



MAGNA CARTA 800 BRITISH LIBRARY EXHIBITION

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE

PROFESSOR NICHOLAS VINCENT

No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgement of his equals or by the law of the land.

Magna Carta, meaning 'The Great Charter', is one of the most famous documents in the world. Originally issued by King John of England (r.1199-1216) as a practical solution to the political crisis he faced in 1215, Magna Carta established for the first time the principle that everybody, including the king, was subject to the law, and it remains a cornerstone of the British constitution. Most of the 63 clauses granted by King John dealt with specific grievances relating to his rule. However, buried within them were a number of fundamental values that both challenged the autocracy of the king and proved highly adaptable in future centuries. Most famously, the 39th clause gave all 'free men' the right to justice and a fair trial. Some of Magna Carta's core principles are echoed in the United States Bill of Rights (1791), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the European Convention on Human Rights (1950). Nicholas Vincent, Professor of Medieval History at the University of East Anglia, is one of the country's leading experts on Magna Carta and has published extensively on the subject. He will introduce us to the major exhibition at the British Library.

MEET 10.30 am coffee for 11 am lecture at Pushkin House
ENDS 4 pm British Library
COST £77 members, £87 non-members, including coffee, lunch with wine, exhibition entry