy campaigns after 1417 can be seen in a far wider and grander context.

In February 1421, Henry V returned to England for the first time in three and half years, with his teenage wife joining him on a royal progress around the country. But the Treaty of Troyes had not ended the Hundred Years War because the dauphin of France, Catherine's brother, saw himself as the rightful heir to his father's throne, and was determined to continue the fighting. At the same time, the financial consequences of Henry's war of

then persuaded Charles, the Dauphin, to repudiate the obligations that he had agreed to in the Treaty of Troyes and accept the crown. This took place in June 1429, ending a remarkable and frenetic period of activity that had, in all, taken less than three months.

Joan continued her campaign the following year, but delay and vacillation by the newly crowned king and his commanders allowed the English and the forces of their main French ally, the Duke of Burgundy, to rally and regroup. Joan, the Maid of Orleans, was, as a result, captured in May 1430 although the English were reluctant to create a martyr of her by executing such a popular figure, and so handed her over to a Church court in English-dominated Rouen. It was here that Joan was tried and convicted of heresy and witchcraft. As a result, she was burnt at the stake in the market square of Rouen in May 1431. Joan was retried and pardoned 20 years later by Charles VII, the king who in 1431 had done so little to save the 19 year old despite all that she had achieved in just 18 months to restore the position of his Valois house. Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans, was canonised in 1920.

### **The Reign of Henry VI and the End of the Hundred Years' War**

The intervention of Joan of Arc in the Hundred Years War was crucial in shifting the balance of the war in favour of France, and this was confirmed at the end of Henry VI's minority when the Burgundy faction abandoned the English cause and made peace with Charles VII. In a war that was primarily concerned with dynastic liaisons, pacts and agreements, this was a diplomatic wound from which the English would never recover and they were soon forced back inside Normandy. Henry VI made it clear immediately after coming of age in 1437 that he wanted little to do with the war in France although his commanders there were to hold out in Normandy until 1444.

The pro-war faction that opposed the king's stand were hugely weakened by the death of the Duke of Bedford in France in 1435, with his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, who had been left in England as Lord Protector of the young king, eased out of government in the late 1430s mainly as a result of his continued support for the war in France. Gloucester was to retire from public service and died in 1447.

Bedford and Gloucester, fierce protectors of their older brother's Agincourt legacy, were replaced by Cardinal Henry Beaufort, a lately legitimised son of John of Gaunt and so a royal great-uncle of the king. Cardinal Beaufort, who led the anti-war faction favoured by the king, had served as the Lord Chancellor under three kings, had helped Henry Bolingbroke secure the throne for the House of Lancaster in 1399 and had been loyal to the future Henry V in 1411 and 1412. Beaufort was also the Bishop of Winchester, and had been a cardinal since the mid-1420s when his rivalry with the Duke of Gloucester, his half-nephew, had begun.

In this new role as adviser to the king, it was Cardinal Beaufort who was to lead negotiations that led to the Treaty of Tours in 1445 that ended the Hundred Years War. This brokered a 20-year truce that was sealed by the marriage of Henry VI to Margaret of Anjou, the precocious and highly motivated 15-year-old niece of Charles VI. It was to be Margaret of Anjou who was soon to have such a major role in the destiny of the English throne.

But the treaty also agreed to the return of Maine and Anjou to the French king, a condition that was kept secret from parliament and from the people of England as it was known, by the cardinal's anti-war clique, how unpopular this would be. Indeed, the truce in general was not popular in England as it gave away much of the land traditionally claimed by the crown, and it was broken in 1449, two years after Beaufort's death, when renegade English forces attacked in Brittany. However, neither the men nor the political will were forthcoming from London to allow any latter-day Agincourt campaign and, as a result, Brittany was quickly lost with Normandy following suit soon after. Finally, Gascony and the southern provinces of Aquitaine were lost three years later.

By the time of these final losses in France, the king had come to be dominated by his new wife, Margaret of Anjou, and, in this, she was most closely supported by William de la Pole, the Earl of Suffolk who, with Beaufort, was blamed for the humiliating losses on the continent. De la Pole, who had been injured as a young man at the siege of Harfleur in 1415, had been a close ally

sixteenth Earl of Warwick. The Duke of Somerset, the leader of the king's woefully small Lancastrian force, was killed at St Albans along with a number of senior members of the Percy family, Lancastrian supporters of the king and major rivals to the Nevilles across the north of the country. Losses on both sides at St Albans stirred deep and visceral animosities that were not sated for another 30 years.

After the battle, the king was taken back to London in York's custody although it soon became clear that few clear-cut benefits were going to accrue from this renewed position of authority, with a tense stand off, similar in nature to the one that had characterised the period between 1453-55, continuing between the two camps for the next four years. Throughout this period, the king to a large extent remained mentally incapacitated, and it was increasingly marked by a psychological battle of wills between the Duke of York and Margaret of Anjou.

This period of faux peace, during which York never claimed the throne for himself, was to culminate in March 1458 when an agreement of sorts was worked out that solved the impasse left by the violence of 1455. After the agreement, the king, restored once again to good health, organised a procession of reconciliation, the Love Day, for the two enemy factions who had intrigued so intensely through his illness. This was to see bitter rivals from each side, including York and his queen, walking side by side in pairs through the streets of London, behind their king, before a mass at St Paul's.

The king's best efforts, however, could not stop open hostility again breaking out in the late summer of 1459 when a Neville army led by the Earl of Salisbury left Yorkshire with the intention of linking up with other Yorkist forces further west. Salisbury was a grandson of John of Gaunt and had served the king in a number of capacities through in the 1430s and 1440s in the war in France. However, the two had then fallen out soon after and this was mainly due to the king's preference for his bitterest rivals, the Percys. After St Albans, the Earl of Salisbury, in league with the Duke of York, had become a more and more dominant member of the faction that was to challenge the competence of the king's rule.

Spain and Portugal, the Roman Catholic superpowers of the age, were the first to commercially exploit the markets that were opened up by both these great maritime adventures. But both were soon to be vigorously challenged by Tudor England whose sailors and pirates quickly began harrying Spanish and Portuguese galleons for the rich cargoes that they carried. Anglo-Spanish hostility, further fuelled by religious disagreements following Henry VIII's decision to break from Rome in the 1530s, bristled throughout the sixteenth century before eventually coming to a head with the Spanish Armada in 1588.

This dramatic victory a century later saved England from invasion and was, at least in part, due to the foresight of Henry VII who in the 1490s had keenly watched the Voyages of Discovery launched from the Iberian peninsular. As a result, he organised the first truly national navy, which eventually was to allow Britannia to rule the waves, and in the late 1490s patronised the voyages of John Cabot to the northern seas of North America where he explored the island of Newfoundland. John Cabot, an Italian who was awarded £10 for this first voyage along with an annual pension of £20, died during his second voyage. However, he was succeeded by his son, Sebastian, who continued vainly to search for a northern passage over the top of the American continent to the riches of Cathay.

England had always been a powerful nation and at times its kings had been among the most important men in Europe. However, the discovery of the Americas, and the English reaction to this, was to change, and improve, this situation dramatically. This was perhaps not fully understood by the prudent Henry VII or by his Tudor son and grandchildren who followed him, but it was in time to make England, and then Britain, the world's first global superpower.

But this was all in the future as Henry VII and his settled kingdom entered the new century. Peace with France had been negotiated in the Treaty of Étampes in 1492, and a further piece in Henry VII's diplomatic jigsaw fell into place in November 1501 when the marriage of his heir, Prince Arthur, to Catherine of Aragon tied England to Spain. Indeed, the sense of optimism, prosperity and hope that this union brought within the Tudor court was not

broken by Arthur's untimely death from the plague a year later with many contemporaries commenting favourably on the 12-year-old Prince Henry, the new heir to the Tudor throne.

**Preview from Notesale.co.uk**  
**Page 43 of 43**