

# Magna Carta and King John's England



 Portcullis

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'Foul as it is, Hell itself is defiled by the foulness of John'; thus, rather intemperately, wrote the chronicler Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century, catching the tenor of what has popularly become a deeply negative view of King John's reign. Surely *Magna Carta* is itself proof of the point?

Fashioned by the Church and malcontent barons, *Magna Carta* was in essence a response to a government that was seen as authoritarian, arbitrary, and capricious. It is therefore also an invaluable source for understanding the nature of aristocratic society in England in the early-thirteenth century - through their complaints might we know them!

But was King John the tyrant that is often supposed? What was the England of his time like, and what challenges did he face? How did he compare against contemporaries expectations of kingship? In this day school we will examine the kingship of King John, and look, with particular reference to the west midlands, at the problems faced in local society; what underlay the complaints of King John's rule? We will look at the charter whose 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary was commemorated in June 2015, to consider how these complaints were to be addressed. Finally, we examine who benefited from the charter and ask to what extent the 'Great Charter' may be seen as a bedrock of English liberties.

The day will be divided essentially between two sessions -

- A royal tyrant? England and the reign of King John.
- *Magna Carta* and the Medieval Community.

**10.00am till 2.30pm**

**FEES: £30.00 (Payable in advance)**

**Inclusive of light lunch & morning  
coffee or tea**