

Einladende Kathedralen dieser Welt

Inviting Cathedrals of the World

Introduction to Salisbury Cathedral

R N Tabe in his poem 'In the eye of the beholder' writes:

Its spire, proud and tall,
reaching up to kiss the sky;
ancient and beautiful

Welcoming one and all
(no enquiring who or why);
Salisbury Cathedral.

Salisbury Cathedral rises up out of the green Close heavens wards but also holds its place as part of the City of Salisbury in the South West of England.

Salisbury Cathedral is widely acknowledged as one of the finest English Cathedrals, built in 1258 in 38 years, with the tallest medieval spire in Europe (123meters). It is renowned for the beauty of its building and the surrounding landscape, for innovation and excellence in its worship and music, and for holding the best original 1215 Magna Carta (UNESCO listed document's of which there are 3 other copies) and over a quarter of a million people visit it every year.

The Cathedral itself is a wonderful image which without words reflects the mission and objectives of the Cathedral. Salisbury Cathedral's Purpose is to "Making a difference for God through exceptional worship and outreach."

It seeks to be prayerful, compassionate proclaimers of the Christian faith helping all to encounter God and his transformative presence, with a continuing commitment to develop a culture of faith, hope and renewal.

How they do things is at least as important as what they do, their clearly defined values seek to communicate this by focusing on:

- Integrity, reflected in transparent, fair and consistent actions;
- Generosity, which generates a warm open welcome to all;

- Compassion, which promotes social justice, equality, diversity, dignity, consideration and respect for all.

The Magna Carta's 800th anniversary in 2015 was an opportune time for the Cathedral to rethink their cultural offer and make the most of their heritage collections, improving both physical and intellectual access. They also wanted to raise awareness and extend the learning offer at Salisbury Cathedral into the social justice arena.

The Magna Carta

Magna Carta is famous as a symbol of justice, fairness, and human rights. For centuries it has inspired and encouraged movements for freedom and constitutional government in Britain and around the world. But when it was issued by England's King John in June 1215 it was an attempt to prevent a civil war between the king and his powerful barons.

Magna Carta means simply 'great charter'. A charter is a legal document issued by the king or queen which guarantees certain rights. This charter has over 60 clauses, covering many areas of the nation's life, including the right to a fair trial. It is one of several copies written immediately after King John agreed peace terms with his barons at Runnymede, which were sent around the country as evidence of the king's decision. Salisbury Cathedral's copy is one of four which survive from this original issue. It was written in Latin by hand, by an expert scribe, on parchment (animal skin, in this case, sheepskin). Medieval documents like this were not signed, but sealed, and at the bottom of our Magna Carta you can see the marks where King John's seal was once attached.

The old Magna Carta exhibition at Salisbury Cathedral was looking tired and there was concern about the condition of Magna Carta and the archive. It was agreed that the Magna Carta needed to be conserved and exhibited but this needed to be done in a place which existed for the worship of God and with people who would speak of the Cathedral as their spiritual home and who in 2015 would journey as pilgrims and not as tourists.

So the aim was to rethink the Magna Carta exhibition, and create a Magna Carta focus in the Chapter House, linking the document on display with its historic context and its survival as part of the Cathedral archive.

The Magna Carta anniversary was also a springboard for us to launch a comprehensive Magna Carta-inspired programme of events and initiatives that would engage with the widest range of groups possible, and create more diverse opportunities for people to get involved.

The objectives of the year were:

- To engage audiences with the local context of Salisbury's Magna Carta and wider archives
- To encourage reflection on what Magna Carta means for individuals and societies
- To provide an understanding and knowledge of the significance of Magna Carta and its legacy
- To support the awareness and participation of individuals in wider social issues and encourage social action
- To encourage critical thinking and advocacy
- To provide a variety of opportunities for people to engage with Magna Carta and participate in activities
- To raise awareness of the Magna Carta as part of a wider Cathedral archive

So I am going to look at what happened

Firstly the Exhibition

The Magna Carta had been displayed badly in the Chapter House (this is a building adjoining the Cathedral which used to be used for the governing body of the Cathedral known as Chapter) and was joined by a collection of unconnected Church Silver.

A grant of £415,800 from Heritage Lottery funds enabled the Encapsulation, conservation and re-display of Magna Carta and develop an interactive exhibition interpreting the document and its themes for visitors in the Chapter House and Cloisters.

In considering the exhibition and its relationship with the building needed to take into account the objectives of the Cathedral to worship and outreach.

Music, colour, light, architecture, words, symbols and images, silverware, stain glass, space, smell and silence all influence us and can assist us in making our minds and souls more open to God – the exhibition could not distract from this – the Cathedral is primarily a place of worship.

The exhibition opened to the public on Saturday February 28th 2015, the day after the press launch. The official opening was held on March 6th 2015 with a lecture by Neil MacGregor entitled “Making the Magna Carta We Want: The unintended meanings of an Icon”. It was attended by approximately 750 people and was a free event open to all. Amnesty International contributed to the exhibition by creating a display about Human Rights, Torture and Magna Carta, which was placed alongside the first part of the Magna Carta display – (a film about contemporary protest movements and the clauses in Magna Carta related to justice and the rule of law).

The exhibition was seen by around 7000 people per week. The results of a random sample survey show that while there was a significant increase in the amount of time visitors spent looking at the Magna Carta exhibition, on average visitors found it less interesting than they did seeing Magna Carta before 2015 and in general ranked their visit to the Cathedral slightly lower than they did last year.

Our independent researcher who undertook the survey attributes this result to several possible factors: the first is that the hype around Magna Carta this year meant that people had much higher expectations, the second being that because of this hype over Magna Carta, the exhibition would have attracted a much wider pool of people including those who in general would find history less interesting. The third factor is the fact that the Cathedral was altogether more crowded, making for a less enjoyable experience overall.

The survey showed a significant increase in the number of people who came to the Cathedral to see Magna Carta, and also that many more people found out that Magna Carta was in the Cathedral from our website. There was a marked increase in people who have not visited the Cathedral before and a slight increase in overseas visitors.

Partnership working

The year provided a good opportunity to work in work in partnership with others both large and small.

This included the British Library over the unification of the four Magna Cartas in February 2015. The event itself involved a three day unification – a launch event, a public day in which 1215 ballot winners got to see the four documents together and learn about them, and a scholars day in which a very small group of Magna Carta scholars got to examine the four Magna Cartas together for the first time.

The culmination of the unification event was a display of the four 1215 Magna Cartas in the robing room at the House of Lords. Over the course of 1 day, 2500 people representing a wide range of groups from MPs to schoolchildren from all around the Commonwealth came to see the four documents. Volunteer guides were at hand all through the day to provide visitors with a brief explanation about the Salisbury Magna Carta. This for us provided critical publicity for the rest of our events during the year.

Arts project

The Cathedral has always had an active art programme providing an international venue for sculpture and other work. 2015 was a quiet year for art but it significantly contributed to a few pieces which aimed to interact with people who may not be interested in either history or faith.

North Porch and Morning Chapel Light Projects

The Cathedral engaged an art company called Squid Soup who work with light to produce two bespoke interactive lighting installations for the building. The first of these, *Enlightenment*, comprised strands of coloured light filling the Cathedral's North Porch. This changed according to the movement of visitors. Due to the scale and prominence and mesmerizing quality of the piece, it attracted a great deal of public interest. Its striking aesthetic quality meant that it was used extensively by national and international media to represent the Magna Carta celebrations taking place around the UK.

The second piece, the *Power of Words*, was a projection which seemed like a jumble of letters that moved according to the body movements of people looking at the installation. Movement made the words form clauses or sections of clauses from the text of Magna Carta. The installation was found fascinating by visitors, and because of its popularity, it was decided to incorporate it into the Magna Flora Flower Festival as well.

Alternative Perspectives

Maybe more significant for me was Alternative Perspective. This display of a mosaic of large clay tiles representing ideas of freedom, justice and the law in response to Magna Carta was the result of a project with inmates of Erlestoke Prison in which Cathedral staff and volunteers worked with prisoners to encourage them to express their views through sculpture. The display, in the Cathedral's South Cloister,

also included prisoners' sketchbooks and notebooks and generated a great deal of interest from visitors, primarily because of its thought-provoking nature.

Barons' Charter Trail

The Barons' trail was organised by the Trussell Trust (a charity for providing food banks and care to the homeless) and Wild In Art, and involved a trail of 25 baron sculptures painted by local artists which were dotted around the city of Salisbury. In addition, 16 local schools each painted their own baron. Mini-barons were produced for sale in local shops, and a competition was held for individual children to paint their own mini baron.

The Cathedral hosted the launch of the Baron's Trail project in November 2014, the sponsor's selection day (in which sponsors chose the baron they wanted), and the launch of the trail itself. For one week at the end of September, the 25 barons were all displayed on the Cathedral lawn, and these were then auctioned off in an event held inside the Cathedral on October 1. Proceeds from the auction, totaling around £59,000, went to the Trussell Trust.

The project proved to be extremely popular among both residents to the city and visitors of all ages. It was probably one of the most effective reminders of the Magna Carta anniversary. Within one month of the launch of the trail on June 13 2015, 23,000 trail leaflets had been picked up by visitors.

Lecture Series:

A lecture series took place through a partnership with Sarum College and Amnesty International. We organised an 8 lecture series. Lecture attendance ranged from 100-750 depending on the speaker and the event.

In addition to the official lecture series, Cathedral staff members and volunteers have given Magna Carta talks all around the country this year, and the chair of our Magna Carta Trust also gave several lectures in the USA. The total number of people that attended the lectures and is over 9000 people. (Several talks were given to huge audiences on Liners between the USA and the UK).

Community Engagement/Education

Although the Cathedral stands out in the geography of Salisbury it engages a specific group of people. Magna Carta year provided an opportunity to widen that group. As a result 750 Volunteers in total received 145 special Magna Carta training of which 87 new recruits. 16 volunteers trained as costume interpreters.

500 flower arrangers transformed the building using over 30,000 blooms and attracting 21, 000 visitors in 5 days of Magna Flora – a flower festival. As part of the Magna Flora Project, we worked with school children from different 17 countries of the Commonwealth. The idea of the project was for them to think about the ideas of justice and freedom (within the context of Magna Carta) and then choose a flower from their country that best represented those values.

During the year 500 schools and colleges interacted with us.

Magna Carta resource box was sent to 377 schools and it is estimated that 118 schools actively used them by 1,250 pupils.

600 people in 11 schools played a new game **Due Process**. The idea was to provide a stimulating and engaging way of working with young people in the older age groups which directly took them through the due process of law and democracy.

Music

The year produced many opportunities for music and maybe the most significant was Magna Cantata.

This was a brand new musical for children charting the course of Magna Carta from King John's time to the present day. It involved 700 school children filling Salisbury Cathedral's nave each night with catchy songs, entertaining lyrics and colourful costumes. Book and lyrics are by Andrew Mackay and music by Philip Lawson in this exciting collaboration conducted by Musical Director Ian Wicks.

It was very successful and there was a total audience of 1928 people over four nights. Audiences were diverse, and a significant number of them had never been into the Cathedral before, or had not been here for many years. One school is to set up a choir directly as a result.

La Folia - Magna Songs

'We have a voice that's strong enough to say no! We have the power to make things change!'

150 young people from four special schools/units in Wiltshire created a new 'great charter' of rights and freedoms, working with Wiltshire-based creative arts company La Folia to present it through music, drama, dance and visual arts. This was performed in the Cathedral Nave in July.

400 participants and 4,000 spectators from communities throughout Wiltshire enjoyed the colourful Magna Carta Pageant.

2576 cups of tea were served at 'Liber-tea' party along with cakes and flapjacks cooked by Elrestoke prison inmates, on the anniversary weekend as over 1000 people walked this the Bishop of Salisbury from Old Sarum the site of the first Cathedral in Salisbury to the Cathedral.

The Cathedral organised a Question Time session with Erlestoke Prison as part of its Citizenship involving a retired QC and court chaplain, the Director of the Prison Reform Trust and an ex-offender.

Throughout the year worship continued and many of the worshipping congregations supported the events throughout the year. During Lent a programme entitled 'The Power of Words' exploring concepts in the Christian narrative which are increasingly challenged in the secular world ran.

Visitor numbers and Sales

As predicted, the year proved to be good in terms of visitor numbers, donations, and sale of Magna Carta merchandise. National and local media coverage substantially raised the profile of the anniversary year, and was important from the point of view of generating local interest, in many cases encouraging people to re-visit Magna Carta.

Visitor Numbers:

There was an increase in visitor numbers of 13% during the year, and an increase in donations by 35%.

Visitor books (in which we have 20,000 signatures) indicate a high percentage of international visitors and also a significant percentage of children visiting and engaging with the exhibition. The following sample from March and April shows an example of visitor country distribution - 41% UK, 13% USA, 10% Italy and 8% Germany.

Merchandise:

During the year they have sold 15,574 individual Magna Carta items against 7,454 last year (an increase of 108%).

The gross income generated during the year was £69,844 against £23,812 last year (an increase of 193%).

Legacy

There was a strong aspiration to ensure that there was a legacy from Magna Carta year. There has definitely been a positive public perception about the importance of Magna Carta and, by association, of the importance of Salisbury Cathedral.

Speaking informally to local visitors to the exhibition in Salisbury and to unification ballot winners at the British Library who happened to be from Salisbury, there was a sense of pride in feeling that Salisbury had such an important cultural icon.

The profile of social justice work that the Cathedral has been raised both internally and externally and Magna Carta has been a really great asset in that respect. Moreover, many of those with whom the Cathedral has partnered have expressed an interest in us continuing to work with them. Erlestoke Prison is a good example.

The general engagement initiatives were equally well received and there has been demands for more such projects and opportunities. Magna Cantata is one such example where many of the schools the Cathedral worked with are very keen to be involved in this type of project again.

Organising high-quality events such as lectures by nationally renowned figures and allowing sixth formers from local schools to attend them for free reminded the Cathedral about the wide-ranging ways in which our place as an important institution can be to the benefit of our community.

Providing opportunities for University students to work on real projects of national significance is another example of the type of outreach that is hoped to continue. Local artists have also expressed an interest in working with again more closely.

The response to Magna Carta year reminded Cathedral that one of their aspirations for the future must be to as open as possible; to continue to be creative and enlightened in our understanding of what engagement means; and to provide the space (in the broadest possible sense of the word) for individuals and organisations small and large to do great things.

Conclusion

The Magna Carta anniversary year gave the Cathedral the opportunity to do things in new ways. To engage with a wide range of stakeholder groups establishing meaningful partnerships that will last far

longer than 2015. It gave the Cathedral the opportunity to explore new ways of conveying information – ranging from immersive theatre to contemporary music, to film and other forms of digital technology.

It enabled them to engage with a much wider range of people than usual, namely by offering projects that many different people could enjoy. They actively asked people’s opinions, getting them to think and express what they felt about social justice issues. In doing all of this they developed their own skills in engaging with people, skills that we can continue to use.

The commercial impact of what we did was significant as well. All in all, the experience taught the Cathedral a lot about how they can use heritage as both a cultural and a commercial attractor as they continued to Making a difference for God through exceptional worship and outreach.

Overall, the successes of the year made the Cathedral more able and confident, and to recognize their own potential to achieve, and to push our own boundaries.

I will end with the poem I started with:

In God is love and love is all,
repudiating the Henge nearby;
Ancient and beautiful,
Salisbury Cathedral.

The Right Reverend Dame Sarah Mullally

Bishop of Crediton former Canon Treasurer Salisbury Cathedral