15. How did the Redmayns experience the preparations for war? 1414-1415

'Your real job as a novelist is not to be an inferior sort of historian but to recreate the texture of lived experience: to activate the senses, and to deepen the reader's engagement through feeling.'

Hilary Mantel*, The Reith Lectures, 2017*

I love Hilary Mantel's aim of recreating '*the texture of lived experience*'. I'm obviously not writing a novel but her phrase sums up what I've been aiming for in these chapters – to glimpse the living people behind the Redmayns' names and effigies, those 'cat-sitting' moments when I catch sight of their emotions and ideals, the complexities of their experiences and how they may have responded to and felt about other people, about events and conflicting pressures – those very human feelings we can recognise across the centuries.

Focussing on the Redmayns' '*lived experience*' is particularly important in this chapter. It would be all too easy to become enmeshed in the national narrative, the story of Henry V's actions and the events that led to his invasion of France and lose sight of the Redmayns' individual experiences – how, from November 1414 to August 1415, the family experienced the debates and practicalities, the hopes and fears of preparing for Henry's invasion of France. This huge – and very risky – expedition must have dominated much of the Redmayns' time and conversations – and I do mean 'family', not just Sir Richard and Elizabeth but the younger generation too, particularly Brian and Agnes Stapleton. Brian was Elizabeth's son by her first marriage and so Richard's step-son. In 1415 he was in his late twenties and taking on heavy responsibilities in his role in the King's army.

However Brian, Agnes and other younger Redmayns will have to wait a few pages to make their appearance. Drowning readers in a torrent of new names is never a good way to start a chapter! Instead, I'll begin by returning to Sir Richard Redmayn who, in November 1414, was riding south to parliament, where it became clear that war with France was a real possibility.

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The November 1414 parliament is a good place to start because it's a helpful chronological marker, the start of the six-month period during which the English preparations for war moved ahead so rapidly that, by the end of April 1415, the nobility and other leaders had signed contracts (known as indentures) agreeing the number of soldiers each of them would contribute to the royal army. More importantly, however, in terms of my search for the Redmayn's lived experiences of these preparations, this parliament opens up at least one important aspect of Richard's experiences and two that are maybe more surprising. At least one cat is about to be sat on!

One of those surprises, in the context of preparing for war, is a possible insight into Richard's friendships. Back in Chapter 5 I identified Henry Vavasour of Hazlewood castle as one of Richard's friends. William Gascoigne, the Lord Chief Justice and Richard's neighbour, may have been another –

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and the 1414 parliament may reveal a third – Sir John Etton, Richard's partner as Knight of the Shire for Yorkshire at this parliament. Richard and John had probably known each other for over twenty years because, during the 1390s John, like Richard, took part in jousts on the Scottish border and may even have fought alongside Richard at the Carlisle joust in 1393. They were both also knights of the royal household under Henry IV and Henry V, had both carried the responsibilities of Sheriff of Yorkshire and had worked closely with Ralph Neville, earl of Westmorland.

Even more interestingly, between 1414 and 1421, Richard and John served together for Yorkshire at three of the seven parliaments for which we know the names of those elected. No other Yorkshire pairing served together three times between 1386 and 1421, a period when Professor Rawcliffe in *The House of Commons 1386-1421* says there was no shortage of suitable candidates. The election of Richard and John as a pair suggests two men who were not only well-respected by their peers in Yorkshire but were known to work together effectively and were comfortable spending time in each other's company, time which probably included their journeys to and from Westminster. All this seems to point towards friendship between the two men – and friendship is clearly a valuable, emotionally supportive and rewarding part of anyone's lived experiences.

Linked closely to friendship is a second aspect of Richard's lived experiences – and definitely a cat-sitting moment for me – as his experiences at parliament may have something in common with mine at teaching conferences. Amongst my enjoyments were the happy accidents of meeting friends en route and our conversations mixing family news and the business ahead. Then, on arrival, came another flurry of well-known faces and cheerful greetings plus new faces to get to know. Old and new friendships are very much part of my experience of conferences – was that also part of how Richard experienced parliaments? Was he, too, frustrated by half-completed conversations and plans to talk further that never took place? Did he enjoy the shared sense of purpose amongst those he met, maybe even a renewal of ideals? Perhaps these kinds of experiences don't change over time – though I never had to stable my horses at a conference – and we can use our experiences to reflect on Richard's experiences at parliaments and other meetings and so make up for the lack of contemporary evidence?

Attending parliament was, of course, about far more than socialising and Richard's presence reveals a third aspect of his lived experiences, one much more directly linked to his involvement in the preparations for war – the depth of responsibility he carried through his royal service and roles in government. This is a feature of his life that I've discussed in earlier chapters but is particularly evident here. At this parliament, as a knight of the royal household, he was expected to understand complex situations, contribute intelligently to discussions and weigh the merits of alternative courses of actions that would be both extremely expensive financially and put many lives and even the crown at risk. How great a pressure this was on him, of course, we have no way of knowing.

This level of responsibility is well-illustrated by the issues discussed at parliament after it opened on 19 November. The Lords and Commons gathered in the King's presence in the Painted Chamber at Westminster, one of the king's private apartments but often used for the opening of parliament, and it's easy to imagine the hum of conversation giving way to silence when the Chancellor, Bishop Henry Beaufort, was ready to speak on King Henry's behalf. From his place amongst the Commons, Richard Redmayn heard Beaufort say that King Henry was determined on the *'recovery of the*

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inheritance and right of his crown' [of France] now that France had rejected his embassy's terms. Therefore a time '*of war and of toil'* lay ahead and the King needed three things from parliament – good advice, the promise of strong military support and a generous grant of taxation to pay for the war. In return, he promised '*great honour and glory'*.

So what, in a little more detail, were the issues that Richard needed to be thoroughly familiar with in order to contribute to discussions and to retain the respect of his colleagues, especially his most important contact, John, duke of Bedford, the King's brother.

The complexity of French politics was one issue. On the surface, France was vulnerable because her nobles had been fighting an intermittent civil war over control of the Dauphin, the heir to the throne, during Charles VI's bouts of mental illness. These divisions were potentially to England's advantage but were not guaranteed to continue – an English invasion was very likely to re-unite the French nobility. In addition, the French, for all their divisions, were dismissive of Henry, who they saw as inexperienced, still very much the prince who had lost friends and alienated people with his behaviour towards his father and was in danger of deposition himself.

A related issue that Richard needed to understand was the complex pattern of diplomacy between England and France since Henry V had become king, including his negotiations with the leaders of the noble factions in France as well as with King Charles. The most recent phase of this diplomacy had begun in May 1414 when Henry had despatched a Grand Embassy to France, offering to marry Princess Catherine of France but, in return, expecting France to pay a huge dowry plus the ransom agreed after the capture of the King of France in battle in 1356 and, most significantly, accepting Henry's right to rule northern France and Gascony, as agreed in the Treaty of Bretigny in 1360.

This appeared to be a very aggressive move by Henry, guaranteed to provoke French hostility, but only Henry and his innermost circle of advisers knew whether he had yet decided to go to war. Most of those at parliament, including Richard Redmayn, would still have been uncertain of the King's intentions. It was possible that King Henry had made such high demands to force France into more moderate concessions and allow him to proclaim victory without war … which brings us to a third issue that Richard need to be fully conversant with – the arguments for and against going to war.

On the one hand, a successful war would unite England behind Henry V and end any remaining opposition to the Lancastrian dynasty – God would have shown his faith in the Lancastrian kings. Conversely, military defeat or even just the failure to achieve major success could threaten Henry's throne – and success would not be easy. No English king had led an army into France for over fifty years and, if it came to a battle, the English would likely be out-numbered and facing an enemy united against the English despite their internal differences. In addition, an invasion would be extremely expensive, involving a continuing armed presence in France to consolidate any success.

These different arguments were reflected in the discussions Richard Redmayn heard in and around parliament or at a Great Council of lords and knights held around the same time. Richard, as a knight of the royal household, was expected to support the king's policies but, while the Commons as a whole responded positively to the King's plans for war, there wasn't the total enthusiasm that Henry had hoped for. The Commons agreed to two grants of taxation, the first to be collected in February

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1415, the second a year later, but that was perhaps at a slower pace and producing less revenue than Henry needed. In addition, there were also words of caution, urging the King to send another embassy to France to offer more moderate terms. Whether this approach was prompted by concern over the risks of war or to show the Pope and other rulers that King Henry was not a warmonger is not clear. Despite this caution, before parliament ended on 7th December, those assembled swore that they were ready '*with their bodies*' to fight for the king.

Writing about Richard's involvement in these discussions has given me insights into several aspects of his lived experience. The depth of knowledge he needed to take part effectively in discussions is the aspect most obviously related to the preparations for war but his presence at parliament has also helped me suggest other important facets of his lived experience – his friendships and possible enjoyment of the social side of such national events, renewing old and new contacts.

And, by way of concluding this section of the chapter, I'll add a final aspect of Richard's experiences – living with uncertainty. We know what was to happen in 1415 but Richard didn't. As he rode north after parliament ended (home in time for Christmas?) he couldn't yet be sure if King Henry would lead his army across the Channel and, if he did, what the outcomes would be? One thing he did know was that, because it would take many months to recruit and equip an army, King Henry had already begun discussing the number of men his nobles would each contribute to a 12-month campaign – and that recruitment of soldiers raised a very personal question for Richard. Would he be part of the King's army? Was this, at last, Richard's opportunity to fulfil his youthful hopes, fuelled by Edward III's victories, of fighting in France?

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When the moment came in August 1415 for Henry V's fleet to set sail for France, at least two younger members of the Redmayn family were on board but Sir Richard wasn't with them. This may not seem surprising – he was, after all, now sixty and the idea of a man of that age fighting on a battlefield feels quite alarming today. However there were men in their sixties at Agincourt and Richard appears to have been a fit sixty so it's worth exploring an alternative explanation – that he was needed in England more than he was needed in France.

As King Henry was expecting to be in France for at least a year, he needed to ensure that, in his absence, England was well-governed and secure against rebellion (especially in Wales) and from Scottish incursions. He therefore appointed his very capable brother, John, duke of Bedford, as 'Keeper of the Realm', supported by a small council of peers including the earl of Westmorland. What's significant about these appointments from Richard Redmayn's viewpoint is that he'd already worked closely with Bedford and Westmorland. It wouldn't be surprising, therefore, if they had asked for Richard to remain in England because he was a reliable administrator and powerful figure in the north. Sir John Etton, Richard's Yorkshire colleague at the 1414 parliament and in the royal household, similarly remained in England as keeper of Roxburgh castle on the Scottish border.

How might Richard have reacted to staying in England? We can't, of course, know but a range of thoughts and emotions may have passed across his mind – wishing he was younger, envy of those taking part, relief that his physical strength was not going to be tested so arduously, satisfaction at

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having a valuable role in England that was recognised by others? Perhaps his thoughts also drifted to his armoury at home and the armour and weapons that he was never likely to use again?

There were, as I said earlier, members of the Redmayn family in Henry V's army but, unfortunately, I'm not sure exactly how many! However I shouldn't feel too frustrated – the survival of so many administrative records of the campaign, enables historians to identify the names of around 75% of the 12,000 men in Henry V's army. It feels miraculous that we know as much as we do about Henry's army! So, which younger members of the family were with the King?

Brian Stapleton, Elizabeth's son by her first marriage and therefore Sir Richard's stepson, was also a man of influence in his own right as a major landowner in the West Riding and head of the Stapleton family. He was definitely in the royal army as he's recorded in the muster roll for the duke of Clarence's retinue, leading 40 men-at-arms and archers in his own sub-retinue.

Richard Redmayn, Sir Richard and Elizabeth's second son, was also a member of Henry V's army. He's recorded in the Norman Rolls as having captured (along with Brian Stapleton) a French soldier who was held for ransom. However he's not listed in the surviving muster rolls, so we don't know whose retinue he was in – it wasn't Brian's as he's not among the 40 men listed for Brian's retinue.

Matthew Redmayn, Sir Richard and Elizabeth's elder son, isn't mentioned in any documents so we can't be certain whether he was in the army. The main reason for thinking Matthew was with Henry V is that his younger brother, Richard (above) was in the King's army. Would Matthew stay home if his brother was in France – though illness or some other reason could have kept him home – and he did fight in France in 1417, though clearly that doesn't guarantee he was there in 1415.

Thomas Redmayn is puzzling in a different way – he's named in the muster roll as an archer in Brian Stapleton's retinue, a logical place for a Redmayn to be, but we don't know if he was Richard and Elizabeth's son or nephew or some other relative! He may have been a third son but even if we push the date of their Richard and Elizabeth's marriage back to 1394 (earlier than I think likely) he couldn't have been born before 1397 so was 17 or 18 in 1415, young to grow into the strength needed by an archer. Maybe it's more likely he was a nephew – perhaps the Thomas Redmayn who, after Sir Richard's death, shared custody of the Redmayn lands with the younger Richard.

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Brian Stapleton was therefore the senior figure amongst the younger family members and the one who carried by far the greatest responsibilities as commander of a retinue of forty men. This level of responsibility is why I'm now going to focus on the texture of Brian's 'lived experience' during the preparations for the invasion of France. For at least six months, Brian's life was dominated by the recruitment and preparation of soldiers for the invasion of France and two words seem to sum up his experiences – 'responsibility' and 'lists'. Brian must have felt deeply responsible for the 40 men in his retinue, men he was expecting to risk their lives in battle and also spent a huge amount of time creating, revising, checking and double-checking lists of men, equipment and much else.

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Brian's detailed involvement in recruiting soldiers probably began by January 1415 at the latest. At the end of 1414, Henry V had consulted his nobles about the numbers of soldiers they could provide for his army and his brother, Thomas, duke of Clarence, contributed the largest number, 960 men (240 men-at-arms and 720 archers – the standard ratio of 1 man-at-arms to 3 archers). To raise that number of men, Clarence recruited some men directly but also agreed indentures with 61 individuals who each brought an agreed number of soldiers to make up Clarence's overall retinue. Brian Stapleton's retinue of 40 men was one of the largest of these contributions and hence he probably needed to begin recruiting early in 1415. In his book, *The Agincourt Campaign of 1415: the Retinues of the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester*, Michael Warner identifies Brian as one of eight knights and squires with retinues of over 32 soldiers and who were therefore Clarence's chief sub-commanders.

Identifying Brian's senior role in Clarence's retinue is extremely helpful because it enables me to infer that Brian was already an experienced soldier by 1415. He isn't named in any military documents before this so it would be easy to assume that Brian was beginning his military career in 1415 but his standing in Clarence's retinue strongly suggests that he was both experienced and had a reputation as a capable leader. These inferences are based on the following arguments:

- We only know the details of the military careers of five of the other seven sub-commanders in Clarence's retinue, but those five were military veterans and the outstanding two were northern knights who may well have had experience on the border with Scotland and elsewhere. Brian's presence amongst these men suggests he too had military experience.
- Brian's ability to recruit 40 soldiers suggests he was already respected as a soldier and leader.
- Brian had responsibility for his 40 men including issuing orders in battle and ensuring they understood and kept the regulations issued by the king – this again suggests experience.

These arguments make it unlikely that Brian was a military novice in 1415 – and as he was aged around 28 he'd had time to gain experience, perhaps under Clarence's command. Clarence himself had extensive military experience by 1415, in fact wider experience and a higher reputation than his brother, King Henry. Clarence had served in Ireland, Wales, in naval warfare against France and, in 1412, had led an army of 4000 men into France. It's possible that Brian served under Clarence in 1412 – there's no record of him doing so but as we only know the names of 4% of those soldiers that's not surprising. A family link may also help explain Brian being in Clarence's retinue – another of the leading sub-commanders in Clarence's retinue was Sir John Godard who may have been related to Brian's wife Agnes.

Having established Brian's seniority in Clarence's retinue, what were his responsibilities ahead of the campaign? Given my emphasis on 'lists' as part of Brian's experiences, it seems appropriate to set out those responsibilities in a list!

1. **Discuss and agree how many men he would contribute to Clarence's retinue** with the duke or his representatives.
2. **Recruit those 40 soldiers** – men he had confidence in as each man's life would depend on those around him. This suggests that Brian had served with many of them before or they were known to him as capable soldiers – men from Brian's own household, relatives (such as Thomas Redmayn and William Goddard, a man-at-arms, possibly related to Brian's wife), neighbours, friends and members of their households and also professional soldiers.

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3. **Create a list of replacements** should anyone drop out in the months before embarkation.
4. **Send the soldiers' names to the Exchequer** where lists of the soldiers were prepared ahead of mustering before embarkation. At the musters, royal officials would check that Brian had brought the number of men the king was paying for.
5. **Decide when and how much to pay his men of an advance on their wages** for the first 3 months of the campaign. In theory, payment took place after the indentures were signed in April which then led to the king sending the money to Clarence to forward to the sub-commanders such as Brian. However that process may have led to delays so Brian himself may have paid an advance earlier to ensure he recruited the men he needed.
6. **Ensure all his men were properly equipped.** Men-at-arms, usually from landed families, had their own full suit of armour with under-padding, helmets with visors, swords, lances, poll-axes or other long-handled weapons. Archers needed leather armour, often reinforced with metal plates, open-faced helmets, bows, swords and daggers.
7. **Keep his men fit and practiced with their weapons** to ensure they knew the standards he expected before setting off for the south coast.
8. **Build and maintain good relations with and between the members of his retinue.**
9. **Ensure all his men-at-arms and archers had horses** – 1 each for the archers and several each for the men-at-arms. The horses needed to be fit for the tasks ahead.
10. **Identify the number of pages and servants travelling with the men-at-arms** in his retinue and how many he himself was taking.
11. **Make sure his men knew and understood the detailed regulations laid down by the king for the conduct of the campaign** – and reinforce their understanding on the journey south.
12. **Plan the timing of his retinue's journey to the south coast** so they arrived at the muster point by July 1st, the initial date set by the king.
13. **Appoint harbingers from the retinue to travel ahead to secure shelter and food** on the journey south and claim their share of the available food on arrival at the muster point.
14. **Keep up to date with communications** with Clarence, Exchequer officials and other administrative demands, of which there must have been many.

Whatever Brian's experience, he also probably discussed his preparations with experienced soldiers, Sir John Godard, for example, and his stepfather, Sir Richard Redmayn – and many of the items listed above had to be kept constantly under review, revisited and re-checked across the months before embarkation.

Military issues were not, however, the only things that Brian had to attend to in preparation for a campaign that King Henry had said might last a year or more. In addition, he had to plan for the welfare of his family and estates during his absence – so here's a few more items for that list:

15. **Appoint lawyers who would act for him in his absence**
16. **Make his will** – including plans for the inheritance of his estates in the event of his death and alternative plans should his heir, a boy aged just 2, should also die.
17. **Plan ahead for his daughters' marriages –** identifying possible husbands if this hadn't already been done and leaving money for their dowries in his will**.**
18. **Discuss how he would communicate with his family while away** and possibly identify servants who might carry messages to and from London, Southampton and even France.
19. **Discuss with his wife, Agnes, the upbringing of their children** in the event of his death and whether she might re-marry or take a vow of chastity as a vowess.

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There's plenty there that perhaps kept Brian awake at night as the months unfolded and, in addition, there were more emotive responsibilities which may have weighed heavily – his responsibility to the Stapleton family's reputation and honour, to the memory of his grandfather who'd been a notable soldier, a need to set an example for his young son and to make his mother Elizabeth, his wife Agnes and his daughters proud of him.

The longer this list of Brian's preparations has become the more impressed I am by the detailed planning he and every retinue commander in the royal army undertook. If Brian's wife and family often thought that his mind was elsewhere then it wouldn't be at all surprising – our hindsight perception of Henry V's victory at Agincourt might suggest that Brian's mind was entirely focussed on glory but it seems far more likely that he was preoccupied by the practicalities of getting his retinue to the muster on time and in good condition and on bringing honour to his family.

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Brian and his retinue set off from Yorkshire by mid-June 1415, just one contingent of the 12,000 soldiers converging on muster points around Southampton. Thomas Redmayn was riding with Brian as one of his archers but the younger Richard Redmayn and, perhaps, Matthew were with other retinues. They didn't have the same weight of responsibilities as Brian but they must have felt the obligation to their family to uphold the Redmayns' military reputation. Before they set off, they would have offered prayers, for their personal safety and that they bring honour to their family.

Sir Richard Redmayn was also heading south to the muster but for a different purpose. Richard had been appointed as one of the administrators of the mustering process, confirming that the retinue commanders had brought the number of troops agreed in their indentures with the king. This wasn't simply about ensuring that the king had enough troops for the invasion but also that the commanders were not paid for troops they hadn't brought with them!

In Richard's case, he was involved in the musters of the two largest retinues, those led by the King's brothers, the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester. On 16 July Richard was with Gloucester's retinue of 800 men near Romsey (a dozen miles from Southampton) and four days later he was ordered by the king to take the muster of Clarence's retinue of 960 men at St Catherine's Hill in the New Forest. What exactly Richard and other administrators did during the several days they spent at each muster is unclear. It's most likely that Richard's military and administrative experience made him ideally placed to supervise the Exchequer clerks who were 'pointing' or ticking off the names of the men in each retinue and ensuring that each commander had brought the agreed numbers of men-at-arms and archers. It's possible that Richard's experience meant that he checked the weapons and horses brought to the muster but I can't be certain of that.

Richard was therefore still on the south coast in the last days of July and, with embarkation planned for the beginning of August, it seems likely that he stayed in the south until the fleet's departure, perhaps using his experience to assist with loading the thousands of horses (at least 12,000 and

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probably several thousand more) onto the ships, given his experience back in 1399 when, as Richard II's Master of the Horse, he'd been in charge of the supply, provisioning and transport of horses to and from King Richard's invasion of Ireland.

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Now for my big finish! One group of people has been very obviously missing from this chapter – the women of the Redmayn family – but there's a reason for that and it's not the lack of evidence about their activities. I've saved Elizabeth, Agnes Stapleton and the other un-named Redmayn women until now because, by exploring the *texture of their lived experiences* at the end of this chapter, I want to prevent them getting lost amidst the activities of their menfolk. Their experiences were every bit as important as those of the men in their family and, by exploring those experiences and feelings, I can also pay tribute to my grandmother, Charlotte Dawson.

I didn't know Charlotte – she died aged 56 in 1935 and my Dad and his siblings rarely spoke about their parents and childhood – but, from what I know, I think Charlotte would have recognized and greatly sympathised with Agnes Stapleton and the other Redmayn women in 1415 and would have recognised these words of Christine de Pizan from around 1405 which I quoted in chapter 4:

> *Because barons … knights and squires and gentlemen travel and go off to the wars,*
> *their wives should be wise and sound administrators and manage their affairs well …*

Of course, Charlotte didn't live in a castle and she wasn't married to a knight. She lived in a terraced house in Liverpool and my grandfather, George, was a clerk but the reason that I think that Charlotte and Agnes, in particular, would have understood each other is that, just as Agnes's husband, Brian Stapleton, joined Henry V's army in 1415, George was transformed in August 1914 into Sergeant Dawson of the 6th Battalion of the King's Liverpool Regiment – The Liverpool Rifles – left for France where he remained, with the exception of his leaves, until after Armistice Day in 1918.

To add a little more detail:

> In August 1914, Charlotte was 36, the mother of 3 sons under the age of 9 and of two children who'd died in infancy. Her youngest son (my Dad) was 14 months old and named George after his father.
>
> In August 1415, Agnes Stapleton was probably in her late 20s, the mother of at least 3, possibly 4 children and very likely had also experienced the loss of other babies in infancy. Her only son was coming up to his second birthday and named Brian after his father.

I am, of course, speculating about the similarities in their thoughts but those old stand-bys in the absence of 'real evidence', common sense and human nature, suggest that Charlotte would have experienced some very strong cat-sitting moments when she recognised her fellowship with Agnes's situation five hundred years earlier.

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There were, for example, their husbands':

- preoccupation with preparing for war and being distracted from what was happening at home
- sense of responsibility for the men in their charge
- hopes and fears about living up to their families' expectations

And Charlotte would also have felt fellowship with Agnes, over how they balanced their support for their husbands, care for their children, how much to reveal of their own anxieties, fear about their children growing up without a father, wondering who to turn to for help.

It's very possible, therefore, that Charlotte and Agnes also shared the emotions of the four women featured in Alain Chartier's poem *Le Livre des Quatres Dames,* written by Chartier c1416-1417 in the aftermath of the battle of Agincourt but also capturing the anxieties and fears of women whose husbands are setting off to war.

Chartier's poem tells of four women – the first mourning her husband who'd been killed fighting honourably and how she hoped they would be reunited in Paradise; the second woman whose husband is alive but a captive and she fears he may die in prison; the third whose husband is missing and she has no clue as to whether he is dead or alive and the fourth whose husband is alive but has brought shame on them, their families and their descendants because he fled the battle.

Agnes and Charlotte must have often wondered whether their husbands would suffer any of those four fates or be wounded or disabled – or, glory be, would they survive unscathed? Despite the five centuries between Agnes and Charlotte, they must have had those fears in common and yet also had to get on with daily life, organising their households and bringing up their children while wondering what the future held for themselves and their children. Charlotte probably had the support of her four sisters who lived nearby and Agnes had servants and, hopefully, family support. No matter how much help they had, however, they both faced extremely demanding situations that must often have felt deeply lonely and were apparently endless.

And, of course, there was Elizabeth Redmayn who watched as her son or sons rode away to war and her sister, Sybil Ryther, whose son, William, may also have been in the royal army. Fear and worry were not confined to wives but accompanied the daily lives of mothers, sisters, aunts and friends.

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Hilary Mantel's words about *recreating the texture of lived experience* have been really helpful to me in this chapter, keeping me focussed in the Redmayn's personal experiences and what we can learn about them instead of being diverted into the national story of Henry V's invasion of France. In particular I've gained a much deeper understanding of the responsibilities borne by Richard Redmayn and Brian Stapleton as they prepared for war. I can't be surprised at the responsibilities that Richard shouldered and the depth of knowledge he needed because his continuing work for the crown has been one of the major themes in these chapters but I've also learned more about his friendships, about how parliament may have been an opportunity to renew old friendships and

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create new ones. And this focus on lived experiences has transformed Brian Stapleton from just a name into a young man who put great thought, commitment and time into preparing to serve his king in war-time. In this, he resembles so many young men who, in every century, have borne levels of responsibility in wartime which would never have come their way in peacetime.

Similarly, the lived experiences of the women of the Redmayn family – and of my grandmother – underline one final thought – that war was an experience shared by families, by women and children as well as by men and their human, emotional responses may well have been very similar across time, whether we're discussing Agnes and Brian in 1415 or Charlotte and George in 1914 or Richard and Elizabeth worrying about their sons. While the Redmayns were preparing for war they were also preparing for loss and for death – but once their men had left home the Redmayn women simply had to wait … and pray. When and how would they hear next – and what would that news be?

How do I know?

Notes on my sources and reading for Chapter 15

In addition to the biographical articles by Professors Roskell and Rawcliffe, Calendars of Patent Rolls and other sources listed for earlier chapters I used the following:

Anne Curry, Agincourt, A New History, 2005

Michael P Warner, The Agincourt Campaign of 1415: the Retinues of the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, 2021

The Soldier in Later Medieval England database:

https://www.medievalsoldier.org/

The Parliament Roll for the parliament of 1414 is available online (for a subscription) at:

https://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/november-1414

I also dipped into:

J H Wylie and W T Waugh, *The Reign of Henry V*, 3 vols, 1914 - 1929

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