

Magna Carta Anniversary Commemorated



This past June marked the 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta (Latin for “the Great Charter”). Also known as “the Great Charter of the Liberties”, it is a charter that was agreed upon by King John of England at Runnymede, near Windsor, on June 15, 1215.

Per Wikipedia, “First drafted by the Archbishop of Canterbury to make peace between the unpopular King and a group of rebel barons, it promised the protection of church rights, protection for the barons from illegal imprisonment, access to swift justice, and limitations on feudal payments to the Crown, to be implemented through a council of 25 barons. Neither side stood behind their commitments, and the charter was annulled by Pope Innocent III, leading to the First Barons’ War. After King John’s death, the regency government of his young son, Henry III, reissued the document in 1216, stripped of some of its more radical content, in an unsuccessful bid to build political support for their cause.

At the end of the war in 1217, it formed part of the peace treaty agreed at Lambeth, where the document acquired the name Magna Carta. Short of funds, Henry reissued the charter again in 1225 in exchange for a grant of new taxes; his son, Edward I, repeated the exercise in 1297, this time confirming it as part of England’s statute law.”

In July 2015, Philatelic Collector Inc., representing several popular South Pacific postal administrations, produced a set of issues designed by Derek Miller, commemorating the 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta. We illustrate here a sampling of those issues. The stamps include excerpts from the Charter, as well as various shields and other images related to the agreement.

The Cook Islands set of four stamps was issued on July 15, the Tonga set was issued on July 20, and the Samoa set was issued on July 21. In addition to mint stamps, these issues also are available in used (cancelled to order) condition and on First Day Covers.

Information on these and many other stamps and FDCs from these South Pacific islands, as well as others, is available from the philatelic agency, at <https://pcistamps.com/>.