

Institution: University of Southampton		
Unit of Assessment: 28 History		
Title of case study: 28-01 Agincourt 600		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Anne Curry	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of Medieval History	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: September 2004 – September 2019
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013 – July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? Y		
1. Summary of the impact <p>2015 saw the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt. Professor Anne Curry's research on the battle and its armies inspired and shaped commemorations on both sides of the Channel, enhancing public understanding and stimulating the participation of more than 500,000 individuals and communities, with vastly more engaged online. Her authoritative work and prolific engagement contributed to the allocation of more than GBP1m for commemorative activities and led to her chairing the funding committee, allowing her research to go to the heart of the projects. In the UK, her collaborative Tower of London exhibition with the Royal Armouries (RA) led to a boost in visitor numbers to the White Tower and informed a substantial 4,500-figurine scale model of the battle, now displayed at the RA Museum in Leeds. In France, she was historical consultant for a new EUR3.2m museum at the Centre Historique Médiéval d'Azincourt, the opening of which in August 2019 was deemed "impossible" without her research-led expertise. Her collaboration with the Historical Association enabled practitioners to develop their educational practices through a residential course and a guide distributed to all History PGCE students.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>Curry's pioneering research has transformed knowledge and understanding of Agincourt, a battle which occupies a central place in historical scholarship and the popular imagination. She revised her critical analysis of sources for a new edition in 2009 and an e-book in 2015 [3.1]. Her reconstruction of the battle, set fully in its context and based on comprehensive study of governmental records on both sides of the Channel, was the centrepiece of <i>Agincourt: A New History</i>, which she revised for a new edition in 2015 [3.2], as well as a book devised and co-edited with Dr Malcolm Mercer, Curator of Tower History for the Royal Armouries at the Tower of London, for a Royal Armouries exhibition on Agincourt [3.3].</p> <p>Curry's examination of financial archives proved that the English army was 12,000 strong, one of the largest ever to be raised for a campaign in France and that even with losses at Harfleur, dysentery and the installation of a large garrison, Henry V still had 8,500 men at the battle, 25% more than the traditional view. The names of most soldiers could be retrieved, along with the structure and size of individual retinues, from the data prepared by Curry on a special Agincourt 600 section on her open access database of late medieval soldiers [3.4]. Through research in French archives, she derived the first reliable figure for the French at the battle: at just c. 12,000, this challenged chronicle-based exaggerations that put the number between 40,000 and 120,000. Her research also enabled her to produce, and place on the website, databases for the French army, the first effort since Belleval in the 1860s to identify retinue leaders and companies and to ascertain the fate of the French at the battle; to date, c. 550 alleged dead and 320 proven prisoners have been identified, along with a further 3,000 combatants.</p> <p>In the lead-up to the anniversary Curry developed a second research theme on the cultural legacy of Agincourt, to investigate why this battle has come to enjoy distinctive fame in the English-speaking world, and to challenge, through empirical research, the many myths which surround it. Her researches extended beyond the 15th century, including the study of newspapers from the 17th century to the present, and embraced art, music, literature and popular</p>		

culture, assessing the extent to which the Agincourt of popular memory is Shakespeare's battle rather than that of 1415. The resulting *Great Battles: Agincourt* [3.5] was well-received in both academic and public domains ('Can hardly be bettered', *French History*; 'Commendably accessible and admirably well researched', *Independent on Sunday*; 'exhaustive... and incisive', *TLS*; 'Does an admirable job in showing how national identity, myth-making and popular culture can influence the historical narrative', *New York Review of Books*). Her research on the battle also shaped her biography of Henry V commissioned for the Penguin Monarchs series which has sold over 2,000 copies and been translated into Chinese [3.6]. Curry has established herself as the world expert on everything Agincourt related ('the doyenne of Agincourt historians', *The Times*; 'Nobody knows more about Agincourt', *Sunday Times*).

3. References to the research

3.1 Anne Curry, *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* (Boydell, new edn 2009; e-book 2015). Available on request.

3.2 Anne Curry, *Agincourt: A New History* (Tempus 2005; revised edition, The History Press, 2015). Available on request.

3.3 Anne Curry and Malcolm Mercer (eds), *The Battle of Agincourt* (Yale, 2015; paperback as *The Battle of Agincourt. The Illustrated Companion*, 2017). Available on request.

3.4 <http://www.medievalsoldier.org/about/agincourt-600>

3.5 Anne Curry, *Great Battles: Agincourt* (OUP, 2015). Listed in REF2.

3.6 Anne Curry, *Henry V. Playboy Prince to Warrior King* (Allen Lane 2015, paperback 2018). Available on request.

4. Details of the impact

Fundraising for the commemoration

In the budget of March 2015, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that GBP1,000,000 would be allocated for the commemoration of the 600th anniversary of the battle of Agincourt. This sum was given to the Agincourt 600 Trust, a charity chaired by Curry, "to contribute to the costs of events and educational activities organised by Agincourt 600 and subsidiary organisations to mark the 600th anniversary of the battle of Agincourt across the UK and Europe." [5.1] It was added to an existing GBP130,000 raised by the Trust from a variety of sources including individuals and livery companies. In reference to both amounts, the co-chair of the Agincourt 600 Committee (which governed the Trust) stated that "it is entirely accurate to say that Professor Curry's research and her high standing nationally aided our fundraising." [5.2] Curry's fundraising efforts involved giving 43 talks in 2015, reaching an audience of around 4000.

Coordinating the commemoration

From the start of the preparations, the Agincourt 600 Committee was "guided by Professor Curry's research and her emphasis on the joint involvement of both the British and the French authorities," according to the Committee's co-chair, who cited *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* as contributing to key position papers and guiding the planning. He went on to state: "Her detailed analyses of the finances of both the French and English armies and her database of late medieval soldiers were simply invaluable... Her work enabled us to answer critics calmly and with confidence as they queried aspects of the battle, particularly the relative sizes of the two armies. Her research into the cultural legacy gave the committee a much-needed breadth and depth to the commemorative activities." [5.2]

Having set up the *Agincourt 600 Commemorative Fund*, the Committee received applications from more than 80 organisations, of which 50 organisations were approved. This in turn comprised in excess of 100 different projects, which included community events, concerts, plays, educational resources, competitions, exhibitions, musical recordings, heritage events, disabled sporting events and resources, films, digital legacies, community sporting activities and commemorative monuments. [5.1]. As the co-chair of the Committee noted, "many of the applicants were enthused by [Curry's] work and planned their activities around it" [5.2].

Reach of the commemorative projects

As reported by the Trust to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, “a conservative estimate would put the reach of the non-digital elements of the projects in excess of 500,000 people of all ages and from across the UK. Digital reach would take this figure much higher. The dedicated Agincourt 600 website, alongside funded projects which have created a semipermanent or permanent legacy (e.g. learning resources, recorded music and memorials), will continue to reach many people and have an impact for years to come.” [5.1]

The month of the anniversary in October 2015 saw 70,000 hits on Agincourt600.com, the official website devised and curated by Curry [5.1]. The commemorations were covered nationally by the Times, Telegraph, Mail, and Guardian, as well and local press. [5.3]

Key commemorative, educational and legacy projects which Curry was directly involved in, and which drew heavily from her research, are detailed below.

Place-Making

Much of the local volunteer activity supported by the Trust consisted of place-making initiatives. One example is the creation of a trail by the Blackheath Historical Society: informed and inspired by Curry's research on the return of the king and his army, members explored the wider history of the heath. The research she communicated at Trotton, West Sussex, on the commander of the rearguard buried there, stimulated parishioners to carry out their research for a new guidebook. At Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire, the materials she provided on Henry V's itinerary in Hampshire in 1415 led to local people producing a video of their own. [5.4]

Eastleigh Borough Council sought Curry out for their 'Road to Agincourt' programme, a creative place-making programme with many different elements aimed at reaching as wide an audience as possible but with excellent historical content: 'we knew that she really understood the concept of community engagement based on academic research.' [5.5]. In addition to participation in project planning, she provided a wealth of practical research assistance. For a newly commissioned play on the Southampton Plot, she provided biographies of the plotters as well as identifying key sites which helped the writer Ben Musgrave to develop the storyline and characters and to determine appropriate historical locations for the performances, including Portchester castle and St Julian's chapel in Southampton where the plotters were buried. The size of venues limited audiences to about 800 but another 10,000 viewed the resulting film. As one audience member wrote 'Ben Musgrave drew on the historical facts and background to produce real characters, with real dilemmas that could be sympathised with, while the smallness of the venue had the advantage of drawing the audience into the action'. A second production, *The Road to Glory*, saw Curry, writer Neil Duffield and a director collaborate to develop youth drama with 15 local participants. Her input helped cast and audience (300) to connect with the experiences of fellow young people on the campaign. The team also produced educational material for local primary and secondary schools, for use in History, English and Drama lessons, impacting 800 pupils. As the project report notes, 'Having advice from leading experts on the subject of Agincourt and Southampton's part in the events of 600 years ago, has played a vital part in developing our understanding of the importance of the events and how it ties into our local history. This knowledge and information enables us to help interpret Shakespeare's versions of events and thus better prepare students to have a much deeper understanding of the characters in the play by learning about the true history behind them' [5.6].

Digital Learning

Curry was the director, designer and lead contributor of a FutureLearn course on 'Agincourt 1415: Myth and Reality'. Some episodes were filmed in The National Archives, where Curry demonstrated how she had worked on the archival sources. The course ran for the first time around the anniversary in 2015 and was subsequently expanded with further modules on the legacy of the battle for two further runs (February and October 2016). Together these generated 19,812 enrolments. The first two runs saw 60% fully participating learners, at that point the highest level of engagement of any FutureLearn course (the average being 21%) and with 43% posting at least one comment [5.7]. One episode was shortlisted for a Learning On Screen Award 2016, in the category Courseware and Curriculum In-house Production, by the British

Universities Film and Video Council. Much of the course is now freely available via direct web access.

Resources for Schools

In 2016, with Curry the initiator, the Historical Association (HA) ran its first Teacher Fellowship course, Warfare and Politics in the Later Middle Ages, the aim being to introduce teachers to current research and to help them incorporate it in their teaching. Selected teachers attended a residential course where Curry's research on Agincourt was the focus of half the sessions. Participants then worked together with an experienced teacher educator to produce lesson plans which were then made freely available online. The model proved successful and has become a standard part of the HA's work with academics. The CEO commented: 'Research-led input from Anne Curry allowed the HA to fully develop a radical new approach to teacher continuing professional development. ... Teachers involved with the Fellowship reported that engaging with Anne Curry's research transformed their understanding of the battle and led them to realising there were a wealth of resources available for them draw on for their subject knowledge and to help their students. They felt better equipped to help students in challenging orthodox narratives'. [5.8] Several participants pointed to other research initiatives they had undertaken as a result of the impetus given by the programme. 1500 copies of a follow-up guide to *Exploring and Teaching Medieval History* have since been distributed to all PGCE students, with an extended online version downloaded 1800 times. Teachers have used these resources to rethink their planning and teaching of medieval history, hailing them as 'wide-ranging and rigorous... yet accessible'. The teacher educator who edited the book commented on Curry's chapter on the organisation of the 1415 campaign as 'an exemplar of how to develop teacher's knowledge and help them move forward' [5.9].

Royal Armouries Exhibition

Curry was historical advisor to the Royal Armouries (RA) for an exhibition on Agincourt in the Tower of London from 24 October 2015 to 31 January 2016. As the Master of the Armouries commented, 'Her research expertise helped to frame and contextualise, for both our curators and the public, the weapons and armour which we hold in our collection. She made us think about how we could move away from an exclusively military approach to the battle including, for instance, the impact on women and popular culture. She also ensured that we considered appropriately the French and international contest... her knowledge of French sources was particularly impactful'. [5.10] The Tower received 450,225 paying visitors during the exhibition. It has always proved difficult for the RA to persuade the public to climb the steps into the White Tower, but a conversion rate during the run as a whole of 55%, and almost 70% in December 2015, demonstrates that the Agincourt exhibition encouraged around 20-45% more visitors than usual. The boost to the RA website was also substantial with 80% new visitors during the exhibition [5.11].

The Master of the Armouries emphasises three areas of Curry's research which made 'a particularly transformative contribution, marking out our exhibition as something quite new and different'. First, she provided her database of 9,000 soldiers known to have been on the campaign and worked with Clay Interactives on how best to present it to visitors. 'The resulting screens were an unusual and popular interactive feature of the Tower exhibition... at Leeds they remain a popular feature for visitors... reminding visitors of the people behind the armour so to speak. Secondly, her research on the numbers and types of soldiers in both armies, on the phases, timings and events of the battle, and the role of individuals was the driving and transformative information used in the creation of a new scale model of the battle which the RA commissioned from Studio MB'. Constructed by model maker David Marshall, this 4m x 2m model included 4,500 figures. [5.12] In 2016 it was transferred to a new gallery at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds where, as the Master notes, it helps to engage the site's c. 200,000 annual visitors, especially younger visitors. [5.10]

Fundraising and historical consultancy for a new museum at Centre Historique Médiéval d'Azincourt

Curry's close links with the Centre Historique Médiéval d'Azincourt date back more than two decades and were confirmed by an invitation to make an address in French and English on 25

October 2015 alongside the British Ambassador and French officials, at the new battlefield memorial on which she had advised. The Communauté des Communes des Sept Vallées, encouraged by the response to the anniversary and with Curry's encouragement, determined to develop a new and larger museum, to regenerate this deprived rural area. They invited Curry to be the principal historical advisor to this important project [5.13]. The layout and displays of the new museum, which provide a completely new scenography and vision of the battle within the broader context of life in the later middle ages, are based almost exclusively on Curry's research. She edited and translated all the information panels, as well as providing voice-overs for the interactive displays. Her research on the French battle dead generated over 300 names for an evocative memorial wall at the entry of the new museum and her research contribution was noted *The Times* (29 August 2019) [5.14]. The Director, Christophe Gilliot, describes the project as a 'key element in the regeneration of the area.' Curry assisted publicists in raising the €3.2m budget, an exceptionally large investment in a local museum. The new museum was opened by First Lady Brigitte Macron in August 2019, with Curry as a guest of honour. As the Director, Christophe Gilliot, commented: 'without you, it would have been impossible to do all this'. Her role was recognised by the decision to name the introductory gallery in the museum the 'Salle Anne Curry' [5.13].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1** Final report from the Agincourt 600 Trust to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
- 5.2** Letter from the co-chair of the Agincourt 600 Committee.
- 5.3** Agincourt 600 media report.
- 5.4** Comments from organisers of activities at Trotton, Blackheath and Bishops Waltham.
- 5.5** Letter from Head of Culture, Eastleigh Borough Council.
- 5.6** 'Road to Agincourt' Interim and Final Project Reports.
- 5.7** Statistics of user engagement and sample responses FutureLearn course 'Agincourt 1415'.
- 5.8** Letter from CEO of Historical Association and Teaching Fellowship educator.
- 5.9** Letter from Teacher Fellowship course leader.
- 5.10** Letter from Master of the Armouries.
- 5.11** Evaluation of the Royal Armouries Tower exhibition March 2016.
- 5.12** Plan and designs for the Royal Armouries Tower exhibition, including the Battle model.
- 5.13** Letter from the Director of the Centre Historique Médiévale d'Azincourt.
- 5.14** Adam Sage, 'French call to arms over 'myths' of Agincourt', *Times*, 29 August 2019.