



Press Release
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Human Rights through the eyes of history: a new online exhibition

Although the concept of human rights as we understand it today was unknown until modern times, people in Britain have fought since the medieval period to gain the rights, freedoms and liberties we all enjoy today. To illustrate this essential part of history, The National Archives has launched a new online exhibition tracing the evolution of our human, social and civil rights from Magna Carta to the establishment of the Welfare State.

Dr Paul Carter, historian at The National Archives, said: "Britain has a rich history in relation to ordinary people seeking to develop rights and freedoms. This new online exhibition is a great illustration of those struggles, and a testimony to those who fought for the freedoms we benefit from today."

Travelling through time via documents and images, the exhibition looks at the struggles and milestone achievements which led to the rights and liberties often taken for granted in our everyday lives.

Starting with the limits placed on the Crown by Magna Carta in 1215, further rights and liberties were achieved through the abolition of the slave trade, the right to relief for the poor, various extensions of the vote and the creation of the Welfare State. The most recent development came in 1998, with the implementation of the Human Rights Act.

To view the exhibition, please go to www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/humanrights

This online exhibition is part of Freedom and Liberty, the 2007 Archive Awareness Campaign www.archiveawareness.com

- Ends -

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For more information about the Archive Awareness Campaign, please contact: Elise Oliver on 020 8392 5237 (elise.oliver@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Notes to editors

The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, is a government department; and also an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. See also www.opsi.gov.uk

The National Archives is at the heart of information policy – setting standards and supporting innovation in information and records management across the UK, and providing a practical framework of best practice for opening up and encouraging the re-use of public sector information. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensure that they become tomorrow's permanent record.

The National Archives is also the UK government's official archive, containing 900 years of history from Domesday Book to the present, with records ranging from parchment and paper scrolls through to recently created digital files and archived websites. Increasingly, these records are being put online, making them universally accessible.

The vision of The National Archives is to:

- Lead and transform information management
- Guarantee the survival of today's information for tomorrow
- Bring history to life for everyone