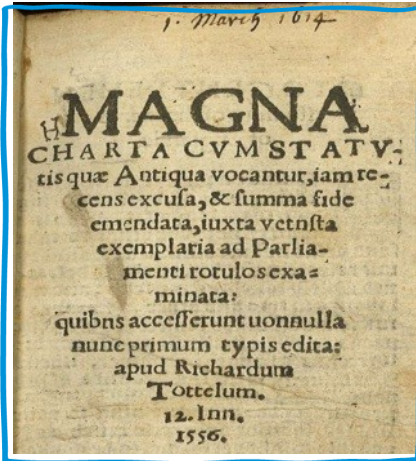
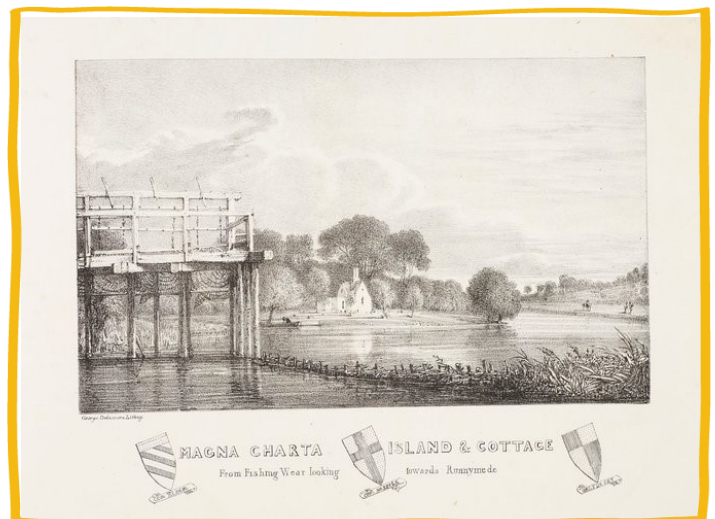


Magna Carta and Windsor Castle



Magna Carta means 'Great Charter', and is one of the most important documents in history, as it established the principle that everyone is subject to the law, including the king, and promises all the right to a fair trial.

It was authorised by King John on 15 June, 1215 and was a series of rules drawn up by a group of 25 rebel barons, along with churchmen and noblemen. They wanted to limit royal powers and avoid high taxes. They insisted that King John agree to meet them in Runnymede, a neutral half way point three miles downstream from Windsor Castle, to put his official seal on the Charter.



In order to discuss the demands of these rebellious barons on a daily basis, King John made Windsor Castle his headquarters and on 10 June 1215 rode out to the riverside meadow, feeling he had no choice, but to give in to their terms. When he returned to the Castle that evening, it was said that he was almost insane with rage and insisted that he had no intention of keeping his promises.

By the time August came however, John changed his mind, never having the intention to honour the agreement and wrote to the Pope to annul the Charter. John recovered much of his old power, gathering an army of mercenaries to fight throughout the land.

The Castle was left in the charge of Engelard de Cygony, a brave and daring knight, along with 60 soldiers. The rebel barons attacked the Castle again in 1216, besieging it for nearly three months.



Eventually, the barons gave up their siege to pursue King John across the country. When King John died on 19 October 1216 his son Henry III came to the throne, aged only nine years old. The regents of the young King confirmed the Magna Carta, which was then reissued in 1225 by the King himself.

There are currently four original copies of the Magna Carta in existence. There are two in the British Museum and one each in Salisbury and Lincoln Cathedrals.

