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Magna Carta

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The Council and residents are very proud that this historic agreement was created in our Borough and the great figures in its creation who are remembered in memorials across the area.

The Magna Carta is recognised as one of the most important documents in English history as it marked the road to individual freedom, parliamentary democracy and the supremacy of law.

In the spring of 1215, England stood on the brink of Civil War. A group of barons demanded that King John agree to a document as protection against the King's arbitrary behaviour. King John met these Barons in Runnymede and agreed to their demands by sealing a document known as Magna Carta, which is Latin for Great Charter.

From then on, no English King could act in a tyrannical manner to erode the rights of free men or dominate the church.

The Great Charter of Freedom concludes with these words:

"Given by Our hand in the meadow which is called Runnymede between Windsor and Staines, on the fifteenth day of June in the Seventeenth year of Our Reign"

The Charter contained the important general expressions of freedom which prohibited the selling of justice, protected the rights of the City of London, prevented the arbitrary imprisonment of freemen, and protected the rights of heirs.

These great principles were exported to the United States of America, and as a result, the American Bar Association installed the current Magna Carta Memorial in Runnymede Meadows.

<https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/discover-history/magna-carta>