

Welcome

Name: Matthew Hefferan

PhD: History

Thesis Title: Edward III's Household Knights in War and Peace

Thesis Description:

My thesis is grounded in the politics and warfare of fourteenth-century England. In particular, my work focuses on the household knights of King Edward III. The royal household knights were a group of men bound directly to the king through the giving of annuities and robes in return for loyalty and service. They have been described as the most important political grouping in medieval society and are key to understanding of medieval government and politics.

The focus of the study is two-fold: first, to consider the size and composition of Edward's knightly household; and second, to explore its function in the medieval polity. The first area considers who these men were and why they were retained, whether fluctuations in the size of the affinity reflected political demands and what prospect of social mobility and legal protection it offered its members. The second strand addresses two distinct areas: war and domestic affairs. With regard to war, it assesses the role of royal retainers in recruiting armies, leading expeditions and garrisoning castles. Domestically, the thesis investigates how royal retainers were used to help the king rule, both in the localities and centrally, in parliament, the royal court and bureaucracy.

The impact of researching the royal household knights extends far beyond a mere understanding of this group. It takes us to the heart of key questions about royal governance, military organisation and the relationship between service and reward in the fourteenth century. As such, we cannot fully understand Edward's kingship until this group is investigated in detail.

Supervisors and Institution(s):

[Dr Gwilym Dodd \(University of Nottingham\)](#)

[Dr James Bothwell \(University of Leicester\)](#)

Publications (please include full details with page nos. or web links):

- Hefferan, M., *Edward III's Affinity and the Crécy Campaign* (Unpublished MA Dissertation: University of Nottingham, 2014).

Scholarly / Public Engagement Activities:

- N/A

Other Research Interests:

- Any aspect of Later Medieval Europe
- The Crusades

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