In 1258-1259 England underwent a political revolution. Reforms known as the Provisions of Oxford, reforms far more radical than Magna Carta in 1215, were forced on King Henry III. A magnate council, responsible to three annual parliaments, took over the government of the country and carried through a wide-ranging reform of local government. Increasingly, as the king struggled to recover his independence, one man emerged as the leader of the movement against him, Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester. Between Montfort’s victory at the battle of Lewes and in May 1264 and his death at the battle of Evesham in August 1265, he was the virtual ruler of the country. The movement of reform reached out to a wide political community embracing knights, townsmen and peasants as well earls and barons. Montfort, indeed, summoned both knights and burgesses to parliament, the beginnings of the House of Commons. The period was also important for the development of English national feeling, one of Montfort’s major slogans being ‘England for the English’.

The lecture/session covers three main areas

1. The causes of the revolution of 1258; the personality and policies of King Henry III. Why was his acceptance of Magna Carta not enough?

2. How and why Simon de Montfort emerged as the leader of the opposition.

3. The significance of the period in widening the political community and developing English national feeling.

Lecture:

- Revolution was much more radical than the Magna Carta
- Took control of central government out of the hands of the King
- Magna Carter left King John still in charge of government policies and members
- 1258 local government reformed more extensively than in 1215
- 1258-59 the barons were also subject to reform
- After 1259 great struggle by the king to overthrow these reforms
- 1263 Simon de Montfort was the ruler of England in the name of the king- governor of England- first person in history to ever do this
- First parliament with a house of commons