



Extracts from the Chapter minutes from 1733 onwards and divers historical prospecting.

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Every so often I like to do an update of our Magna Carta knowledge. In this edition I hope to highlight two aspects: exemplifications and the charter in the US.

EXEMPLIFICATIONS

This is the proper name for attested copies which have been sealed by the *Spigurnel*, the king's official equipped with a seal press, beeswax and resin.

1215: we know of 13 copies that were issued for circulation to cathedrals. The sheriffs were largely foreign imports brought in to do King John's will and not all cathedrals were operating following the Pope's interdict. The documents were issued in two tranches, firstly of 7 and later a further 6.

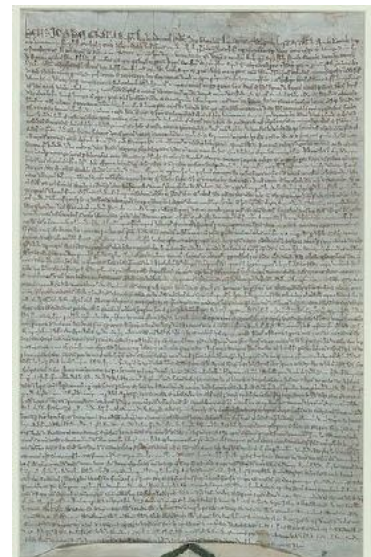
It is thought very unlikely that a master copy ever existed. The four surviving copies are in Salisbury, Lincoln and two in the British Library. The antiquarian Sir Robert Cotton acquired the two London copies in the 17th century. One was discovered in a tailor's shop by a lawyer, Humphrey Wyems, the other by Sir Edward Dering in Dover castle. The Dover copy is now believed to have originated in Canterbury. This copy was slightly damaged in Cotton's library fire in 1731 but a copy was engraved by John Pine in 1733. In the 1830s however, a bungled attempt at cleaning and conservation rendered the document illegible until recently when technology came to the rescue. The Salisbury copy is the most readable and it is likely that it was produced at Old Sarum where they had acquired great skill in copying books. I have read that the Cathedral 're-discovered' the copy in 1812!

A draft of the 1215 charter was found in Peterborough Abbey and is held by the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House.

1216: only 1 copy survives which is in Durham Cathedral.

1217: 4 copies exist, 3 in the Bodleian and 1 in Hereford Cathedral.

This last is accompanied by the *Articuli super Cartas*, the instruction to sheriffs how to observe the conditions in the document. Durham and



Lincoln also have the accompanying *Charter of the Forest*.

1225: 4 copies exist, 1 in the British Library (see page 1, *public domain*) but originally from Lacock Abbey (Abbess Ella Longespée), there is 1 each in Durham Cathedral, the Bodleian and the National Archives (Kew). Also found in Peterborough Abbey was a copy of the third re-issue of the 1225 charter along with a 'roll copy'. The British Library's copy is accompanied by the *Charter of the Forest*.

1297: 1 copy is in Parliament House, Canberra which was sold to them by King's School, Bruton. The second copy is on permanent loan to the US National Archives (see page 1). This came originally from the Brudenell family (Earls of Cardigan) who sold it to the Perot Foundation who sold it on to US businessman David Rubinstein for \$21.3 million. There is also 1 copy in Kew and 1 in the London Guildhall.

1300: 7 copies survive from Edward I reign. They are in Faversham, Oriel College Oxford, the Bodleian, Durham Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, City of London and Sandwich (one of the Cinque Ports). The Sandwich and Oriel College exemplifications are accompanied by the *Charter of the Forest*. Right is a 1300 copy of the *Articuli* in the National Archives.

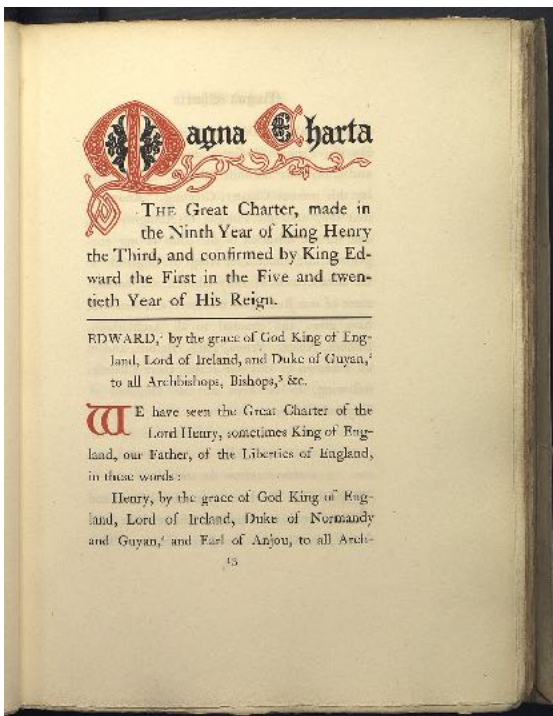


Two things strike me; firstly that Durham Cathedral has managed to acquire 3 copies of Magna Carta; secondly, that there was a Wessex cluster - Salisbury, Bruton and Lacock.

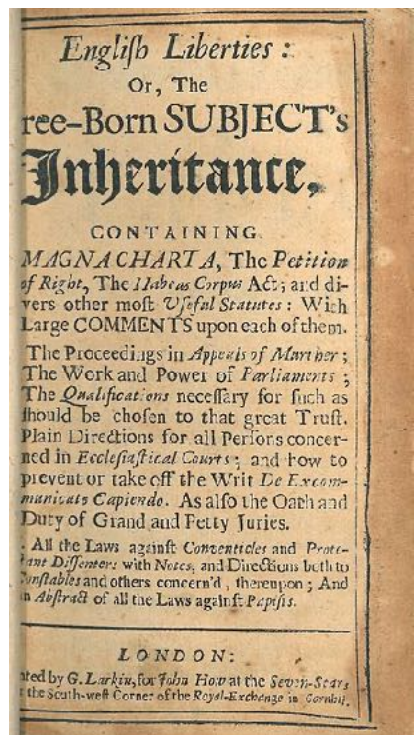
THE AMERICAN ANGLE

The Lincoln copy has travelled to the US on a number of occasions and in fact spent the war years locked in Fort Knox. Winston Churchill wanted to cement the *special relationship* by giving them the copy but Lincoln were having none of it.

Henry Care (1646 - 1688) was a Whig propagandist and member



of the *Green Ribbon Club* (loose London political association that met in taverns and coffee houses). He was very anti-Popish and his handbook *English Liberties, or the Freeborn Subject's Inheritance* (right, in the *public domain*) sold well in the

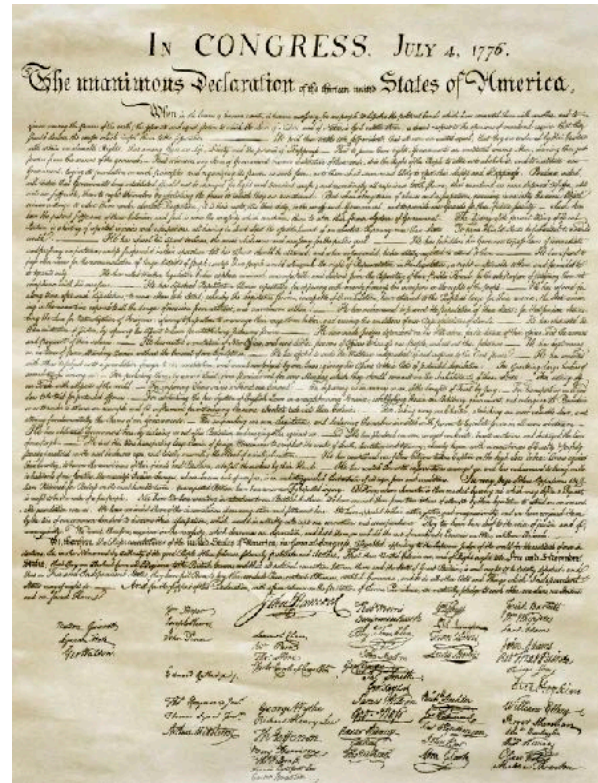


American colonies. In 1687, the Quaker and Christ Church Oxford educated William Penn, who governed Pennsylvania largely from England, had printed in Philadelphia *The Excellent Privilege of Liberty and Property: Being a Reprint and Facsimile of the First American edition of Magna Charta* (left, courtesy of the Tarlton Law Library, Austin, Texas). Penn was heavily influenced by Edward

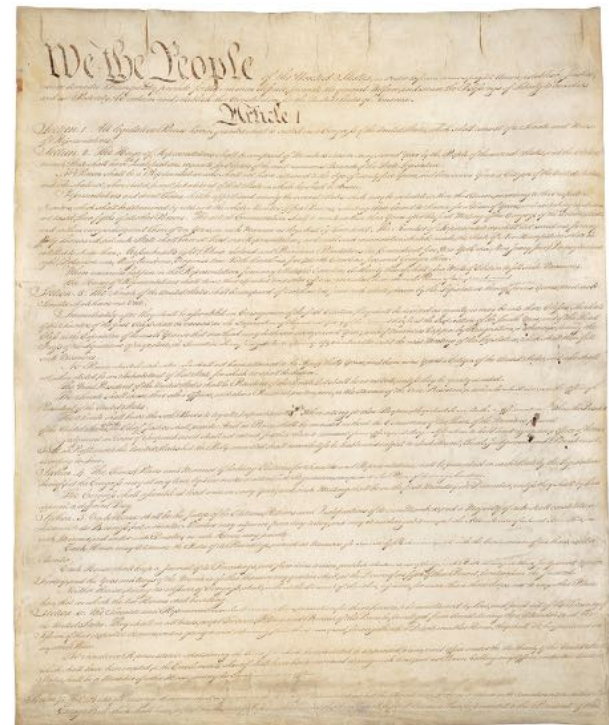
Coke and John Selden.

The Declaration of Independence of the (right, courtesy of the Aspen Institute) was signed by 56 of the United States' *Founding Fathers*, congressional representatives of the Thirteen Colonies. The *Committee of Five* who drafted the document were John Adams (Massachusetts), Thomas Jefferson (Virginia), Benjamin Franklin (Pennsylvania), Roger Sherman (Connecticut) and Robert Livingston (New York). Jefferson was deputed to write the first draft.

Although the philosopher John Locke's (1632 - 1704) ideas contributed to the written constitution (lower right, *free license of the US National Archives and Records Administration*), it is said that the Founding Fathers reached back to ancient Greece for their ideas. After all they were both slave-owning democracies!



The constitution grew out of reforms to the earlier *Articles of Confederation* but opinion was polarised, as it still is, by those who wished to see a strong federal government and those keeping more power with the individual states. The pivotal role went to James Madison, Jr. (4th President) who was a supporter of power being devolved to the states and who was opposed by Alexander Hamilton (of musical fame) who was the leader of the federalists.



The Greek democracy was based on a relatively small population divided into *demes* in which the *polis* (excluding women and slaves) were involved in decision making. By Roman times it had morphed into a mob being kept quiet with 'bread and circuses' easily roused by demagogues. Unfortunately, the Trump presidency has highlighted that the US has followed the Roman model.

ABSENT BARON

One important Baron that was absent at Runnymede was our own William Longespée, the King's half-brother. Apparently he was in Devon *conducting a campaign against rebels around Exeter*. It could be that he was included in the document because he *had played and was still playing a considerable role in this crisis*. Quotes are from *Magna Carta* by JC Holt, Cambridge University Press 1992.