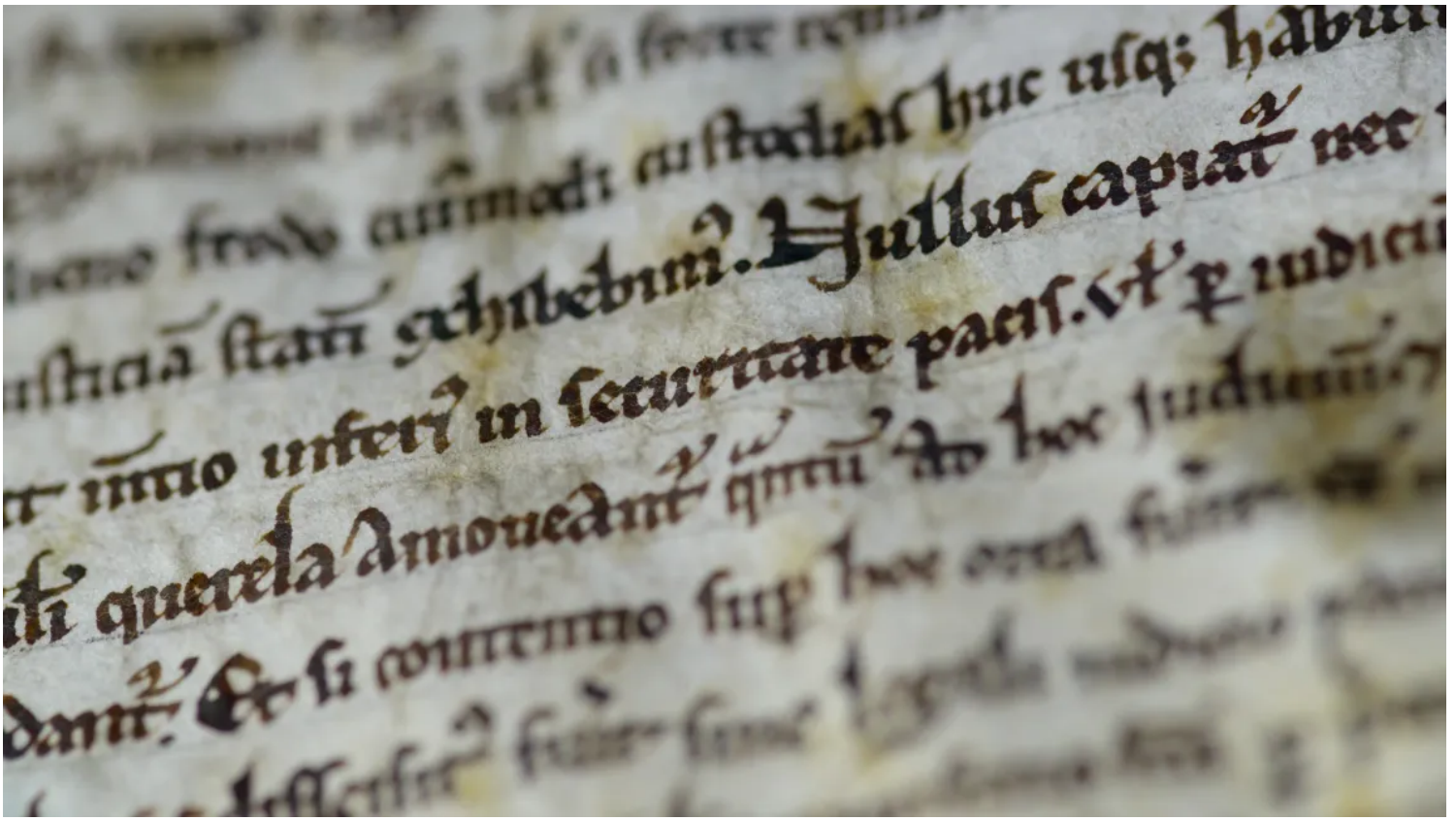


Close-up of the Magna Carta

The project, Engaging with the Magna Carta, will see the complete re-display and re-presentation of the Cathedral's Magna Carta in its Chapter House alongside other documents from the Cathedral's extensive archive. Using displays, media, interactive stations and film, this permanent exhibition, which is to open in February 2015, will tell the story of how Magna Carta came about and explore its lasting legacy, encouraging visitors to consider its enduring relevance to our rights and responsibilities today.

In addition Salisbury Cathedral's programme will include a broad range of community engagement activities ranging from learning opportunities to specifically targeted initiatives such as an art project with inmates from Erlestoke Prison. The Cathedral's celebrations will also feature events including lectures, musical and theatrical performances, light-based contemporary art installations and a city-wide 'Baron's Trail', in partnership with the Trussell Trust. The central weekend of 13-15 June will feature a concert performance of a brand new, Magna Carta-based, musical commission by Tarik O'Regan, as well as a giant 'Liber-Tea' Party and community activities in the cathedral and close. The 'Magna Flora' Flower Festival from 15-20 September forms the climax of the celebrations with arrangements inspired by Magna Carta and its legacy.

Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, said: "Our history and heritage is rich and deep, defining us to the rest of the world. Magna Carta is one of its cornerstones so it seems absolutely right that next year, its 800th anniversary, should see special efforts made to present it in a new and compelling way to the public, young and old.

The HLF support for this project is timely and a fine example of how Lottery money can be used to help mark the anniversaries that make us proud as a nation."

The Very Revd June Osborne, Dean of Salisbury, said: "We are delighted to have received the support of HLF to enable us to fulfill our ambitions to share the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta in 2015 with the widest possible audience. As we reflect on the sealing of this milestone in human rights, we hope to help people to engage on a personal level with the values it represents and its lasting legacy of equality and justice. The new exhibition and the exciting range of celebratory activities we have planned will do just that and we are very grateful for the support which makes it possible."

Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West, said: "Salisbury Cathedral's original 1215 Magna Carta is one of the world's most important documents, pivotal to our journey to democracy, and is still hugely relevant to our lives today. In the run-up to the 800th anniversary in 2015, we're really pleased to be supporting this project that will allow people to see it in its rightful place, properly, for the first time."

Salisbury Cathedral has raised £200,000 in partnership funding to support its bid including a pledge for £30,000 from Wilsons Solicitors in Salisbury. The Cathedral will be looking to work with a range of partners to deliver its ambitious programme. These include The British Library, Lincoln Cathedral, Magna Carta 800th Committee/Magna Carta Trust, Diocese of Salisbury, the Trussell Trust, BBC, Wiltshire Council, Visit Wiltshire, Dorset County Council, Salisbury City Council, AGEAS Salisbury International Arts Festival, Salisbury Museum, Salisbury Playhouse and Sarum College.

Notes to editors

Salisbury Cathedral's Magna Carta is on permanent display to visitors in the 13th century Chapter House. Check the Salisbury Cathedral website for details.

The 1215 Magna Carta is inscribed in the UNESCO 'Memory of the World' register underlining the fact that the four original documents held by Salisbury Cathedral, Lincoln Cathedral and The British Library are regarded amongst the world's most significant documentary heritage.

The Salisbury Connection
At Runnymede, King John was urged to accept the demands of the barons and agree Magna Carta by his half-brother, William Longspeé, whose Effigy is in Salisbury Cathedral. Also present at Runnymede was Elias of Dereham, who at the time was steward to one of the key players in the crisis, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton.

Elias himself was a skilled negotiator and was at the very centre of the discussions between the King and the barons. Once Magna Carta was agreed and sealed he was entrusted with delivering 10 of the 13 copies made, one of which was given to the original cathedral at Old Sarum. Elias later became a Canon of Old Sarum before masterminding the building of the present Salisbury Cathedral.

Salisbury's copy of Magna Carta 2015 is in excellent condition. Written in a neat business hand, it is closer in some ways to a book hand than to the business hand of the royal chancery. It has various medieval and post-medieval endorsements including anno domini 1215 written in a hand very similar to that of the antiquary and herald Robert Glover. It is assumed to be the exemplar of the charter delivered to Wiltshire and thence stored in the cathedral archives.

Magna Carta, 1215
Magna Carta is one of the most celebrated documents in English history, regarded as the cornerstone of English liberty,

law and democracy, and its legacy has been its enduring worldwide influence. It was written in Latin, the language of all official documents of the period, on a single skin of parchment. It consists of 63 clauses written on 76 tightly packed lines, written with the standard medieval time and space-saving abbreviations.

It is one of the most celebrated documents in English history whose importance cannot be exaggerated. The critical importance of the charter is that it imposed for the first time detailed written constraints on royal authority in the fields of taxation, feudal rights and justice, and limited unjust and arbitrary behaviour by the king. Magna Carta has become an icon for freedom and democracy throughout the world. The other surviving copies are held by the British Library and Lincoln Cathedral.

HLF support for anniversaries

Last year, HLF announced that at least £10million is being set aside over the next four years to fund projects marking some of the UK's most important anniversaries and commemorative events. The money will be invested to ensure that those moments which form a central part of our national history are commemorated and understood.

Events such as the Diamond Jubilee, and the Olympic and Paralympics Games showed how events can bring the people of the UK together. This new funding reflects the fact there is enormous enthusiasm to provide more opportunities to foster the sense of community spirit and national pride that such events can inspire. It will help to highlight important historical dates that will resonate with people and communities right across the UK.

The funding will be provided to ensure that projects of all sizes can apply for support from smaller grants of a few thousand pounds up to grants over £2m.

Further information

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