

The Provisions

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‘As the rose is the flower of flowers’ is the inscription used to glorify the chapter house at Westminster. It was there on St. Valentine’s Day 1265 that Henry, together with Edward, swore to abide by Magna Carta. Henry’s confirmation of the Charter was nothing new, but on the earlier occasions he got a tax in return. Now all he got was the chance to keep his job and hope it would still be around for his son some day. This apparent end to the king’s quid pro quo attitude to Magna Carta was significant in itself, but he was required at the same time to accept the conciliar rule imposed by the June constitution. In making this move, the Montfortians were building on their strategy begun at Amiens the year before of linking the Provisions to Magna Carta, basically binding the liberties of the people to the machinery of government. From then on, everytime the king said ‘yes, yes, yes’ when asked to confirm the Charter, there would be somebody next to him with a copy of the Provisions in hand saying ‘yes, indeed’. Of course it wasn’t to be. Two days later Montfort squared off with Gilbert de Clare over the holding of a tournament in Dunstable and the two were irreconcilable after that. To get a better feel for the magnitude of the occasion, see David Carpenter’s [account](#) delivered in the chapter house itself. Another excellent summary of the events can be found in the [contribution](#) made by Sophie Ambler for The Magna Carta Project.



The chapter house, where Henry once again swore to act in good faith

The day after the February 14th anniversary of this historic moment will see the release of my [biography](#) of Montfort. It has 336 pages, 37 illustrations, and begins by recalling the fateful encounter between Simon and Henry on the Thames in 1258. Many thanks to David Carpenter for giving me the idea for the title, which I think sums up Montfort the best, and to John Maddicott for encouraging me in my efforts. It’s a mark of his professionalism and generosity that he helped me present a view of the man that he doesn’t necessarily agree with, but as he himself says in his own [biography](#) of Montfort, he deserves reassessment as new generations come to see him in different ways. I will embark on what is known as a virtual book tour at the end of this month. Go to [simon 2014](#) for a schedule of the ‘stops’.

