

Magna Carta 800th Anniversary 2015 – Bell Ringing

Monday, 15th June 2015 will be the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta on Runnymede Meadows alongside The River Thames between Windsor and Staines and a number of national events will take place to commemorate the event. Naturally it is planned that bell ringing will feature in the celebrations and **Sunday, 14th June** has been designated as the Big Ringing Day. Full details are still being discussed, but it is likely that ringing will be recommended between 3 and 4pm at least, in addition to normal Sunday ringing. Do please make a note of the date now.

Ringers everywhere will be encouraged to ring to commemorate the 800th Anniversary, by open ringing, special touches of 800 changes, quarter peals and peals, perhaps of 5800 changes. Special methods and compositions will be available on the Central Council's website. It is the intention especially to encourage ringing at all those places that can trace connections to Magna Carta.

A number of touches of 800 changes are available which were composed in 2009 to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the foundation of Cambridge University. Associations, Guilds and Societies are requested to encourage appropriate ringing at towers under their jurisdiction, especially those that have a connection with Magna Carta, including those overseas.

Why does Magna Carta matter? To quote from the Magna Carta Trust's literature, it has been said that it is Britain's greatest export.

- It is a foundation stone of the freedoms enjoyed by hundreds of millions of people in more than 100 countries
- It enshrined the rule of law in English society '*due process*'.
- It limited the power of authoritarian rule '*no one is above the law*'
- It paved the way for trial by jury
- It proclaimed certain religious liberties
- It defined limits on taxation 'no taxation without representation'

There are many places in the UK and abroad that have connections with Magna Carta, such as the five Charter Towns (London, Canterbury, St Albans, Bury St Edmunds and Runnymede), places that hold copies of the Magna Carta: Salisbury, Lincoln, Durham, Hereford, Washington DC (USA) and Canberra (Australia). In addition there are places that have connections with the 25 Barons who sealed the document or with other people who were probably present, e.g. The Abbott of Chertsey. The Magna Carta 800th committee has started publishing some detailed information on the 25 Magna Carta barons on their website, <http://magnacarta800th.com>. A list of places having associations with Magna Carta where ringing might take place is being prepared and will be published in the autumn, including details of the places where

the Barons lived or held castles so as to identify suitable towers.

A challenge: could peals be rung in new methods named after all the Barons?

A new method was rung by members of the Guildford Guild in a peal on Saturday, 23rd March 2013 at Egham, close to Runnymede meadows, and was named Magna Carta Surprise Royal. Runnymede Surprise Major has also been rung on a number of occasions.

Churchmen and barons, led by Stephen Langton the Archbishop of Canterbury, held their first meeting in St Albans in 1213 to discuss their grievances against King John. This historic meeting eventually led to the articles that became Magna Carta, sealed at Runnymede, so a number of events have taken place this summer in St Albans to start the 800th anniversary celebrations.

As yet we do not know what particular events will take place in the Borough of

Runnymede in 2015 although it is anticipated that there may be some form of Pageant on the Meadows. Surrey County Council in conjunction with Runnymede Borough Council and the National Trust are taking the lead in preparing a master plan to outline a series of events to take place in Runnymede. In addition the Tower Captain at Ottershaw, Peter Binns, has suggested that there should be a 'ripple of ringing' in towers in the locality either leading up to the start of the Pageant, or 'rippling' out world wide from Runnymede Meadows.

It is likely that 2015 will be a busy year for commemorative ringing since in addition to Magna Carta, it will also be the 600th anniversary of Agincourt and the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo.

KATE FLAVELL
and MALCOLM LOVEDAY

The 25 barons who gathered at Runnymede Field to meet King John were:

	William de Hardell		William Marshall
	Richard de Montfitchet		Robert de Vere
	John FitzRobert		Roger Bigod
	William Mallet		John de Lacy (or Lasci)
	Robert de Ros		Robert Fitzwalter
	Geoffrey de Say (or Saye)		Hugh Bigod
	Saher de Quincy		Geoffrey de Mandevile (or Magnavil)
	Eustace de Vesci (or Vescey)		William de Mowbray
	Richard de Clare		Henry de Bohun
	Richard de Percy		William d'Aubigny (or de Albini)
	William de Lanvellei (or Lanvallei)		Roger de Montbegan
	Guilbert de Clare		William de Forz (or Fortibus)
	William de Huntingfield		