

## U3A Bikers sign up to trip to Runnymede Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015

An outer zone train ticket and comfortable 24 minute journey on South-West Trains was all that was required to transport U3A cyclists from the hustle of Clapham Junction to Staines, now famous as the home of Ali G, aka Sacha Baron Cohen. But we were off to find out about some other barons - from 800 years ago!

After a pleasant ride on the Thames pathway and a stop to admire the boats passing through the picturesque Bell Weir Lock, this week's bike ride took us to the historic site of Runnymede. This tranquil riverside site witnessed the sealing of the Magna Carta in 1215, seen by many as the birthplace of modern democracy.

We cycled to the controversial bronze statue of the Queen at the Pleasure Grounds and then continued through the grassy landscape of Long Mede meadow and an uphill climb to look at both the Kennedy Memorial (1965) and the Magna Carta Memorial (1957). Taking full advantage of the National Trust signpost which declared that Runnymede was "a home to politics and picnics for over 1000 years" we then ate some foraged blackberries collected on route.



In the centre of the meadow we rode to look at "The Jurors", an artwork by Hew Locke for Runnymede. Twelve bronze chairs are decorated with images and symbols relating to past and ongoing struggles for freedom, the rule of law and equal rights, which received our unanimous vote.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yD12u-ehyvE>

A short ride past the Lutyens-designed memorial lodges brought us to the riverside Harvester's pub and lunch, followed by more blackberries on the return journey, afternoon refreshment by the river and all too soon the 24mins train journey back.

"Thank you John for a great ride today".

*Ride leader: John Clements*

*Report by: Elaine Andresier.*

