# **Abstract**

The Ministry of Information and the British Film Hero during World War 2

*PhD project by Robert Williamson*

This project intends to offer new understandings of the complex relationship between the Government and the British Film Studios relating to feature film content and production during the period of the Second World War.It will exploreGovernment policy and institutional organisation and investigate the impact of underlying work processes and propaganda demands upon the representation of the hero figure in British feature films. This project’s uniqueness lies in its practice of historical enquiry being explored, and exposed, in the consideration of government policies that relate to feature film narratives. It will open a dialogue with archival resources, to give a visibility and voice to an otherwise unarticulated aspect of British cinema history. Moreover this thesis contributes original research to current academic studies in propaganda and film, and crucially, enables the British Government film policies to be fully explored.

Through a combination of primary and secondary sources, this study will examine if there is evidence of institutional causal links between British Government policies and film, and that indirectly the role of the hero was adapted and enhanced.  Several academics have suggested the idea of a national identity being reframed via demands or propaganda, as war progressed and that a hero-figure was a significant element in that framework. I will expand on these findings and provide a new contribution to film history and stimulation for further studies.

A focal point of the research will be a focus and analysis of the processes and relationships by which the Ministry of Information and its Films Division operated with the Film Studios in feature film content and production. It will examine the hypothesis that these working practices were effective and analyse whether the relationships were collaborative or conflicted especially within propaganda demands of government. Within this framework, it will seek and analyse any correlation between other government departments, not only the MOI. Also, considered will be the USA’s involvement in propaganda policies, and determine whether this affected the changing role of the hero in British made wartime films.