

# *The Reeds of Runnymede*

(*Magna Carta*, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1215)

*At the Runnymede, at Runnymede  
What say the reeds at Runnymede?  
The lissom reeds that give and take,  
That bend so far, but never break.  
They keep the sleepy Thames awake  
With tales of John at Runnymede.*

*At Runnymede, at Runnymede  
Oh, hear the reeds at Runnymede:  
'You must'n sell, delay, deny,  
A freeman's right or liberty.  
It wakes the stubborn Englishry.  
We saw 'em roused at Runnymede!*

*'When through our ranks the Barons came,  
With little thought of praise or blame,  
But resolute to play the game,  
They lumbered up to Runnymede;  
And there they launched in solid line  
The first attack on Right Divine-  
The curt, uncompromising 'Sign!  
That settled John at Runnymede.'*

*'At Runnymede, at Runnymede  
Your rights were won at Runnymede!  
No freeman shall be fined or bound,  
Or dispossessed of freehold ground,  
Except by lawful judgment found  
And passed upon him by his peers.  
Forget not, after all these years,  
The Charter signed at Runnymede.'*

*And still when Mob or Monarch lays  
Too rude a hand on English ways,  
The whisper wakes, the shudder plays,  
Across the reeds at Runnymede.*

*And Thames, that knows the moods of kings,  
And crowds and priest and suchlike things,  
Rolls deep and dreadful as he brings  
Their warning down from Runnymede!*

-- Rudyard Kipling

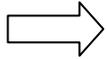


## *Runnymede*



*'On a Monday morning in June 1215, between Staines and Windsor, the barons and Churchmen began to collect on the great meadow at Runnymede. A small cavalcade appeared from the direction of Windsor. Gradually, men made out the faces of the King, the Papal Legate, the Archbishop of Canterbury and several bishops. They dismounted without ceremony. Someone, probably the Archbishop, stated briefly the terms that were suggested. The King declared at once that he agreed. The original Articles of the Barons on which Magna Carta is based were sealed in a quiet, short scene which has become one of the most famous in our history.'*

Winston Churchill from History of the English-Speaking Peoples.



*'I propose that we should agree on a European MAGNA CARTA to entrench for every European citizen, the basic rights which we in the west take for granted: We must enshrine for every individual:*

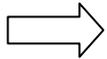
*-freedom of speech and thought, of worship, of access to the law, of the market place;*

*-freedom to participate in genuinely democratic elections, to own property, to maintain nationhood; and*

*- freedom from fear of an over-mighty state'.*

**Margaret Thatcher**

5<sup>th</sup> August 1990

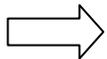


*'Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world' ...The General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations...*

*Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.'*

**United Nations General Assembly**

10<sup>th</sup> December 1948



*'The Declaration of Human Rights is of basic importance: it is first and foremost a declaring of the basic principles to serve as a common standard for all nations. It might well become a MAGNA CARTA of all mankind.'*

**Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt**

**United Nations General Assembly**

9<sup>th</sup> December 1948