

Bastion Tours

Turn left at bottom of first flight of stairs. Are within an early 2nd C stone building. Floor of building, crushed tile mortar, represented in floor. Line of tiles indicates rear wall of lias limestone.

Turning right, are standing on original 1st c Roman clay rampart. Rampart was faced with turf and reinforced internally by mattress of oak planks laid in horizontal layers at 2' intervals. This represented by black strips on the floor.

- Brief history of why Romans came to Gloucester. Significance of River Severn
- Show map of Roman Gloucester
- Show image of rampart

The front and back faces of the rampart were cut away to accommodate 2nd c building and city wall.

- Show image of 1st c stone wall

Rampart raised with a loam bank in late 2nd c.

Now facing back of 3rd c city wall. This face never seen in ancient times as loam bank retained as reinforcement. Foundation of wall below floor level is of pointed oak piles packed with rubble. Two types of stone: oolitic limestone from Cotswolds – Leckhampton, and blue lias limestone from Severn Vale. Latter contains iron carbonate – rust colour leaching out.

Roman fortress in centre from mid-60's AD established by 20th legion. AD 75 legion heads to Caerleon. Gloucester granted Colonia status AD 96-98 by Emperor Nerva. Towards end of 1st c, process of fortification starts. Walls were face with stone. Between 100 AD and time Romans left (410 AD) walls were partially rebuilt a number of times and fully in 3rd c.

Note size of stones – large blocks cut on site and moved to location. Fit together without mortar

- Show image of wall building

Length of wall to right – larger well-dressed blocks, squared oolite. These 4th c rebuild and extends to East Gate.

Taper in back face of wall between 3rd and 4th c lengths with lintel over it. At end of 1st c, clay rampart between here and East Gate removed and replaced by masonry wall 1.3m thick, built in high quality ashlar as "wing wall" to the East Gate. Nothing remains of that wall. When 3rd c wall built, about 1.9m thick and built with front face flush with inner wall, back face being tapered down to 1.3 m to match. When thinner 1st c wall was replaced in 4th c by thicker wall, its rear face was brought up to the taper where it stopped abruptly, leaving a step in the back face. Subsequent courses of the wall were supported on a lintel to span the narrower tapered length.

Ashlar – masonry squared and dressed to high standard with a smooth finish and close-fitting joints.

Following City wall, cross 1st ditch (coloured brown as it was filled with clay early 2nd c). 2nd c ditch ahead – marked in black.

- Point out wall displays – chronological record

Move round to 13th c Bastion. One of at least 3 towers added to eastern defensive wall in 13th c.

Other locations: South of East Gate, between Museum and Boots; At corner of Parliament Street and Brunswick Road.

Bastions were defensive measures

- Clear line of sight from arrow slits
- More resistant to strike by cannon and gunpowder
- Not as easily breached by tunnelling

Bastion was discovered during archaeological dig in 1969, prior to Kings Square development. Opened to public in 1975. Closed in 1997 because of flooding. Reopened in 2016.

Defences of Gloucester were significantly improved during the 13th c. 1st Barons war – 1215-17. Magna Carta signed in King John's reign. Barons wanted this reasserted. Accession of Henry III to throne brought end to first conflict. 2nd Barons War – 1262-65. Simon de Montfort was leader of baronial faction.

Significance of defensive walls after the Romans left:

- Saxons held Gloucester for 500 years. Aethelflaed strengthened town so walls may include Saxon additions
- Medieval period: 1215-17 and 1262-65 two Barons wars where Gloucester was in the front line
- Wars of the Roses. In May 1471, Gloucester closed its gates against the Lancastrian army marching from Weymouth to Wales, forcing it to march north to cross the Severn. The decisive Battle of Tewkesbury (1471) saw Lancastrians lead by Edward of York defeated by Yorkists who included Richard Duke of Gloucester, later Richard III.
- Civil War in 1643. Siege of Gloucester held out for 3 weeks. 1660 restoration of Charles II

Show images of:

- Roman walls and East Gate
- Medieval walls and gate