

## **Plans for 375 Civil war commemoration 2018**

The Siege of Gloucester was an engagement in the First English Civil War. It took place between 10 August and 5 September 1643, between the defending Parliamentary garrison of Gloucester and the besieging army of King Charles I. The siege ended with the arrival of a relieving Parliamentary army under the Earl of Essex. The Royalist forces withdrew, having sustained heavy casualties and had several cannon disabled as a result of sallies made by the defenders.

5<sup>th</sup> September 2018 will be the 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day the siege of Gloucester was lifted. This is annually commemorated during "Gloucester Day" celebrations which are generally held on the first Saturday in September.

### **#Gloucester375 commemorations**

To commemorate the 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the lifting of the siege of Gloucester there a number of initiatives that are being discussed with a range of partners across the city which would take place, appropriately across the two weeks of the History Festival and Heritage open days including

- Enhanced Gloucester Day celebrations (some re-enactment -possibly Col Massey and a few troops)
- Series of Talks at History festival Blackfriars and City voices
- Programme of Civil war walking tours (Civic Trust and others)
- Civil war Re-enactment in Gloucester park involving 200 reenactors and horses and living camp, possibly a ticketed all day event 15/16<sup>th</sup> September (Sunday main focus)
- 15/16<sup>th</sup> September living camp in bowling green Gloucester
- Heritage Open Days (HODs) 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> September, themed around Civil War, with costumes provided 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> September
- Also during HODs re-enactment of scenes depicting stories of Gloucester from the civil war such as the canon ball that rolled down Southgate and the famous pig that was taken around the city walls
- Special brochure explaining history of siege of Gloucester, civil war and Col. Massey distributed free to all Gloucester primary schools
- Museum Exhibition – possibly exhibits from Leeds Armoury
- Permanent memorial to Col Massey
- Bring back Scrumpty to tell the civil war story
- One ticket giving joint entry to museum exhibition and Gloucester Park re-enactment
- Parade through city by re-enactors, with Col Massey at the lead. Either during HODs or Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> before battle re-enactment 16<sup>th</sup> in Gloucester Park

## **NOTES**

### **Background**

On 10 August, the Royalist army arrived at Gloucester and promptly demanded that Colonel Edward Massey surrender. Massey refused and Royalist forces began digging in and setting up artillery batteries around the south and east gates of the city and also severed or diverted water pipes. The defenders burned houses and other obstacles outside the city walls. The bombardment of the city began.

However, over the next days, ably lead by Massey, the defenders made several sallies from the gates, attacking and disabling Royalist artillery, taking prisoners and tools. Breaches in the wall were filled with cannon baskets and wool sacks. The Royalists made attempts to drain the city moat and fill it in at places.

As the siege was prolonged, the King requested his favourite, Prince Rupert, who was currently holding the newly captured port of Bristol, to acquire a newly built cannon from his friends and associates in the Low Countries. This was done post-haste and this huge cannon was shipped over to Bristol and escorted up the Severn Channel to Gloucester, to be positioned just outside the city walls (actually on the high wall of Llanthony Secunda priory in Hempsted), aimed at the cathedral itself.

Unfortunately for the King, his gunners had no experience of firing the brand new gun, especially one larger than they had ever used before, and, on its initial firing, the cannon exploded. With this failure and the excessive time spent trying to take Gloucester, the King had given Parliament enough time to gather huge London forces to march to its relief.

On 26 August the Earl of Essex left London with an army of 15,000 men to relieve the City. Meanwhile, the Royalist army began tunnelling to place a mine under the East Gate, but a sudden spell of bad weather flooded the tunnel, leaving enough time for the Earl of Essex to arrive and reinforce the city.

By the end of the siege, Massey had only three barrels of gunpowder left for the defence of the city.

### **Commemoration**

For centuries afterwards, the lifting of the siege was marked by an annual Gloucester Day. This died out in the nineteenth century but was reinstated in 2009.[1]

The modern Gloucester Day has recently included a parade by the Mock Mayor of Barton, an office created after Barton was moved outside of the limits of the city following the restoration of Charles II

## **Plans for Aethelflaed commemoration 2018**

June 12<sup>th</sup> 2018 will be the 1100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Aethelflaed – First Lady of Mercia, warrior Queen, mother, skilled politician, city planner and a woman without whom we possibly would not have an England as we know it.

History has been written largely by men and whilst most famous among her contemporaries her fame did not survive her. Aethelflaed has been claimed by historian Michael Wood to be the second most significant female figure in English history, and someone who should be a feminist icon. She is buried in Gloucester at St Oswald Priory, which was founded by her and her Husband Aethelred.

### **2018 #Aethelflaed festival in Gloucester**

To commemorate the 1100th anniversary of the death of Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians we are proposing a week long festival will be held in Gloucester, culminating on June 12 2018 with the unveiling of a new monument to this most important and influential woman. It coincides with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Women attaining the vote in 1918

The web site [AethelflaedRises.com](http://AethelflaedRises.com), and facebook page [facebook.com/QueenAethelflaed](https://facebook.com/QueenAethelflaed) were initially published in late 2014. The team at Marketing Gloucester are working up a plan with a number of partners including hopefully all the "Burghs". We are very happy to hear from anyone who would like to be involved and envisage that the History Festival in September could be an important part of the celebrations. Currently we have partners involved in the following, or who are investigating

- Large Statue of Aethelflaed (similar dimensions/position to Angel of the North)
- Re-enactment around the anniversary in June 2018 (Anglo Saxon/Viking re-enactors sourced)
- Play on Aethelflaed (possibly outdoors at St Oswalds)
- Further archaeological/DNA research
- New devoted Aethelflaed Website
- Partnership with the other towns/cities connected with Aethelflaed – focusing on Gloucester being the centre for celebrations
- Creation of temporary "Greek Theatre" with raised seating in the round using St Oswalds Priory as backdrop. This to be used for talks and performances
- Series of Talks on Aethelflaed
- Museum exhibition
- Schools education piece/competition
- Civic Trust walking tours
- Events also during National festival of Archaeology

Marketing Gloucester will be coordinating events with the other Cities, Towns and Burghs which have strong historical connections with Aethelflaed. We will be looking for contributions from (among others)

Hereford, Bridgnorth (912); Tamworth (913);Stafford (913); Eddisbury (914); Warwick (914); C  
hirbury (915); Runcorn (915). Leicester, Chester.

Marketing Gloucester have been discussing this with a number of parties who have a particular interest in Aethelflaed and have identified others that could be involved which include:

Andrew Armstrong	Gloucester History Festival
Caroline Heighway	Theatre Gloucestershire
Civic Trust	Richard Graham MP
Museums	Gloucester cathedral
Paul James	Tom Holland
Jarek Adams	Janina Ramirez
Strike a light	Bernard Cornwell
Jess Gordon	

### **Re-enactment around the anniversary in June 2018/St Oswald's "Greek" theatre**

We are currently investigating whether we can have an event at St Oswald's including re-enactment. The Priory and Cathedral would make a marvellous backdrop, similar to the Greek Theatre in Taormina and if we have covered tier seating with sound proofing behind it, it could make for a good event and present other opportunities for additional performances through the Summer. This would also provide a wonderful venue for talks including one which showcased St Oswald's

### **Further archaeological/DNA research**

Jason Smith has spoken to Reading University about the bones, which they hold, but they are not keen on spending the money as yet on doing the DNA tests, but we will keep pushing as a reinterment would make a great story. There is also an opportunity to complete the unfinished dig of the undercroft of St Oswald's priory, which potentially could hold Aethelflaed's remains.

### **Series of Talks on Aethelflaed/Museum Exhibition**

The Museum of Gloucester are planning an Anglo Saxon/Aethelflaed exhibition during 2018 and possibly put on some talks during this time, although it could be good to look to do a series of summer talks at St Oswald's