



# History

## Y7 Spring 1: Life in Medieval England

### Magna Carta 1215

The Magna Carta was written, or 'drawn up' in **1215**. It was a document, literally a great treaty.

At the time the king of England, **King John**, was fighting with other powerful landowners. The landowners, called **barons**, were unhappy with the way the king was running the country and the amount of money he was taxing them.

Magna Carta means '**great treaty**', and it was written to make the barons happy and to stop the fighting. **It set out a list of basic rules about how the country would be run.**

One of the most important, was that **no one was above the law** - including the king.

King John signed it (he actually put his seal on it) which meant that the clauses named would apply to everyone.

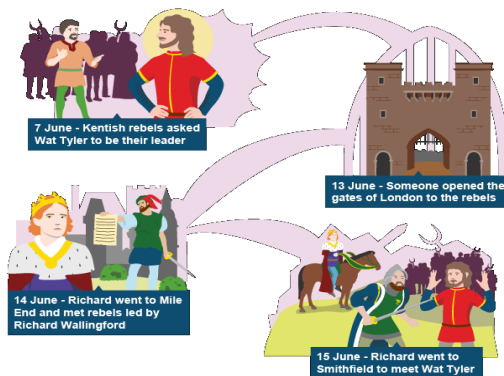
### The Peasants revolt 1381

In 1381, a priest called John Ball encouraged peasants in the south England to go and meet with the King. These chose an ex-soldier, Wat Tyler, to lead them.

These people then travelled to London, pulled down houses, set them on fire, murdered some of the King's advisors and met with King Richard II.

### They were annoyed because:

1. **Wages** had been reduced by the King.
2. Peasants are forced to **work for free** for their lord, a few days each week.
3. A new **Poll tax** was created to pay for the King's war with France.



The king agreed to many of the rebels demands but then went back on his word and hunted down the leaders of the rebellion and had them killed.

### Keyword

### Meaning

1

**Doom Painting**

A religious painting which would encourage people about the rewards of heaven and warn them of the dangers of sin and hell.

2

**Tithe**

Villagers gave one-tenth of their food to the village priest as a form of tax.

3

**Archbishop**

A high ranking church official.

4

**Turbulent**

Troublesome or awkward e.g. Henry saying "who will rid me of this turbulent priest".

5

**Martyr**

Someone who dies for a holy cause, sometimes Martyrs are made a Saint.

6

**Magna Carta**

A great treaty which the Barons forced King John to sign, giving them more power.

7

**Rebellion**

People who rebel or rise up and fight against the government or king.

8

**Black Death**

The Black Death was the deadliest pandemic recorded in human history. It killed nearly half of all European people.

9

**Peasant's Revolt**

Led by Wat Tyler, the peasants rebelled against the king over unfair taxes in 1381.

10

**Quack**

A fake doctor who prescribes cures for all sorts of illnesses and conditions – none of which actually work.

### Medieval timeline

**1151** - Henry II, the first 'Plantagenet' king, takes the throne.

**1170** – Murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket

**1215** – Magna Carta is signed by King John

**1347** – The Black Death arrives in Europe.

**1381** – The Peasant revolt.

**1415** – The Battle of Agincourt. A large French army is defeated by the English.

**1453** – The Hundred Years war with France ends.

**1485** – Henry Tudor wins the Battle of Bosworth and is crowned as Henry VII. He marries Elizabeth of York and unites the families ending the Wars of the Roses.

## Henry II and Thomas Becket

In 1170 Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered by four of the king's knights in the Cathedral. Why?

- Henry II was a strong king who was trying to get England under control.
- He was annoyed that priests who committed crimes were often let off by the church courts.
- He made his best friend Thomas Becket the Archbishop of Canterbury, hoping that he would allow Henry to control the church law.



- Becket did not and they argued, after one particular argument four knights overheard Henry saying "who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" and thought he meant that they should kill him.
- Henry was very sorry for the death of his friend and allowed monks to whip him as a punishment. The knights were sent to the Holy Land and died fighting the crusades.



## The Black Death

The bubonic plague was a painful disease, with black buboes or swellings, in the groin and armpits, which lasted up to a week.

An estimated **30% to 60%** of the population of Europe died from the plague.

In the 1347 - 1350 outbreak, **doctors** were completely unable to prevent or cure the plague. For those who believed in the Greek humours there were a range of cures available. '**Blood-letting**' – deliberately bleeding a vein – was a way of reducing 'hot' blood, whilst blowing your nose or clearing your throat was a way of getting rid of too much 'cold' **phlegm**.

Mustard, mint sauce, apple sauce and horseradish were used to balance wet, dry, hot and cold in your diet!

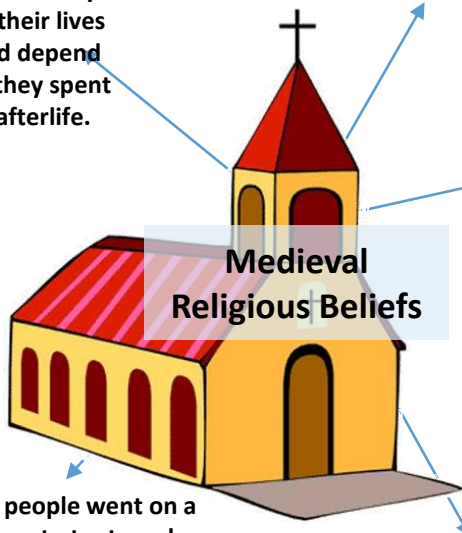
The impacts of the plague were:

- **Mental health** – It affected the way people lived their lives and some were very angry and blamed the church.
- **Social** – Poor people began to question their place in society and this helped break down the feudal system.
- **Economic** – Shortage of workers meant that wages rose until the king tried to stop this, which led to the Peasant's revolt.

Everyone believed in Heaven and Hell and how they lived their lives would depend on where they spent the afterlife.

The Church was very important for people – baptism of babies, marriages, confession, the last rites for the dying and burying the dead.

Many people chose a career in the Church or in a monastery. In 1300 one in twenty townspeople was a cleric.



### Medieval Religious Beliefs

Many people went on a pilgrimage to try to reduce the time they thought they would spend in purgatory. A person who had been on pilgrimage would wear a badge to show which shrine he had visited.

Monasteries and nunneries looked after the old and sick, provided somewhere for travellers to stay, gave alms to the poor and sometimes looked after people's money for them.

Estimated death toll for the British Isles and Ireland **3.2 million**

