Henry V Study Day

9th March 2013, Avenue Campus, Lecture Theatre C, 9.30am – 5pm

09.30 – 10.10 **Coffee and registration**

10.10 – 10.15 **Welcome**

10.15 – 11.15 Professor Anne Curry

'(Not) Born to be King. Henry V before and after 21 March 1413'

We are approaching the actual anniversary of Henry V's accession to the throne (21 March). This provides an excellent moment to reappraise him as a king and as a man. He was not born to be king. His creation as prince of Wales was the result of his father's usurpation of the throne in 1399. Henry did not have an easy time as prince, nor did he always take his duties seriously. Yet he is often seen as the perfect king, defeating the French and coming within a whisker of uniting England and France under one monarchy. Drawing on new research on Henry as prince, and on the views of contemporaries, this talk will explore this highly complex and enduringly fascinating English hero.

11.15 – 11.30 **Coffee**

11.30 – 12.30 Professor Ros King

'Shakespeare's Henry V: war hero or war criminal?'

Productions of Henry V, and literary criticism on the play, tend to fall into two camps: some see the play as jingoistic and Henry as a hero, others see it as anti-war, with Henry as variously misguided or even criminally responsible. How is this possible? Is it simply a 'matter of interpretation' or is there something in the structure of the play that encourages these divergent thoughts and raises questions about the concept of just war? This talk will examine the two early texts of the play printed during and shortly after Shakespeare's lifetime, which differ from each other in interesting ways, considering them in the context of the law and practice of war at the end of the sixteenth century.

12.30 – 13.15 **Lunch**

13.15 – 14.25 Richard Inverne

'The Legacy on Film'

As Prof. Ros King outlines, stage productions of Shakespeare's play tend to spotlight either the jingoistic or anti-war elements of the text; it is difficult to find a production which sought a middle course between the two. Generalising of course, it would appear that many if not most U.K. productions prior to about 1960 bent towards the former, whilst later productions showed their directors' main interest in the latter. Nowhere is this more reflected than in the two big-screen versions, that directed by and starring Laurence Olivier in 1944 and the "remake" by Kenneth Branagh –then widely tipped as Olivier's successor- in 1989. This talk will seek to differentiate between the two film versions and, by means of contextualisation, examine exactly why Olivier's film and his own post-Hollywood star performance might be considered "jingoistic" and Branagh's more realistic, an opinion encapsulated in film critic Mark Dujsik's remark that 'Olivier's Harry comes across a hero while Branagh's comes across a human being.' Why might that be so? Taking a look at the relationship between the British Film Industry and World War II, followed by that between the Industry and British and American politics in the 1980s...might provide an answer.

14.25 – 15.25 Dr Craig Lambert

'The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: The Appropriation of English Shipping Resources for the French War'

This talk will address the crucial, but occasionally ignored, involvement of England's maritime communities in the Hundred Years War. It will address some of the key issues of assembling naval forces under Edward III and Henry V. As kings of an island nation Edward III and Henry V needed to assemble sufficient naval resources to be able to transport their armies, supplies and envoys to France. The immense task of gathering large fleets of ships should not be underestimated. At this time there was no 'Royal Navy' to speak of and in order to achieve their martial and diplomatic aims in France, Edward and Henry had to requisition merchant ships for service in their wars. Yet, this process was not static and under Henry V changes to the fleet raising procedure were introduced. That we can discern such innovations is because the underlying bureaucratic process employed to arrest hundreds of ships from hundreds of ports has left behind a large corpus of documentation. These sources allow us to examine the procedure of assembling naval forces, first under Edward III and then under Henry V. We can also offer precise details on the size of the naval forces involved, which ports contributed ships, and the enormous number of seafarers English kings could mobilize and the impact this had on coastal communities. Combined with documents relating to land service, what these records show is a true 'society at war'.

15.25 – 15.45 Coffee

15.45 – 16.45 Professor Jon Adams

The greatest of Henry's Great Ships: *Gracedieu*

Henry V's 'great ship' *Grace Dieu* (*Gracedieu*) built between 1416 and 1418, was the largest ship ever built in England up to that time. At 1400 tons, nothing exceeded her in size for another two hundred years. Yet the ship never saw action and only made one somewhat ignominious voyage. For as David Loades put it, the medieval navy was more an event than an institution. Once the event had passed, so did the need for ships. On these terms *Gracedieu* was a white elephant: Built for Henry's war with France, and particularly to combat the huge carracks of their Genoese allies, by the time she was ready for sea, Henry had all but won. Put into reserve and finally moth-balled in a mud dock in the Hamble river, she was struck by lightning and burnt to waterline in 1439. From this perspective her history seems pitiful but the remains of her lower hull still lie in the mud where she settled and archaeology is revealing another side to the story. This paper discusses *Gracedieu* as a symbol of power and an extraordinary expression of the medieval shipwright's art.

16.45 – 17.00 Conclusions