Richard Plantagenet

It was in this year 1411, that Richard Plantagenet was born to Richard, fifth Earl of Cambridge and Anne Mortimer. His father was the son of Edmund, the first Duke of York, who was in turn the fourth son of Edward III. If Henry VI had died before 1453, the year of the birth of Edward, Prince of Wales, then Richard would have undoubtedly been crowned King of England, since there was no other noble with such a strong claim to the throne at that time, other than Richard himself.

Being so highly placed in the royal household, Richard was destined to play a significant role in the Government and politics of England throughout his lifetime and in England's affairs in France during the later stages of the Hundred Years War. He was appointed Lieutenant of France in 1436. Throughout his service in Europe, he had to pay for the services of his men and finance the army in France from his own personal funds.

Although York was a wealthy man in his own right. Thus, he was able, albeit unhappily in doing so, to fund the English army overseas. By the time he left France, York had forwarded some 38,000 of his own money to maintain English interests in France. To add insult to injury, in 1445 he was replaced as Lieutenant of France by Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset. It is not to be doubted that it was on Somerset's advice that Henry VI created York Lieutenant of Ireland, which was in reality, exile by office. Somerset was no doubt fearful of York, a fear enhanced by the fact that Somerset, a man whom York equally detested, and a favourite of Henry VI was forwarded funds to the sum of 25,000 to sustain the king's army in France.

Not only did York detest Somerset because of his favouritism with the king, but he also detested the fact that he had been given the office he had previously held in France and the funds to support it, despite his inability as a soldier. York's fears over the management of the campaign in France was soon realised, as the war began to go badly for the English.