



MAGNA CARTA 800

Sample commemoration trails

For 800 years Magna Carta has influenced constitutional thinking worldwide. In over 100 countries the Rule of Law and Human Rights has affected billions of people. Whenever its principles have been denied it has led to loss of liberties and to loss of human rights.

In 2015 it will be 800 years since Magna Carta was agreed between King John and his barons, so enshrining the rule of law in English society and limiting authoritarian rule.

The original charter was sealed by King John on 15th June 1215. This version was revised several times in the 13th century. The 1297 version became part of English law, guaranteeing trial by jury, due process of law, independence of justice, and many things affecting all citizens, such as universal (now) suffrage, fair treatment of widows and children, even standard weights and measures.

In 2015 we invite you to visit England and commemorate, along with the ten Charter towns and the many towns and villages connected with this period of history, the 800th anniversary of this corner stone of modern freedom.

Tours lasting two or three days – each with a distinct Magna Carta focus – can be arranged to fit in with varying time frames or combined into longer tours of a week or more depending on inclination and time available.

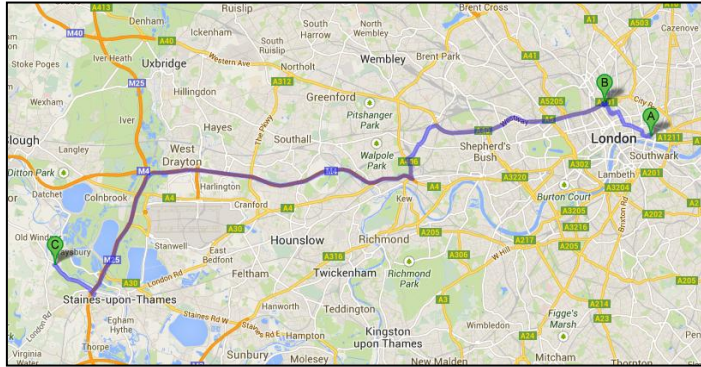
Bring the “Great Charter” alive in 2015 and discover the locations with direct relevance to the liberties we enjoy today.

Trail One – London and Runnymede

Day 1: City of London - The centre of dissent

London is the only city specifically named in the charter in a clause that affirms its liberties.

The City itself played a central role in the events that led to Magna Carta's creation in June 1215. The Mayor (later known as the Lord Mayor) was subsequently appointed with 24 of the barons to see that its provisions were carried out and. A month earlier King John, in an attempt to gain the City's support, had granted it a royal charter to elect its own Mayor.



The Mayor was required to receive royal approval and to take an oath of loyalty – provisions that govern the annual election and swearing in of a Lord Mayor to this day.

The most significant Magna Carta sites in the City include the new Heritage Gallery at **Guildhall Art Gallery** and the Temple complex. The former of which houses the City Corporation's 1297 Magna Carta sealed by Edward I.

The **Temple Church** was where, for a week in January 1215, King John was confronted by a posse of barons demanding a charter. Four months later, the original charter was issued from the Temple. In Temple Church there is an effigy of William the Marshall who mediated between King and barons (and Bishops) and was a witness to the Charter.

Bringing you into the present day, special guided tours of City Magna Carta sites leave the City Information Centre (opposite St Paul's Cathedral) at 11am daily (between 1 May and 30 September 2015). A programme of special events relating to the Magna Carta and the City will take place on different days throughout the summer of 2015 (see website for full details).

Whilst in the area: At nearly 2,000 years old, the City is the birthplace of London. It is here that Roman remains and two millennia of London history are on view through the buildings, streets and open spaces. Icons like St. Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London (which houses the Crown Jewels), and Tower Bridge, stand alongside contemporary architecture that reflects the City's modern role as one of the world's leading financial centres.

Explore the City's iconic attractions and mazes of small streets and alleyways, many unaltered for centuries. And take time for tea (or a pint) in one of the many traditional cafes and pubs.

Day 2: The British Library - A treasure trove for Charter enthusiasts -

Two of the only surviving four copies of the 1215 version of Magna Carta are housed in the **British Library**. 2015 will see a major exhibition commemorating the 800th anniversary depicting the story of Magna Carta from its origins to modern times.

In addition to Magna Carta, original medieval documents are held in a dedicated Magna Carta room in the Library's Treasures Gallery. They include a unique copy of the barons' demands, a papal document which declared the Magna Carta null and void in 1215, and a sealed copy of Henry 111's 1225 Magna Carta.

A wider programme of public events including a conference, lectures and a learning programme will be staged at the British Library throughout 2015. And the Library's cafe is to be recommended.

The other original 1215 Magna Carta's are at **Salisbury** (see trail two) and **Lincoln Cathedrals** (see trail three) – tours can easily link these three locations.

Day 3: Runnymede - The sealing of Magna Carta

Runnymede, a water-meadow alongside the River Thames in Surrey (an hour from London). bears a symbolic plaque marking the site of the ancient 'meeting meadow' where King John agreed to Magna Carta in 1215.

In a grassed enclosure on the lower slopes of Cooper's Hill is the **Magna Carta Memorial**, created by the American Bar Association. It contains a pillar of English granite on which is inscribed "To commemorate Magna Carta, symbol of Freedom Under Law".

Look out for the Ankerwyke Yew opposite Runnymede, close to the ruins of St Mary's Priory. It is a male tree with a girth of 26 feet (8 meters). Estimates put its age at between 2,000-2,500 years. The tree would have witnessed the sealing of Magna Carta and also the meeting between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn in the 1530s – if only its branches could relay the tales!

Whilst in the area: Runnymede is close to the royal town of Windsor, a must visit for all royal enthusiasts. Other nearby attractions are Henry VIII's Hampton Court Palace, the More-Molyneux family's Loseley Park and the Surrey History Centre.

A trip to the National Archives in Kew, which hold two Magna Carta's and will have a special exhibition in 2015, is also well worth a visit.

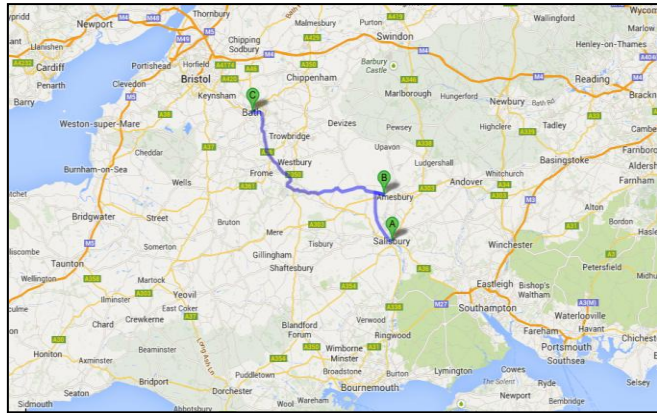
The medieval royal manor of Odiham lies midway between Winchester and Windsor, and it was from **Odiham Castle** that King John rode to Windsor and Runnymede on 10th June 1215, returning two weeks later when a French translation of Magna Carta was attested here.

Trail Two – Salisbury and the West Country

Day 1: Salisbury

Salisbury Cathedral is home to arguably the finest preserved copy of the four 1215 Magna Carta's.

This is on permanent display in the cathedral's Chapter House. A major exhibition planned for 2015 will put Magna Carta in its historic context with special reference to the role of the church in brokering the charter.



Elias of Dereham, who later masterminded the building of the present cathedral, delivered Salisbury's copy of Magna Carta to the original cathedral at **Old Sarum**. One of England's most impressive medieval buildings, it contains an effigy of King John's half-brother William Longspee, who urged him to accept Magna Carta. Old Sarum is where the Domesday Book was delivered to William the Conqueror in 1085.

The Cathedral Close contains wonderful museums and historic properties open to the public.

Day 2: Stonehenge and Bath

Morning: Stonehenge, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is just 20 minutes from Salisbury. Its ring of standing stones is one of the most famous sites in the world. Archaeologists believe it was built anywhere from 3000 BC to 2000 BC

Afternoon: Visit Bath, the first city in England to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. Its Roman Baths and 15th century Abbey complement its Georgian architecture. In Bathwick, an old mediaeval street near the centre of the city, a mural displays extracts from Magna Carta.

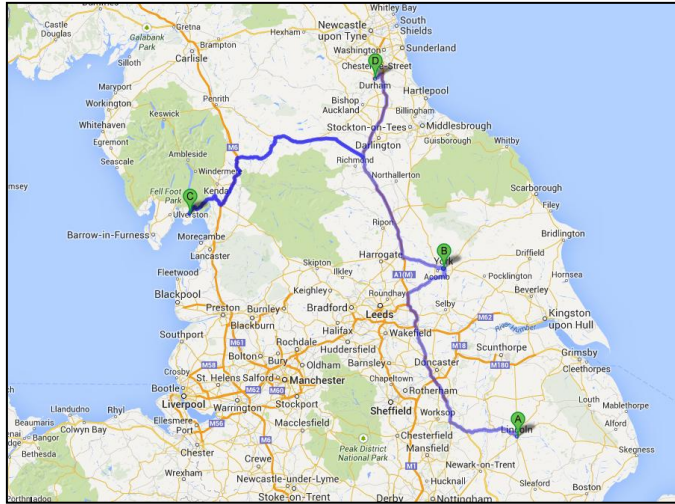
Whilst in the area: Longleat and Wilton – two leading stately homes – and the classic English villages of Lacock and Castle Combe are close by.

Trail Three – The Cathedral cities of the North

Day 1: Lincoln – The beginning and the end

Twelfth and thirteenth century Lincoln was a place of learning, where a young Stephen Langton's radical constitutional idea took shape. Langton later became Archbishop of Canterbury (see Trail Four) and instilled in Magna Carta his ideas on kingship.

A fourth and final 1215 Magna Carta is in the possession of **Lincoln Cathedral**. Printed in facsimile in the Statutes of the Realm in 1810, it is used as the basis for most of the editions of Magna Carta published over the past two centuries. Its articular quality lies in the fact that it is written in an 'official' hand.



Interestingly it was held for safe-keeping in Fort Knox in the United States during World War II and seen by over 15 million Americans.

Lincoln Cathedral, constructed between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, is one of England's most beautiful churches and nearby Steep Hill, with its medieval houses, indicate the character of King John's times.

A new secure underground vault will open at **Lincoln Castle** in 2015. Built specifically to display this copy of Magna Carta together with a copy of the 1217 Charter of the Forest (which limited the power of the king to seize large areas of land for hunting). Films projected onto a curved 180 degree screen will give visitors a fully immersive experience.

King John renounced Magna Carta within weeks of agreeing to it and he cut a swathe through Lincolnshire in a civil war to save his throne. Illness ended his life in **Newark Castle**, a residence of the bishops of Lincoln. Fighting continued, until the climax was reached in a battle in Lincoln which defeated Prince Louis of France and rebel barons, asserting the succession of John's son Henry III to the English throne.

Whilst in the area: Walk along Lincoln's newly-restored city walls and visit recently-rebuilt 18th and 19th century prisons in the city.

(Lincoln is easily accessible from London, regular fast trains run from St Pancras International, just a few minutes' walk from The British Library).

Day 2: York and Cartmel

Morning: Disastrous wars early in his reign left King John short of money. One way to raise it was to allow a town's citizens to buy the right to rule themselves. In 1212 the king granted a charter to the citizens of York allowing them, rather than his representative, to collect and pay taxes to the Crown, to hold their own courts and to appoint a mayor. The charter proved to be a precursor of Magna Carta.

An exhibition in the Medieval Gallery of the **Yorkshire Museum** marks the 800th anniversary of York's independence.

Afternoon: William the Marshall established the Priory Church of St. Mary and St. Michael in Cartmel, Cumbria, in 1189. Marshall was the leading mediator in the showdown with King John. He later became Lord Regent of England during Henry III's childhood and was central to the review of Magna Carta in 1217.

Whilst in the area: Brougham Hall, near Penrith, contains papers belonging to Henry Brougham, Lord Chancellor of England in the 1830s and the man who introduced the second most important piece of legislation in English history - the Great Reform Bill of 1832.

Day 3: Durham – Earls Palatine

Three editions of Magna Carta dated 1216, 1217 and 1225 are held in **Durham Cathedral**, the greatest Norman building in England. They demonstrate the evolution of the original version and will be displayed in 2015 within the cathedral. An accompanying exhibition will set the charter in the context of the city.

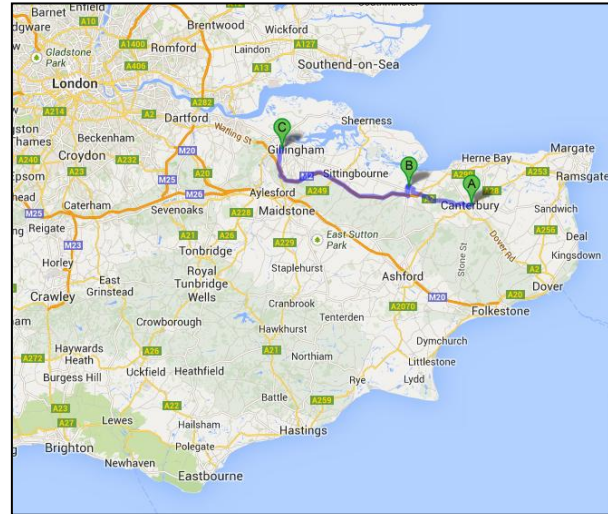
The Bishops of Durham held the unique status of Earls Palatine and were effectively religious warlords, charged by the King with securing England's northern border. The cathedral is sited alongside **Durham Castle**, the stronghold of the Earls Palatine.

Whilst in the area: A project known as Open Treasures reveals rare artworks, manuscripts and carved stones held in storage by the cathedral. Many date to the Anglo-Saxon era.

Trail Four – Kent and East Sussex

Day 1: Canterbury - The eye of the storm

Canterbury Cathedral forms one third of Canterbury's UNESCO World Heritage Site. From the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons of Kent to Christianity in 597 and the proclamation of the first Archbishop of Canterbury, it was at the core of religious life and many political disputes with the Crown. In 1170 the infamous murder of Thomas Becket took place here.



The accession of Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1207 brought church-state tensions to a head. Langton became an implacable opponent of King John and joined with rebellious barons and other bishops to limit the royal powers. This led directly to the showdown that produced Magna Carta. Langton's input to the charter is emphasised by the first clause, which protects the freedom, rights and liberties of the English church.

Whilst in the area: Many buildings in Canterbury including the Norman castle, the Roman town walls, St. Augustine's Abbey, Eastbridge Hospital, the Black Friars and St. Martin's Church (the oldest parish church in continuous use in England) link back to the medieval era.

Visit the Grey Friars, the remains of which house the Canterbury Heritage Museum. Fantastic restaurants, cafes and bars surround the Cathedral, and the shopping ranges from the modern to boutiques, antique stores, and even a bookbinder, proud of his tradition and tools.

Day 2: Faversham and Rochester - Kings, Queens & Sieges

Morning: **Faversham**, just 15 minutes from Canterbury, holds a Magna Carta copy issued by Edward I in 1300 together with other magnificent Charters. A permanent display in the town hall illustrates the importance of the charters.

Faversham, the Market Town of Kings, so called because of the steady stream of Kings and Queens who have visited the town - not least King John. The town is the perfect stopping off place to explore with nearly 500 listed buildings, one of the finest medieval streets in England and an excellent choice of cafés, pubs and restaurants.

Afternoon: Kent's second Cathedral at **Rochester** houses the remarkable 1123 Textus Roffensis – an Anglo-Saxon manuscript containing the first code of English law. Written in the vernacular Old English in c. 604, it inspired the principles of Magna Carta.

Nearby **Rochester Castle** was besieged by King John in 1216 after being seized by rebel barons.

Whilst in the area: Faversham is also home to Shepherd Neame, Britain's oldest brewer. Tour the brewery, learn about Kent's hopping traditions and sample the specially commissioned **Magna Carta ale**.

Depending on your favoured route and base for your tour, a further half day option could be considered:

Day 3: The Key to England or a Norman stronghold

Option 1: The Key to England – Dover

Sitting atop the world famous White Cliffs of Dover, **Dover Castle**, known as the Key to England, was besieged by Louis VIII of France in 1216. Louis was invited by a group of rebel barons to come and take the English crown. He had some success in breaching the castle walls but was unable to ultimately take the site. During the siege, the English defenders tunnelled outwards and attacked the French, thus creating the only counter tunnel in the world. This can still be seen in the medieval works.

Option 2: Pevensey, East Sussex

Pevensey received a royal charter from King John in 1207. Four witnesses to this charter also witnessed the sealing of Magna Carta eight years later, including Peter des Roches (Bishop of Winchester), the powerful and unpopular ally of the king. The Royal Charter is on view in the **Court House Museum**.

Whilst in the area: Also at the Court House are the oldest surviving seals of the Cinque Ports (Britain's original naval force) dating from the early 13th century. Visit the unique oval-shaped Norman Castle at Pevensey, situated within the largest Roman shore fort in Britain. Pevensey beach was the main landing place of William the Conqueror in 1066.

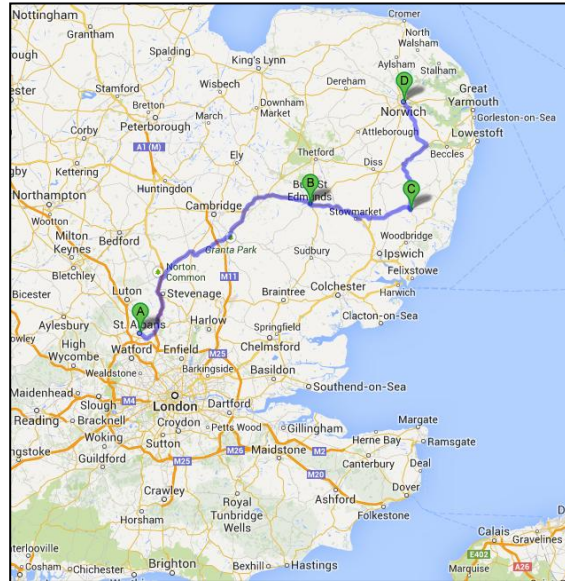
In Kent don't miss Leeds Castle ("the loveliest castle in the world"), Hever Castle (of Anne Boleyn), and/or Chartwell, home of Sir Winston Churchill.

Trail Five –East of England

Day 1: St. Albans and Bury St. Edmunds

Morning: At **St. Albans Abbey** in Hertfordshire barons and clergy met in 1213 to demand payment from King John for past grievances. This led to demands for general rights and privileges based on past royal charters. The Cathedral and Abbey will stage a range of Magna Carta events between 2013 and 2015 (see website for more details).

Afternoon: At the High Altar of the Abbey in **Bury St. Edmunds** (90 minutes from St. Albans), the barons reputedly met on St Edmund's Day - 20th November 1214 - to swear an oath of allegiance to each other to force King John to accept the Charter of Liberties, the immediate precursor to Magna Carta.



The remains of the abbey are visible today in the Abbey Gardens. St. Edmundsbury Cathedral, with its recently completed Tower is located in the precincts of the abbey. Facsimiles of the barons' shields can be seen in the Cathedral. The Abbey of St Edmundsbury was one of the most important in the land and received many visits from Kings making pilgrimages all through the middle ages. A light and sound event will be held in October 2014 as well as other events through the year.

Whist in the area: Take a walking tour of St. Albans and visit Verulamium Museum displaying the life and times of a major Roman city. Drop by **Huntingfield** village in Suffolk; Baron de Huntingfield was one of 25 Barons to act as surety to Magna Carta.

Day 2: Framlingham and Norwich

Morning: **Framlingham Castle** in Suffolk is home of Roger Bigod, 2nd Earl of Norfolk, and one of the most important of the 25 baronial sureties of Magna Carta. The castle was seized by King John in 1216 after a siege but returned to the family the following year.

Afternoon: **Norwich Castle** and Cathedral both pre-date Magna Carta era. In 1216 the castle was besieged and captured by French forces led by Prince Louis, son of the King of France, who had intervened in the baronial uprising against the crown.

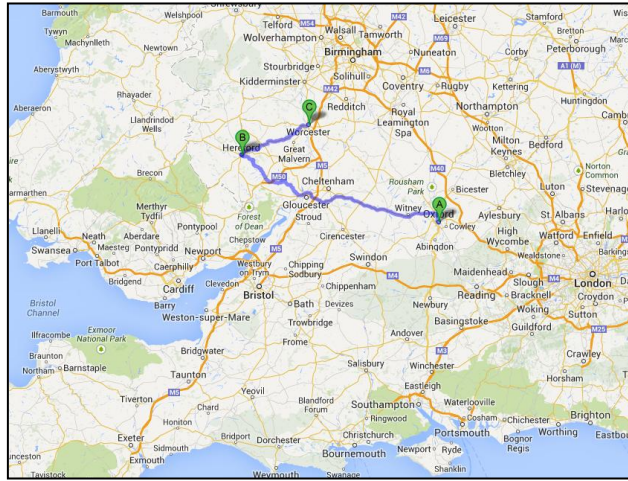
Whilst in the area: At the University of East Anglia see the results of a three-year research project to track down lost Magna Carta originals and related documents from more than 300 archives in the UK and France. Public lectures and an exhibition are scheduled. The results of the research project will be freely available online.

Trail Six: The Midlands

Day 1: Oxford

Oxford's **Bodleian Library** holds nearly a quarter of the world's original 13th century manuscripts of Magna Carta. Of the seventeen known surviving Charters, three are in the Bodleian, including three of the four surviving 1217 Charters.

In addition the Bodleian holds a fourth "engrossment" (an official document from the Royal Chancery bearing the ruler's seal) in the shape of a 1225 issue of Magna Carta that once held the Great Seal of Henry III. No other institution has such a concentration of Magna Carta's.



In 2015 the four Oxford Charters will be displayed together for only the second time in 800 years.

Whilst in the area: The Bodleian contains a unique collection of other exhibits including a pristine Gutenberg Bible, a 14th century copy of the Travels of Marco Polo, Jane Austen's handwritten compendium of her early works and the Spanish Codex Mendoza account of the Aztec civilization.

Day 2: Hereford

Two important Magna Carta items are housed in the New Library building of **Hereford Cathedral** together with a wealth of other fantastic treasures. The first is the finest surviving 1217 Magna Carta – the significant revision of the original 1215 charter issued by King John's son Henry III.

The second is the sole surviving copy of the 'Kings Writ,' issued by King John in the form of a letter to royal officials across England following his meeting with the barons at Runnymede. The document instructs recipients to ensure the terms of the charter are made known publicly, sworn to and kept. Period illuminations and documents from the cathedral's historic Chained Library are on view and illustrate themes of the charter.

Whist in the area: The unique Mappa Mundi depicts the beliefs, knowledge and scholarship of the 13th century European world. It was created about 1300.

Take a slight de-tour between Hereford and Worcester to visit **Berkley Castle**. The Barons met in the great hall of Berkeley Castle, including a member of the Berkeley family, before going to Runnymede. The Berkeley was one of the 40 Barons present at Runnymede.

Day 3: Worcester

During the civil war at the end of King John's reign, the city of Worcester declared for the rebellious barons. In July 1216 one of John's lieutenants broke through the defences at Worcester Castle and captured the town.

King John was buried at **Worcester Cathedral** in 1216. His Will is kept in the Cathedral Library and his effigy is near the High Altar. John often visited the Cathedral; his favourite hunting grounds in the Forest of Dean are nearby. His last visit to Worcester was in August 1216 when he ordered citizens to make a payment so that alms might be given to the poor.

The Cathedral Library looks after some of the relics from King John's tomb including his thumb bone and fragments of his clothing. Several medieval manuscripts written by the cathedral's monks, as well as documents from John's era, are on display in the Library.

Whilst in the area: A 1:500 scale reconstruction of the walled city of Worcester in 1250 is on view in the Worcester City Museum.

For further information and up to date events go to
www.magnacarta800th.com