



Magna Carta, the Grand Ringing Day and LiberTeas

What are Ringers doing to join in the Celebrations?

As part of the *'Strike a Blow for Democracy'* week-end, on Sunday 14 June 2015, to mark the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, there is to be a **Grand Ringing Day**, involving lots of ringing at 3 pm. Ringers will join with those holding an afternoon tea to celebrate, debate and reflect on our freedoms and rights. So start planning your peal, quarter peal, open ringing, tower tours etc now!

And don't forget to let your local press, radio, TV & social media know what you are doing and why.

Magna Carta 800

Monday 15 June marks the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta, which was the document that laid the foundations for many of the rights and representation that we enjoy today. To coincide with this, Parliament is working with Surrey County Council, Runnymede Borough Council, the National Trust and other stakeholders who are managing Magna Carta commemorations at Runnymede

On Sunday 14 June 2015 at 3pm, as part of a UK-wide event entitled LiberTeas, the whole nation will be encouraged to sit down to tea. This is also the time that is designated for ringing as part of the Grand Ringing Day. This is your chance to get involved in a special day of national commemoration. Parliament is asking communities across the UK to take a moment to celebrate, debate or reflect on our liberties. One way of doing this is to ring. Another is to hold a tea party and the word LiberTeas is thus created.

What is Parliament doing?

Throughout 2015 Parliament will bring people of all ages together to mark and remember the movements and moments that have shaped our democratic heritage. Significant historic anniversaries, which underpinned the establishment of Parliamentary democracy and the legal system in the UK and around the world, will be commemorated. These anniversaries include 800 years since the sealing of Magna Carta (15 June 1215) and 750 years since the Montfort parliament (20 January 1265). There is to be a UK-wide programme of cultural events, activities and online resources.

The History

Magna Carta

The first version of Magna Carta was sealed at Runnymede on 15 June 1215 and was the first document to put into writing the principle that the king and his

government were not above the law. It sought to prevent the king from exploiting his power, and placed limits on royal authority by establishing law as a power in itself. As a piece of baronial propaganda, Magna Carta was distributed widely. Copies were sent to every county court in England and it was ordered to be translated from Latin into the language of the common people. It therefore very quickly became widely known and copied.

Simon de Montfort

In 1258, the barons of England, fed up with the way Henry III had been governing England, forced him to agree to a set of reforms called the Provisions of Oxford. These reforms effectively removed the King from power and set up a council of fifteen barons who had the power to appoint ministers, and who were responsible to the 'community of the realm' through regular parliaments three times a year. In 1261 the king regained power and had the Provisions of Oxford cancelled. Most of the barons accepted this, but Simon de Montfort did not. In 1264 he captured the king and took over the country himself. He re-introduced the Provisions of Oxford and held parliaments, but in addition to the barons, he also invited representatives of the counties and towns of England to attend parliament for the first time. Although Simon de Montfort was killed in 1265 at the Battle of Evesham, representatives were summoned again to parliaments later in the thirteenth century and in the fourteenth century. These became known as the Commons. Representatives drawn from constituencies across the country have continued to make up the House of Commons until today.

Many people see Magna Carta as the beginning of our liberties, a journey which, through years of development, campaigning and law-making, now manifests as the rights and representation we enjoy today.

Montfort's parliament of 1265 has a unique resonance as it built on the principles of Magna Carta and most importantly included representatives chosen by both the towns and shires to discuss events of national concern – something which ultimately paved the way for the emergence of the House of Commons.

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More info: www.parliament.uk/2015 and www.magnacarta800th.com

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