

Birth of the Tudors

The House of Tudor was one of the most successful and lavish royal dynasties in British history.

Its crowning years began here, in Pembroke Castle, with the birth of Henry Tudor in January 1457.

Harri Tudur as he was affectionately known in Wales, would become the first Tudor king, Henry VII in 1485.

And the House of Tudor would go on to produce two of the nation's most renowned monarchs, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

The Tudor line had humble origins in a place called Penmynydd on the island of Anglesey in north Wales.

The Tudurs as they were known were already a well-respected and powerful family.

They had served ancient lines of Welsh princes, such as Llywelyn the Great who was the son-in-law of King John of Magna Carta fame.

But the family was also related to the outlawed Owain Glyndwr. He opposed the British crown during the Welsh Wars of Independence that raged from 1400 to 1415.

As a result, the Tudurs lost much of their land, wealth and titles to the crown.

So perhaps it was in order to rebuild their family name that a young Owain Tudur – Henry Tudor's grandfather – was packed off to London to serve as a page under the King Henry V's steward, Sir Walter Hungerford.

But just how did this young Welsh courtier, from a disgraced and ruined family, manage to bed and marry a dowager queen of England and, in doing so, place a Tudor king on the English throne just two generations later?