

— THE —
HAMLYN
LECTURES
— 2015 —

To be delivered by

Professor Michael Freeman

University College London

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**A "MAGNA CARTA" FOR CHILDREN? –
Rethinking Children's Rights**

Lecture 1 –

Wednesday 11 November, 18.00

Venue: University of Leeds, School of Law, Moot Court Room, Liberty Building

Registration:

www.hamlynleeds2015.eventbrite.co.uk

Are Children Human?

Lecture 2 –

Wednesday 18th November, 18.00

Venue: University of Nottingham, Law & Social Sciences Building, B63

Registration:

www.hamlynlecture.eventbrite.co.uk

**Even Lawyers were
Children once**

Lecture 3 –

Wednesday 25th November, 18.00

Venue: University College London, Cruciform Lecture Theatre

Registration:

<http://www.laws.ucl.ac.uk/event/hamlyn-lecture-2015>

**A "Magna Carta" for
Children?**

www.law.ex.ac.uk/hamlyn

www.cambridge.org/haml



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INTRODUCTION

The overarching theme of this year's Hamlyn lectures is the slow progress of children to citizenship.

Until recently children were seen at best as, "becomings", now, it is commonly held, that they are "beings", but, it will be argued, not fully so. In the First Lecture, the slow progress will be explained. The roots of children's rights will be uncovered to reveal some early supporters – Hutcheson, Spence, even Marx. The rise of children's rights in the 20th century will be illustrated by reference to Janusz Korczak, the two Declarations and the Liberation Movement of the 1970s. Why, having been marginalised for so long, were children ghettoised into their own convention? What does this say about our attitudes to human rights? And about human rights proponents? Are children not human?

In the Second Lecture we will reach the Convention. The Convention's top-down approach will be assessed – would a bottom-up one have reflected children's interests better? The Convention will be defended against critics who indict it as being anti-family, culturally biased, not appreciative of children's lack of capacity. The Convention's norms, principles and themes will be critically examined. The Convention is seen as a great achievement but only a beginning. Regional formulations of children's rights [Africa and Europe] will also be considered.

The Third Lecture will look beyond the Convention to the future, in particular to the future of childhood. The view is taken that rights by themselves are not enough. But given that we have fought for a rights regime for children we should look to improve it, by re-thinking the rights in the Convention, for example by moving beyond participatory rights to citizenship. But we must also ask what alternatives there are to this approach. Are there better ways to affect improvements in the lives of children: an emphasis on well-being, on happiness? Would an emphasis on the ethics of care achieve more for children than a simple rights regime? Do children need a separate Code? Or should we bring them in from the "ghetto" and just accept them as human beings with human rights?