



National Society
Magna Charta Dames®

The National Society Magna Charta Dames and Barons

An Hereditary Order
Instituted March 1, 1909

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Somerset Chapter
Magna Charta Barons®

June 20, 2017 Report To the Magna Carta Trust

By Lewis L. Neilson, Jr., Chancellor

1. We have a great opportunity as the power of destiny propels us to provide a reminder of the inspirations of 1215 and 1225 to provide a foundation for individual liberty which sustains the spark of freedom from tyranny.
2. The Anniversary Year 2025 provides the next series of Aspirations to remind us of the Magna Carta. As we illuminate the messages within that Magna Carta, we can coordinate with those in the United States who are Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The Chairman of the 250th Anniversary requested a Magna Carta as part of an exhibit, which would emphasize the link and the importance of the Magna Carta to the signers of the Declaration of Independence, some educated at the Middle Temple.
3. We are now focused on the memories of the five years from launch to 800th Celebration, guided by Sir Robert Worcester who applied his talent, his experience, and his dedication to inspire many of us who joined with him to make this journey an incredible success. Each of us is endowed by our creator with ability and he applied his to share this event. It is unique when working with a distinguished individual to have the privilege of becoming part of his team.
4. The memory is portrayed by words and video. I recorded many meetings and events as did others who we hope will assist with the memory. The story we prepare should have one focus, to inspire peoples to understand and relate to the legacy of the Magna Carta so they are empowered to accept their rights, as the American Colonists did in 1776, and release the awesome power of creativity which is held by free people. When people are no longer distracted by oppression, to spark of freedom can become a beacon.
5. The continuing and immediate legacy in the United Kingdom is the Fairhaven Lecture Series which is a ten year series leading up to 2025 which is the 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta issued by King Henry III upon his majority, granted without reservation. Our Society offered to sponsor a proposal with Royal Holloway University as the host for this

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series and we appreciate that Royal Holloway prepared the grant request and also that Runnymede Magna Carta Legacy provided the matching support along with the Magna Carta Trust.

6. Additional legacy is contained within the organizations, towns and other recipients of the generous commitment by the U.K. Government to fund projects which encouraged those with a good idea to carry forward.
7. The U.K. Government provided funding for research by very talented authors under the guidance of East Anglia University provided outstanding books as well as research content.
8. In the United States, the launch event was the exhibit of the Hereford Cathedral Magna Charta in Houston Texas and over 100 members of our Society, descendants of the Barons, joined the kick-off event and we shared a picture on our Website.
9. During the five years to 2015, the Divisions Chapters and Colonies of our Society renewed their efforts to gather in friendship and fellowship to participate, with presentations and programs which focused on the 800th Anniversary. In June 2015, I met with Arkansas members of our Society and was honored to present a lecture on the 800th Anniversary at the Clinton Presidential Center.
10. Our Society hosted National Meetings in D.C. with speakers including Ms. Allison White, Representing Lincoln Cathedral, Sir Robert Worcester, Ambassador G. Philip Hughes, and Dr. Elizabeth Malpass. Dr. Emm Johnstone, in 2016, provided perspective not only on the 800th Anniversary but also important issues going forward. In 2014, we were joined by Paul Saunders Esquire, President of the International Rule of Law Project Inc. which is an affiliate organization in the United States of the Bingham Institute in the UK.
11. At Runnymede on June 15, 2015, our Society hosted over 140 participants in the Celebration as part of a Tour which included Allington Castle, the home of Sir Robert Worcester, Lincoln Castle, Framlingham Castle, Canterbury Cathedral and the British Library, among many significant venues. Demonstrating the commitment of the Crown to Magna Charta, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth was the Patron of the Event and shook the hand of one of the descendants of the Barons, the Chancellor of our Society.
12. Each participant in the 800th Anniversary Celebration deserves credit.
13. Continuing thanks to all members of the Committee and Sir Robert Worcester for inspiring extraordinary programs resulting in increased awareness of Magna Charta. **Developing awareness of Magna Charta** is our Society mission statement.
14. Our mission will be relevant as the Anniversary of each reissue of Magna Charta provides the opportunity to remind all peoples of its significance.
15. I am honored to and a Trustee of the Magna Charta Trust and was honored to be a member of the 800th Committee and look forward to continuing active participation to develop awareness of Magna Carta.
16. We welcome suggestions for our future support of Magna Charta.

I am attaching an article from one of our members, participating on our Tour

Tracing the historic trail of the Magna Carta

A delegation of 140 Americans representing the National Society Magna Charta Dames & Barons traveled to Runnymede on June 15 for the 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta. They made the trip for various personal, professional and intellectual reasons. Magna Carta Dame Cassidy Herrington, daughter of Society of Colonial Wars Governor in the Commonwealth of Kentucky Ken Herrington, tells us hers. Cassidy is a news producer for WCBU-FM Public Radio in Peoria, IL.

To the Brits, our arrival in Runnymede was startling.

Conversations sounded something like this:

“We can trace our lineage to the barons of the Magna Carta,” I recall explaining to a stranger I met in line for coffee on that chilly morning.

“But you’re American,” he replied. “Why do you care so much about Magna Carta?”

Every American on our trip had a different, and often deeply personal, answer to this question. Without hearing their response, you could take a few guesses by observing how they traveled, how they talked about their genealogy, or how they amassed souvenirs at each medieval stop along the way.

I was sort of an outlier in this group. I’m 25 years old, so genealogy hasn’t yet begun to infiltrate my free time. I recall studying the Magna Carta and how it inspired the Bill of Rights, the document that U.S. soldiers, to this day, risk their lives to protect.

I’m a journalist, so I’m particularly partial to the first amendment. That was enough for me to agree to make this journey, and like gilded icing on the Queen’s cake, the 800th Anniversary was a rare opportunity to understand, even empathize with, the travails of my ancestors.

That’s why at 5am that Monday, I eagerly arose to the ringing of the concierge’s wakeup call. After a few swigs of instant Nescafe, my father and I boarded the bus, or coach as the driver preferred to call it, that rounded misty curves on the country road to Runnymede, where our ancestors gathered 800 years ago.

We arrived promptly at 7am, to an empty field off the banks of the Thames. The grass was still wet with morning dew, and grey clouds hung low over the meadow. To the delight of many, our English hosts had white tents selling proper breakfasts, hot beverages and handspun wool blankets.

As the sun began to rise, nearly three thousand British royals, lawyers, military officers, politicians – along with our tour of Americans – began to crowd the grassy field. Visitors clad in colorful threads and hats (a nod to the Queen) walked along the site, to mingle, visit the monument and take in the pomp and circumstance.

The ceremony began at 10am, when Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, Anne, Princess Royal, Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, Prime Minister David Cameron, and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby arrived for the rededication of the Magna Carta Memorial. That monument, suitably for this narrative, was erected by the American Bar Association in 1957. It stands atop a hill, overlooking the field where thousands of international guests gathered below to honor a moment in human history.

From our seats, we looked upward to hear the Princess Royal Anne and the ABA President, William Hubbard rededicate the ABA Memorial followed by U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch who said from the steps of the monument:

“While the hands that wrote the Magna Carta have long been stilled, the principles they carved out of the struggles of their day, the struggles of the human condition, live on.” That was the truism, the crown jewel you could say, that I carried home with me. Magna Carta is an ideology that is still being pursued in our country and around the world. To say that Magna Carta was a successful, complete document is an over glorification, if not utterly inaccurate, for King John didn’t cohere to the rules he laid his wax seal upon. 800 years later, the world is still rife with human rights violations that the Magna Carta seeks to prevent. In countries like Syria, North Korea and Uganda, innocent civilians are murdered for political opposition, and journalists are tortured for pursuing truth. On the grounds at Runnymede, a new memorial called “The Jurors” was dedicated on June 15th, 2015. Twelve bronze chairs arranged in a circle beckon visitors to sit and contemplate the meaning of Magna Carta and what the rebellious barons so desperately sought. Which is why, in my mind, Magna Carta isn’t an aging piece of lambskin kept in a temperature-controlled museum vault. It’s a living, breathing document that is the compass that directs countries on how to lead and govern. As society becomes more heavily influenced by technology and pluralism, it’s important that we continue to protect this ideology and be guided by its light. And for the Americans who claim barons as part of their ancestry, it’s upon us to carry their story forward.