

Gloucester Siege Tour

Commence from St.Michael's Tower to Greyfriars.

1. 1643 The City of Gloucester had declared itself subjects of the King but answerable to parliament.
2. Having besieged and taken Bristol and Cirencester the King's men descended upon Gloucester which in those days was a very important and strategic City , the Gateway to Wales and the King's supporters in Monmouth.
3. Royalist forces had already established a base at Highnam House.
4. Gloucester had acquired the services of Edward (Colonel) Massey who had been refused a commission in the King's army. Although only 23 he was an experienced military strategist.
5. By July 1643 the King's army were at the outlying villages and Colonel Massey had had all the houses near to the city demolished. He had also previously taken Tewkesbury and Hereford to consolidate his defences from the North. The King and his son Prince Charles made themselves at home in Matson House. (Selwyn School)
6. Massey decided to fortify the walls and ditches around the city to protect the 4000 civilians . He only had a garrison of 1500 fighting men.
7. Two representatives were sent 'from the godly city of Gloucester' to the king, refusing to surrender except by 'the commands of his Majesty signified by both Houses of Parliament'. The suburbs were then fired and over two hundred houses destroyed to drive off the advancing enemy.
8. Greyfriars.
St. Mary de Crypt damaged by Royalist cannons.
Used the Crypt as a storage vault for gunpowder.
9. Brunswick Road.
Humpty Dumpty. A siege engine which collapsed.
Pig and Whistle. Gloucester allegedly ran a pig around the walls to show that they had food. A boy played a jolly tune on the whistle to draw their attention.
The City Wall. To the south about 300 metres was Gaudy Green. Royalists fired at the City from there. They also severed the water pipes which flowed from Robinswood Hill (2 Kilometers South East).
The King brought in miners from the Forest of Dean to undermine the walls. However, there was a torrential storm which flooded the mineworks. This gave The City a respite until a relieving force could arrive.
10. Walk along the wall which is under foot to Boots corner.
Mural depicting the siege . Also the Baron's siege of the 12th-13th century.
11. Continue the wall walk passing over the King's Square to the North East corner.
This was probably the safest part of the city. The wall had an outer defence.
It ran around where the modern day railway line runs.
12. Still tracing the Wall walk to the North Gate then through the back of the Cathedral see the raised tump which was a defensive barricade.
13. Walk to Charles 11 .

Charles was erected in Southgate St. after 1660 (Restoration) . Gloucester reverted to being Royalist. However, because Gloucester had been the catalyst for Charles 1 losing the Civil War (It was the turning point in his fortunes)

Charles 11 ordered the total destruction of the city walls.

His statue disappeared and was not discovered until 20th C in a garden at Chaxhill.

14 Colonel Massey's lodging at the 'Crown'. The Royalists could reach here with Cannon and they did try to hit the cathedral.

15 St. Nicholas' Church.

The forces of colonel Massey defeated the Welsh troops at Dark Barn (on the road to Newent. 1500 captives were incarcerated in this church and St. Mary de Lode but Massey couldn't feed them so made them swear to go home. He let them go and they immediately rejoined the Royalists.

16 Commelines House.

A dutchman who came to Gloucester to escape religious persecution and danger in Holland lived in this house and was awoken early on morning when a Royalist Cannonball came through his roof and landed on his bed. It was red hot and he used his chamber pot to cool it down. His descendants went on to own a farm which still exists as Commeline's Farm in Upton St. Leonards.

17 The King's 6000 force began to withdraw on 5th Sept. 1643 when news of The Duke of Essex's relief army came in . They were close at hand having had to come the long way round from London avoiding the Royalist army in Oxford.

18 40 soldiers and civilians were killed and 400 injured in Gloucester.
More than 1000 Royalist troops died.

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