



Gloucester History Festival

5-20 September 2026



gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk



RICHMOND
VILLAGES

Part of Bupa

The Gloucester History Festival

Welcome



I'm thrilled to welcome you to this year's Festival where we'll be going on some extraordinary journeys into the distant past, as well as tackling the challenges of the present. We'll be celebrating the arrival of The Bayeux Tapestry with a trio of special events and, closer to home, Gloucester's new historic Walking Trail! With more than 600 listed buildings and outstanding Roman, Tudor and medieval remains, for me it's the perfect place to explore.

Prof Janina Ramirez
President of the
Gloucester History Festival

Join us for an unforgettable celebration of history in the heart of Gloucester. Discover inspiring talks, fascinating debates, exhibitions and family activities, many in Blackfriars' spectacular medieval Scriptorium where we shall be staging over 30 free events. We're especially delighted to offer free under 25 tickets for 20 talks this year ensuring that more people than ever can share the excitement of discovering and learning from the past together.

Andrew Pitt
Chair of the
Gloucester History Trust



Tony Robinson,
Caroline Quentin,
Dan Jones,
David Olusoga,
Natalie Haynes,
Michael Wood,
Nick Crane,
Samira Ahmed,
Katja Hoyer,
Paul Mason,
Penny Mordaunt,
Amy Jeffs

Join 150 top historians,
actors and broadcasters
speaking this year.

What's on

Saturday 5th-Sunday 20th September

Gloucester Day

Saturday 5th September

Celebrate the Gloucester Day Parade.

Heritage Open Days

Friday 11th-Sunday 13th September

Free entry to 100 magnificent historic buildings.

The Blackfriars Talks

Friday 11th-Sunday 20th September

150 top historians and broadcasters at Blackfriars Priory.

The Livestream Festival

Friday 11th-Sunday 20th September.

Every Festival event streamed worldwide.
Enjoy the Festival wherever you are.



Both livestream and in-person tickets are available



Visiting the Festival

Blackfriars Priory: A Jewel in Gloucester's Glorious Crown

Festival site open daily

Entry Free

It's hard to imagine a better place to bring history-lovers together than the magnificent surroundings of Blackfriars Priory. Founded in 1239, it's the most complete historic building of its type in the country and one of the best in Europe. And it lies just 5 minutes walk from Gloucester's historic Docks and magnificent Cathedral.

Is Blackfriars the most evocative and enchanting venue for a History Festival in the entire British Isles? We think so!



The Scriptorium Buttery **Open daily**

With its twinkling fairy lights, centuries-old stonework and café-style seating, the Scriptorium is home to 30 free events.

Blackfriars Festival Café **Open daily**

The much-loved sun-dappled courtyard hosts the Festival Café, serving hot and cold drinks and a mouthwatering selection of soups, sandwiches, homemade cakes and snacks.

Blackfriars Green **Open daily**

Visit Roman and Medieval encampments, enjoy Morris dancing, meet the Priory monks in person and hear medieval music all on the lawn in front of the Priory.

The Waterstones Festival Bookshop **Open daily**

Browse the Waterstones Festival Bookshop curated especially for history-lovers.

The Glorious History of Gloucester Rugby **Wednesday 9 September, Kingsholm Stadium 7-9pm £12**

Celebrate the start of a new season as stars of the men's and women's game join us at Kingsholm for a special evening exploring the remarkable history of the Cherry and Whites.

View the lineup and book tickets at gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk.



Gloucester Day

Saturday 5th September

Join us for a day of celebrations!

Gloucester Day commemorates the lifting of the Siege of Gloucester on 5 September 1643 with a day full of frivolity, parades, music, street stalls, entertainment and a Mock Mayor making ceremony with Town Crier Alan Myatt.

Celebrating the rich heritage of our historic city, expect colourful regalia, decorations, national costumes, banners and flags to feature. There'll be stalls in all the Gate streets and King's Square which also features cultural music and entertainment.



© Reunion

Events at Gloucester Day are free.

Mock Mayor of Barton's Parade

11.00am

Starting along Constitution Walk. This intentionally comic parade is filled with larger than life Gloucester characters, traditional entertainers, music and fun.

Thanksgiving Service

12.00 noon-12.30pm

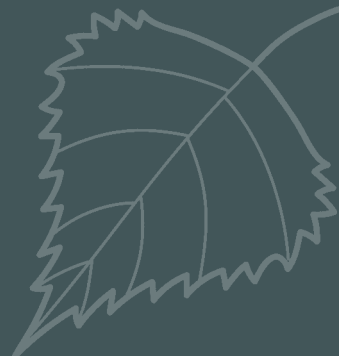
St Mary de Crypt

Everyone is invited to attend this free service.

Gloucester Day Parade

2.00pm Starting along Constitution Walk

The second parade of the day is a more formal affair – involving hundreds of participants led by the Right Worshipful Mayor of Gloucester. People young and old, march to show their pride for their city.



Friday 11th - Sunday 13th September Heritage Open Days

Free Event from The Civic Trust

A Duck Pond With No Ducks

Tony Conder

Wednesday
9th September

Gala Club 7.30pm
Entrance Free

In 2027 Gloucester Docks will be 200 years old. Many talks have traced the origin of the docks, but in this talk popular historian **Tony Conder** will be focusing on the story of the redevelopment of Gloucester Docks 1970 -2027. From 1970 Gloucester's docks have successfully transformed from commercial port to a visitor and residential quarter of the city. This is the story of that change and the parallel struggle to obtain a tall ship for the city.

Gloucester is opening its doors on Heritage Open Days from Friday 11th to Sunday 13th September with over 100 events!

Organised by the Civic Trust, celebrate Gloucester's history, architecture and culture by joining in the wide range of events. Make exciting new discoveries by visiting historic buildings usually closed to the public, or that charge admission, such as one of the finest examples of a Tudor Merchant's house in the country or by stepping aboard an unusual B & B housed in a lightship!

Join themed guided walks around the city and find out about the people such as a Roman Emperor or a miserly banker who have played their part in making Gloucester what it is today. Immerse yourself in free talks, musical and cultural events all linked to the local area.

Full programme: gloucestercivictrust.org

Booking Your Events

How to Book

Festival Venue:

Blackfriars Priory, Ladybellegate St.,
Gloucester GL1 2HN

Book tickets: gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk

Book by phone: 07847 138531

Book tickets in person at:

Museum of Gloucester, Brunswick Road,
Gloucester. Wednesday - Saturday 10am-4pm,
(closed Sunday - Tuesday).

Book signings:

are in the Waterstones Bookshop after events.

The Livestream Festival:

Enjoy the Festival from the comfort of home
as Britain's top historians and broadcasters
are live-streamed worldwide direct from
Blackfriars Priory!

Viewing links are sent out one hour before
event start time and you can view again until
25 October 2026.

All single livestream tickets are £7



Book a Festival Pass

Grab one of our great value festival passes. They always sell out quickly!

Day Pass: £50 available
Monday to Friday offers entry
to all 5 events that day.

Festival Pass: £400 offers in
person entry to all 51 Blackfriars
events, Festival lanyard and the
same reserved seat throughout
saving 20%.

Digital Festival Pass £70
offers livestream entry to the
full digital Blackfriars Talks
programme. View live or
anytime until 25th October.



Blackfriars Talks Friday 11th September

Fortress City: The Roman Walls of Gloucester

Andrew Armstrong 4-5pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



The Roman army established a fortress at Gloucester in the first century AD, creating a defensive line that shaped the city for centuries and still defines its streets today. In a brand-new illustrated talk, City Archaeologist **Andrew Armstrong** follows Gloucester's walls from their Roman origins through Saxon, Norman and medieval expansion to their defiant role during the Civil War siege of 1643.

Aethelstan: England's First King

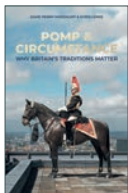
Michael Wood 6-7pm £14 / £7 Livestreamed



In 927, King Aethelstan conquered Viking York and secured the submission of Britain's rulers at Eamont Bridge, a crowning achievement that created the first united kingdom of England. As its 1,100th anniversary approaches, acclaimed historian and broadcaster **Michael Wood** explores Aethelstan's extraordinary life from birth to death. In a dazzling new talk, he offers fresh insights into England's forgotten founder king, reveals Gloucester's important place in his story and considers the challenges of writing an early medieval biography.

Pomp & Circumstance: Great British Traditions

Penny Mordaunt 8-9pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Penny Mordaunt's sword-carrying role at the Coronation of King Charles III became one of the ceremony's defining images. Now the former Leader of the House of Commons explores the history of Britain's greatest traditions. From the Coronation Service to royal weddings and funerals, the State Opening of Parliament to Remembrance Day, sporting rituals to local customs including Gloucestershire's cheese rolling competition, she considers how ceremony creates identity, continuity and belonging. Which traditions should be preserved and how must they evolve to remain meaningful?

Blackfriars Talks Saturday 12th September

Domesday: Travelling the England of the Norman Conquest

Max Adams 10-11am £12 / £7 Livestreamed



In 1085, just 19 years after the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror ordered the most astonishing survey medieval England had ever seen. Now bestselling historian **Max Adams** follows in the footsteps of the king's commissioners on an epic thousand-mile journey through the places and people recorded in Domesday Book. In a fascinating illustrated talk, he brings Norman England dramatically to life and asks what changed after 1066. From the conquest depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry to the kingdom measured in Domesday, discover how a new England emerged.

The Bayeux Tapestry: A Precious Cargo

Peter Ricketts, Jim Peters & Janina Ramirez 12-1pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



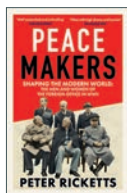
How do you move one of the world's greatest treasures across the Channel after almost a thousand years? Meet the people at the heart of the Bayeux Tapestry's top secret historic journey to Britain. Government Envoy for the Tapestry **Lord Peter Ricketts** navigated the diplomacy, leading British Museum Collections Manager **Jim Peters** helped ensure its safe handling and

medieval historian **Janina Ramirez** made a TV documentary on the process. They reveal for the first time the challenges and the extraordinary responsibility of transporting this precious cargo and each chooses one unforgettable detail to look out for in the Tapestry. Chaired by Bayeux expert, History Extra's **David Musgrove**.

In partnership with History Extra

Peace Makers: Why Diplomats Matter in War and Peace

Peter Ricketts 2-3pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Wars dominate the headlines, but diplomats often shape what happens next. Taking his new book *Peace Makers* as a starting point, former National Security Adviser and British Ambassador **Lord Peter Ricketts** uncovers the Foreign Office figures who forged wartime alliances between Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt and helped build the post-1945 order. From the Cold War and NATO to Trump, Putin, Iraq and ongoing tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, he reveals the reality behind the hidden work of diplomacy and why its role in today's dangerous world matters more than ever. Chaired by **Andrew Pitt**.

David Olusoga

In Conversation 4-5pm £15 / £7 Livestreamed



Join historian and broadcaster **David Olusoga** for an illuminating conversation exploring how Britain's past shapes its present. Known for landmark series such as BBC's *A House Through Time*, *Empire* and *Black and British*, he reflects on the stories we tell about history, the legacy of empire, and the power of uncovering forgotten narratives, as well as considering where we stand today. A BAFTA-winning filmmaker and bestselling author, he brings sharp insight, humanity and depth to this wide-ranging discussion.

From Boudicca to Joan of Arc: Women of Legend

Janina Ramirez, Elodie Harper & Samira Ahmed 6-7pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Boudicca, Æthelflæd and Joan of Arc became icons of courage, rebellion and national identity but who controlled the stories told about them? Bestselling historian **Janina Ramirez**, author of *Legenda* and novelist **Elodie Harper**, author of *Boudicca's Daughter* join Radio 4 Front Row presenter **Samira Ahmed** to strip away centuries of mythmaking. They explore how the images of some extraordinary women have been reshaped, weaponised and co-opted for political ends and ask: what survives of the real women beneath the legends?

The Beatles & The Sixties

Samira Ahmed, John Robb & Janina Ramirez 8-9pm £10 / £7 Livestreamed



From the opening chord and the screaming crowds to the irreverent humour, the Beatles did not simply soundtrack the 1960s, they seemed to capture its exhilarating new possibilities. Legendary music journalist **John Robb** and Front Row presenter **Samira Ahmed**, author of a new study of The Beatles' film *A Hard Day's Night*, explore how music and film can preserve a moment in history. Why did The Beatles matter so much, and what can their songs, image and dazzling first film tell us about a Britain transformed by youth, freedom and popular culture?

Chaired by **Janina Ramirez**.

Blackfriars Talks Sunday 13th September

Weimar: Life on the Edge of Catastrophe

Katja Hoyer 10-11am £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Weimar was a cradle of democracy, culture and radical new ideas yet it also became an early stronghold of fascism. Bestselling historian **Katja Hoyer** tells the story of the town and its people from 1919 to 1939, from artists and workers to politicians, victims and bystanders. Through their lives, she reveals how a society filled with hope and creativity moved towards dictatorship and catastrophe.

The Rise of Populism and the Right

John Sweeney & Katja Hoyer 12-1pm £12/ £7 Livestreamed



Across Europe, America and beyond, populist movements and authoritarian leaders are reshaping politics in ways that would once have seemed unimaginable. Award-winning Panorama journalist and foreign correspondent **John Sweeney** has reported from war zones worldwide fearlessly investigating dictators and warlords for 30 years. He joins bestselling historian of Germany **Katja Hoyer** to examine the roots of today's political upheaval across the globe and closer to home. From Weimar Germany and the Cold War to

Putin's Russia and Trump's America, they explore how democracies come under pressure and what history can teach us about defending them. Chaired by **Jo Durrant**.

Janina Ramirez

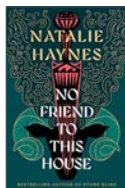
Art From the Dawn of Time 2-3pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Janina Ramirez has spent the past year on a top-secret project taking her to thirty countries and the very origins of storytelling art. From the world's oldest image in Indonesia to the printing-press revolution, China's Mogao Caves and India's Kailasa Temple to Versailles and Vienna, this is a once-in-a-lifetime journey through art. Join her for a Festival exclusive packed with fresh discoveries and remarkable insights.

Natalie Haynes

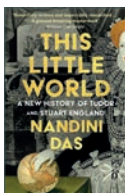
No Friend to This House 4-5pm £15 / £7 Livestreamed



Few writers bring the ancient world to life with as much wit and intelligence as **Natalie Haynes**. The comedian, broadcaster and presenter of BBC Radio 4's *Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics*, joins us for an electrifying stand-up show. She tells the story of the Medea myth: priestess, witch, daughter of a brutal king and the woman who saves Jason's life on his quest for the Golden Fleece, and pays for it.

The Tudors: This Little World

Nandini Das 6-7pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed

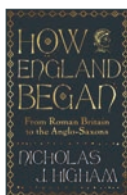


From the Battle of Bosworth to the Spanish Armada, we might think we know the Tudors. Yet prize-winning historian **Nandini Das** uncovers a remarkable age when England looked outwards to the wider world with unprecedented curiosity. Through tales of merchants, diplomats, sailors and spies she reveals a new Tudor society transformed by encounters across Europe, Asia and Africa. Richly illustrated and beautifully told, from Venetian glassmakers and African innkeepers to the Flemish artist who served four British monarchs, she offers a startling new perspective on Tudor England. 'A ground-breaking masterwork.' (William Dalrymple). Chaired by **Jo Durrant**.

Blackfriars Talks Monday 14th September

How the Anglo-Saxons Won Britain

Nicholas J Higham 12-1pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Why did Roman Britain disappear? And how did the Anglo-Saxons transform a shattered province into the foundations of England? Leading historian **Nicholas Higham** explores one of the greatest turning points in England's story. Following the collapse of Roman rule, new kingdoms emerged from centuries of upheaval, conflict and migration. In a compelling illustrated talk he uncovers the dramatic birth of Anglo-Saxon England and reveals why, in the end, the Romans were to blame.

Villages by the Sea: An Exploration of Britain's Coastal Heritage

Ben Robinson 2-3pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Britain's coastline is far more than the edge of our island, it is where some of our greatest stories began. Join Flying Archaeologist **Ben Robinson** star of BBC Two series Villages by the Sea, for a fascinating journey through our coastal past. From bustling medieval ports and mighty sea defences to ancient fortifications, shipbuilding, fishing communities and the scars left by great industries, discover how Britain's shores have shaped our history, our landscape and our national identity in a richly illustrated new talk.

The Cathedral Cloisters: Gloucester's Medieval Masterpiece

Janina Ramirez, James Clark, Rebecca Phillips & Chiz Harward

4-5pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



They've welcomed medieval monks, inspired architects, survived the Reformation and become famous around the world through Harry Potter and Wolf Hall, yet Gloucester Cathedral's magnificent cloisters tell an even more remarkable story. Join medieval historian **Janina Ramirez**, monastic expert **Prof James Clark**, Cathedral Archivist **Rebecca Phillips** and Cloister Project archaeologist **Chiz Harward** to explore one of Britain's greatest medieval spaces. Discover why these extraordinary 14th century cloisters transformed English architecture, how they were used by the Benedictine monks and how their current restoration will safeguard them for centuries to come.

History's Greatest Leaders: What Makes a Legend?

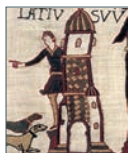
Mike Soutar 6-7pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



What separates an ordinary leader from one who changes history? Entrepreneur, broadcaster and The Apprentice judge **Mike Soutar** joins Janina Ramirez to explore the qualities that define history's greatest leaders. The author of Next Gen CEO brings his Apprentice experience and business acumen to examine figures including Elizabeth I, Winston Churchill, Joan of Arc and Æthelflæd, asking what today's leaders can still learn from them. Join him for an entertaining and thought-provoking event exploring ambition, courage, resilience and decision-making that shaped the world. *In partnership with History Extra*

The Buildings of the Bayeux Tapestry

Andrew Ziminski 8-9pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



The Bayeux Tapestry is famed for its battles and heroes but look more closely and another story emerges, one told in timber, flint and stone. Master stonemason and bestselling author of Church Going **Andrew Ziminski** takes you on a unique illustrated journey through the remarkable buildings woven into its scenes, from Bosham Church and Westminster Abbey to Mont Saint-Michel, mighty castles, humble peasant homes and village churches. Discover what their construction reveals about everyday life, warfare, craftsmanship and the dramatic transformation of England after 1066.



Blackfriars Talks Tuesday 15th September

Emily Palmerston: The Regency Countess Who Shaped an Age

Jehanne Wake, Katie Wake & Elizabeth Norton 12-1pm £10 / £7 Livestreamed



Everyone knows of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire but few have heard of Emily, Viscountess Palmerston. The sister of Queen Victoria's first Prime Minister Lord Melbourne and the wife of another, Lord Palmerston, she stood at the heart of British politics for decades, quietly shaping governments, speeches and strategy. Historians **Jehanne** and **Katie Wake** uncover the extraordinary woman whose political genius has been overlooked for too long. Set against a world of glamour, royal scandal and political intrigue, from Queen Caroline's bitter struggle with King George IV to the ruthless double standards faced by women, they join **Elizabeth Norton** to reveal how Emily Palmerston changed the course of British history.

Lady Jane Grey: Crown of Blood

Nicola Tallis 2-3pm £12/ £7 Livestreamed



Executed in 1554 at just seventeen, Lady Jane Grey has long been remembered as the tragic Nine Days Queen, manipulated by ambitious men and sacrificed in a ruthless struggle for the Tudor throne. But is that the whole story? Acclaimed historian **Nicola Tallis** uncovers a remarkable young woman of formidable intellect, deep religious conviction and extraordinary courage, revealing the determined Protestant who chose principle over survival. She also explores the enduring legend that Jane was proclaimed queen at Gloucester's New Inn, exploring how the story arose and why it survived for almost five centuries.

Pagan Britain: Ancient Sacred Landscapes

Ronald Hutton 4-5pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Long before churches and cathedrals dominated the landscape, Britain was a land of sacred springs, ritual monuments and mysterious places of worship. Britain's foremost authority on pagan religion, **Ronald Hutton** takes us on an enthralling illustrated journey through the beliefs and landscapes of prehistoric and Roman Britain. From Stonehenge, Avebury and Seahenge to the West's own ancient ritual sites, he explores what archaeology can tell us about our pagan ancestors, separating enduring myths from remarkable discoveries to reveal a lost spiritual world that echoes through today's landscape.

King Arthur: Life and Legend

Amy Jeffs 6-7pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Camelot, Excalibur, Merlin and the quest for the Holy Grail have inspired writers and artists for centuries. But where does history end and legend begin? Bestselling author and illustrator **Amy Jeffs** takes us on a richly illustrated journey through the landscapes that shaped the Arthurian story, from Tintagel and Cadbury Castle to Glastonbury and the Welsh borders. She explores the archaeology, medieval chronicles, myths and folklore behind Britain's greatest legend, revealing why the story of King Arthur continues to enchant every generation.

Witchland: Witch Hunting in 17th Century Britain

Marion Gibson

8-9pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Why did ordinary people come to believe their neighbours were witches? And what does that tell us about Britain's past? One of Britain's great historians of witchcraft, **Marion Gibson** explores the extraordinary people and places behind England's witch trials of the 1640s, a nationwide witch-hunt fuelled by the extremism of the English Civil War and providing a playbook for the Salem Witch Trials a few decades later. From notorious prosecutions to the forgotten stories of accused witches, she uncovers a landscape shaped by fear, superstition, religion and belief, revealing how the echoes of the witch trials still resonate today.

Blackfriars Talks Wednesday 16th September

The Gloucester Citizen at 150

Ian Mean 12-1pm £10 / £7 Livestreamed



For 150 years, The Gloucester Citizen chronicled the triumphs, tragedies and everyday lives of Gloucestershire's people. But its story stretches right back to the founding of The Gloucester Journal in 1722, one of Britain's oldest provincial newspapers. Legendary Citizen and Western Daily Press Editor **Ian Mean** explores its unique publishing history, breaking the big stories and recording everything, from the opening of Gloucester Docks and Victorian cheese rolling to advertisements for coachmen, milkmen and machinists. This unique event celebrates local journalism's enduring role and asks what the future holds for trusted news in the digital age.

The SAS Great Train Raid

Damien Lewis 2-3pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



A daring SAS mission, a heavily guarded Nazi train and an extraordinary story of courage, deception and survival. **Damien Lewis**, author of the bestselling SAS Great Escapes, brings to life one of the Second World War's most astonishing special operations in this gripping illustrated talk. Drawing on newly uncovered accounts and eyewitness testimony, he recreates an incredible mission behind enemy lines, revealing the courage of the men who risked everything to strike a devastating blow against the Third Reich.

The DNA of History: The Secrets Hidden in Our Genes

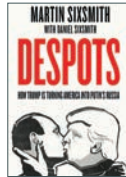
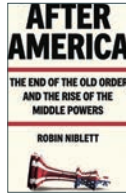
Turi King 4-5pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Join the scientist who identified the remains of Richard III for a lively mythbusting tour of modern genetics unpacking how DNA solves crimes, rewrites history and shapes our lives. Geneticist **Turi King** explores remarkable discoveries revealing how advances in genetic science are revolutionising our understanding of the past. From the O J Simpson trial to mistaken dinosaur DNA, from Dolly the sheep to Richard III, she brings genetics to life with fascinating examples that reveal what DNA can and can't tell us about who we are. 'She combines fascinating history and science with brilliant storytelling' (Alice Roberts). Chaired by **Jo Durrant**.

Navigating a Dangerous World

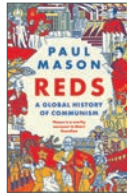
Robin Niblett & Martin Sixsmith 6-7pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



The balance of global power is shifting faster than at any time since the end of the Cold War. Former Chatham House Director and top foreign policy expert **Sir Robin Niblett** joins acclaimed historian and former BBC Moscow correspondent **Martin Sixsmith** to explore the forces reshaping our world. With growing rivalry between America and China, Russia's renewed aggression, instability in the Middle East, the strategic importance of the Arctic and Greenland, and the changing role of Europe, we live in an increasingly uncertain age. An illuminating and essential discussion of the geopolitical forces that will define the decades ahead. In conversation with History Festival chair **Andrew Pitt**.

Reds: How Communism Shaped the World

Paul Mason 8-9pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed

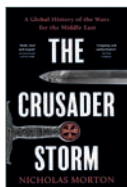


For much of the 20th century, Communism shaped revolutions, inspired millions and transformed the lives of billions. But why did its ideas prove so powerful and what remains of them today? Journalist, author and former BBC Newsnight Economics Editor **Paul Mason** explores the extraordinary history of one of the world's most influential political movements in this compelling illustrated talk. From Marx and Lenin to the Space Race, the Cold War and beyond, he examines Communism's remarkable legacy and asks what lessons it still holds for the 21st century.

Blackfriars Talks Thursday 17th September

The Crusader Storm: How the Crusades Changed the Medieval World

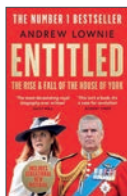
Nicholas Morton 12-1pm £10 / £7 Livestreamed



From the foundation of the Crusader States in 1097 to Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem a century later, the medieval Middle East was transformed by war, trade, alliances and ambition. Acclaimed historian **Nicholas Morton** brings this dramatic history to life through a vivid cast of characters: a Byzantine renegade, a crusader princess, a Turkish matriarch, a young Arab nobleman, a Syriac archbishop, Saladin's leading commander and Egypt's vizier. Their intertwined stories reveal a dynamic world in which weapons and ideas crossed borders, reshaping societies across Europe and beyond. Join him to discover how these epic campaigns changed East and West forever.

Entitled: The Rise & Fall of The House of York

Andrew Lownie 2-3pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Bestselling royal biographer **Andrew Lownie** lifts the lid on the extraordinary story behind *Entitled*, the book that exposed the lives of Prince Andrew and Sarah, Duchess of York. He reveals the years of research, legal battles and determined investigation required to uncover the truth, and the obstacles placed in his way by the House of Windsor. From Mountbatten to modern royalty, Lownie reflects on the challenges of researching powerful figures and explains why exposing the truth still matters in an age of secrecy and spin. Chaired by **Jo Durrant**.

Edward VIII & Wallis Simpson: Love, Duty and Abdication

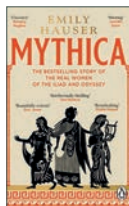
Anne Sebba & Andrew Lownie 4-5pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Ninety years after the abdication crisis shook the monarchy, Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson continue to fascinate. Leading royal historians **Anne Sebba** (*That Woman*) and **Andrew Lownie** (*Traitor King*) examine the latest discoveries about the abdication, the truth behind the allegations of Nazi collaboration, the real role of Wallis Simpson in the crisis, and how the consequences still echo through the Royal Family today. Chaired by **Jackson van Uden**.

Mythica: The Women Behind the Greek Myths

Emily Hauser 6-7pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Helen of Troy, Penelope, Cassandra and Aphrodite have inspired storytellers for thousands of years. But who were the women behind the myths? Bestselling classicist **Emily Hauser** explores the real lives that inspired the greatest legends of Ancient Greece digging into the history behind Homer's epic poems. As Christopher Nolan's film *The Odyssey* sails onto movie screens, this richly illustrated talk uncovers the history, archaeology and enduring power of the women whose stories helped shape Western civilisation.

The Secret History of Britain's Footpaths

Nicholas Crane 8-9pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed

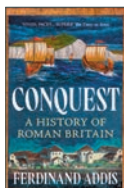


For centuries Britain's footpaths have carried pilgrims, traders, soldiers and explorers across some of our most spectacular landscapes. Broadcaster, geographer and former presenter of BBC Two's *Coast*, **Nicholas Crane** takes us on a beautifully illustrated journey along the ancient routes that helped shape our history, from Roman roads and Hadrian's Wall to mountain tracks, long-distance trails and the paths of the River Severn. In a talk created especially for the Festival, he reveals a millennium of stories hidden beneath our feet. 'Absorbing and exhilarating...this book will literally expand your horizons' (Michael Palin).

Blackfriars Talks Friday 18th September

Conquest: How Rome Seized Britain

Ferdinand Addis 12-1pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



In 55 BC Julius Caesar launched Rome's first assault on Britain. Nearly a century later Emperor Claudius returned with an army determined to conquer. In a compelling illustrated talk, acclaimed historian **Ferdinand Addis** brings the epic, brutal story of Roman Britain vividly to life, from invasion and fierce resistance to Boudicca's revolt, Agricola's northern campaigns and the building of Hadrian's Wall. Discover how conquest transformed Britain and why Rome's extraordinary legacy survived long after the legions had gone.

Who Was to Blame for the Wars of the Roses?

Matthew Lewis, Nathen Amin & Nicola Tallis 2-3pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



The Wars of the Roses tore England apart, as cousin fought cousin and rival dynasties battled for the crown. But what caused decades of bloodshed and who should carry the blame? Three of Britain's leading historians, History Hit presenter **Matthew Lewis** and Tudor experts **Nathen Amin** and **Nicola Tallis**, go head-to-head in a lively debate over the kings, queens and powerbrokers who plunged England into civil war. Expect passionate arguments, clashing interpretations and the chance to decide whose case finally wins the day.

Henry VIII: The Last Years

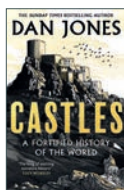
Andrew Johnston & Joanne Paul 4-5pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



What really happened during the final, dangerous years of Henry VIII's reign? Tudor historians **Andrew Johnston** and **Joanne Paul** explore a court scarred by the break with Rome, the destruction of the monasteries and the execution of Thomas More. As Henry's health failed, Catherine Parr, Thomas Cranmer, the Howards and the Seymours struggled for influence, while royal secretary William Paget drafted the King's will and helped shape the succession. Discover the deadly power politics that determined how Tudor England would survive Henry's death.

Castles: A Fortified History of the World

Dan Jones 6-7pm £15 / £7 Livestreamed



From ancient strongholds to medieval fortresses, castles have shaped warfare, politics and power for more than three thousand years. Bestselling historian and television broadcaster **Dan Jones** takes us on a spectacular illustrated journey through some of the world's most remarkable fortified places. Drawing on his new book, he explores why castles were built, how they were attacked and defended, and what they reveal about the societies that created them. Discover the extraordinary stories behind the walls that changed history.

Adventures in Glorious Gloucestershire: Myths and Legends

Mark Cummings, Candia McKormack, Janina Ramirez & Steve Knibbs

8-9pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Join us for a free glass of Gloucestershire cider in the courtyard from 30 minutes before the event.

From Coopers Hill cheese rolling to St Anthony's Well and May Hill Morris dancing to Sabrina, Goddess of the Severn, Gloucestershire is a land of myth, legend and tradition. Writer, traveller and former BBC broadcaster **Mark Cummings** leads a joyful journey through the county's strangest stories, ancient traditions and hidden places. Former Cotswold Life Editor **Candia McKormack**, BBC West Gloucestershire reporter **Steve Knibbs** and historian and broadcaster **Janina Ramirez** join the fun. Put your knowledge to the test at the end of this event and win a round of Double Gloucester cheese! Chaired by BBC broadcaster **Vernon Harwood**.

Blackfriars Talks Saturday 19th September

Alexander: God, King, Man

Edmund Richardson 10-11am £12 / £7 Livestreamed



At twenty, Alexander the Great inherited a divided kingdom and an unruly army. By thirty-two he had conquered the Persian Empire and become a living god. Acclaimed historian **Edmund Richardson** sweeps us from the deserts of Egypt to the mountains of Afghanistan in a vivid illustrated talk. Discover the brilliant commander, ruthless conqueror and vulnerable young man behind one of history's greatest legends and the extraordinary ambition that carried him to the edge of the known world.

Bringing the World to Britain: Georgian and Victorian Architecture

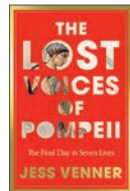
Daniel Wilson 12-1pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



With his Great British Architecture instagram **Daniel Wilson** brings Britain's buildings brilliantly to life combining infectious enthusiasm, vivid storytelling and spectacular images. In this lavishly illustrated talk, he explores how Georgian and Victorian architects drew inspiration from across the globe, creating buildings of extraordinary imagination and variety. Through six remarkable examples, including Gloucestershire's exotic Sezincote House, discover hidden histories, surprising influences and the extravagant eclecticism that transformed Britain's architectural landscape.

The Lost Voices of Pompeii

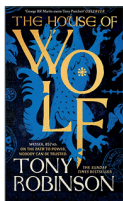
Jess Venner 2-3pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



We know how Pompeii's people died but how did they live? Sunday Times bestselling historian and archaeologist **Jess Venner** recreates the city's final 24 hours through seven real inhabitants, from a wealthy fish-sauce merchant and successful businesswoman to a tavern keeper, priest and enslaved man. Drawing on the latest archaeological discoveries, she restores the voices of a bustling, diverse community moments before Vesuvius erupted, revealing ancient lives filled with work, worship, ambition, love and survival.

Tony Robinson

Anglo-Saxon England: The Making of a Kingdom 4-5pm £15 / £7 Livestreamed



Anglo-Saxon England was forged amid dynastic feuds, Viking attacks and a struggle to create a united kingdom. **Tony Robinson**, star of *Blackadder* and presenter of *Time Team*, reveals the turbulent 9th century world of King Æthelwulf and his sons, including the future Alfred the Great. Moving from royal courts and monasteries to battlefields and Rome, he reveals an age of ambition, betrayal, faith and warfare and why these dramatic decades became a decisive turning point in the making of England explored in his book *The House of the Wolf*. Chaired by **Janina Ramirez**.

Adventures in Poland

Waldemar Januszczak & Janina Ramirez 6-7pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Waldemar Januszczak and **Janina Ramirez** share the story of their road trip through Poland's rich history, fabulous art and dramatic landscapes. Travelling in a classic 1970s Polish Fiat, they explore strange customs, dark histories, forgotten heroes and dazzling film stars for their latest TV series revealing a country larger, more diverse and more fascinating than we could imagine. Join them to discover the Poland we ought to know.

Jung Chang

Fly, Wild Swans 8-9pm £15 / £7 Livestreamed



Jung Chang's worldwide bestseller *Wild Swans* was both an epic personal history of 'three daughters of China' - Jung, her mother and grandmother - and a history of China itself undergoing seismic change. Her bestselling sequel *Fly, Wild Swans* brings the story up to date in a deeply moving and unforgettable account as China faces another watershed moment poised between capitalism and communism. Join her as she discusses her life and writing in a rare event.

Blackfriars Talks Sunday 20th September

Dad's Army: The Glorious True Story of the Home Guard

Sinclair McKay 10-11am £12 / £7 Livestreamed



They may be remembered as a band of charming amateurs, but Britain's Home Guard played a serious and courageous role in defending the nation. Sunday Times bestselling historian **Sinclair McKay** draws on original research for his new book to uncover the remarkable men and women behind the television legend. From improvised weapons to secret operations, he reveals how Dad's Army became a formidable fighting force and shares some of the most exciting and unusual adventures of Gloucestershire's Home Guard, with fascinating illustrations.

Caroline Quentin

In Conversation 12-1pm £15 / £7 Livestreamed



From Men Behaving Badly and Jonathan Creek to Restoration Home and A Passage Through India, **Caroline Quentin** has delighted television audiences for decades. She's also a passionate gardener, artist and lifelong lover of history and the natural world. In a frank and hugely enjoyable event, she lifts the lid on her life as an actor, her love of historic buildings and reveals her connection to nature exploring the landscape, wildlife and changing seasons of Devon and Somerset.

The Black Death: A Medieval World in Ruins

Thomas Asbridge 2-3pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



In the 14th century, plague swept across Europe, Asia and North Africa with terrifying speed, killing millions and tearing apart the medieval world. Bestselling historian **Thomas Asbridge** tells this vast human story through the Christians, Muslims and Jews caught in its path. From cities overwhelmed by death to acts of courage, cruelty and compassion, he reveals how the Black Death shattered societies, weakened empires and transformed everyday life and why its haunting story still grips us today.

Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age

Andrew Graham-Dixon 4-5pm 12-1pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Why did Vermeer paint his mysterious pictures and what do they really mean? BBC broadcaster and former chief art critic of The Independent and The Sunday Telegraph, **Andrew Graham-Dixon** offers bold new answers in a lavishly illustrated talk. Journey into Delft and the Dutch Golden Age as he uncovers Vermeer's hidden life, radical religious connections, peace activism and influential female patrons. From Girl with a Pearl Earring to his luminous interiors, discover an artist, a life and a body of work transformed by remarkable new evidence.

The Secret Story of the Vikings: God's Hammer

Thomas Williams 6-7pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



We picture Vikings as pagan raiders and Crusaders as Christian knights but the truth is far more surprising. The Vikings converted, adopted the cross and launched holy wars of their own. **Thomas Williams**, bestselling author of Viking Britain, uncovers the thrilling forgotten story of the Viking Crusades, where Norse warfare and tradition, Christian faith and medieval empire collided. From pagan menace to armed pilgrimage, join him for a gripping and entertaining new talk exploring how the Vikings helped reshape Europe.

Chaired by **Jackson van Uden**.

Radiohead Meets Portishead

Adrian Utleý, Philip Selway & Janina Ramirez 8-10pm £12 / £7 Livestreamed



Adrian Utleý of Portishead and **Philip Selway** of Radiohead are stars of two of the nineties biggest British bands. Radiohead's OK Computer rewired alternative rock, while Portishead put Bristol's dark, cinematic trip-hop on the world stage. In conversation with **Janina Ramirez**, they revisit the bands, the music and the atmosphere that defined an era before joining forces for a unique live set guaranteed to shake the rafters.

Step into the Scriptorium Buttery, part of Britain's oldest surviving library, for free bite-sized talks, uplifting music, spellbinding storytelling and delicious food history. Drop in for an event or simply to enjoy a coffee, visit the free Little Library and soak up the calm of this ancient building.

**Open daily from
11am - 9pm**



Free Events in The Scriptorium Buttery

Events are free – no booking needed. Just drop in and let history surprise you!

Saturday **12th** September & Sunday **13th** September

Voices Gloucester at the History Festival

Voices Gloucester will be sharing a range of talks, exhibitions and experiences in the Scriptorium - see the website for details.

Monday **14th** September

Travel Through British History

1.15-1.45pm

Travel back through the centuries as **Philippa Lacey** records a live episode of the British History with Philippa podcast. Meet the remarkable people, dramatic events and unexpected stories that shaped Britain in an entertaining journey through the past.

Our Heritage of Song

3.15-3.45pm

Robin Burton explores how traditional songs preserved the voices and experiences of ordinary people. Discover the stories carried through generations in words and melodies and meet the collectors who rescued England's musical heritage from being lost forever.

Operation Pimento: An Extraordinary Wartime Escape

5.15-5.45pm



Adam Hart tells the gripping true story of his great-grandfather Frank Griffiths and an extraordinary Second World War escape. Drawing on family papers and historical research, he reveals remarkable courage, ingenuity and survival and how one family story inspired his first book.



Robin Burton

Jo Durrant's Beautiful Universe: Live

7.15-7.45pm

Janina Ramirez joins the line-up for a special live History Festival edition of the award-winning podcast **Jo Durrant's Beautiful Universe**. See the website for all the details.

View the full programme: gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk

Tuesday 15th September

Dressing the Georgian Lady

1.15-1.45pm

Discover how shifts, stays, pockets and panniers created the fashionable silhouette of a high-society Georgian woman around 1770. **Angela Rendell** explains each hidden layer before dressing a live model in a carefully researched silk Polonaise gown made by the speaker herself.



Sophie Gaudier-Brzeska: A Life Reclaimed

3.15-3.45pm

Jeff Walshe uncovers the extraordinary life of Polish writer Sophie Gaudier-Brzeska, her relationship with sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and her Gloucestershire years in Wotton-under-Edge. Discover her connections with Jim Ede and the campaign to restore her neglected legacy. *In partnership with Wotton-under-Edge Heritage Centre*

Ypotryll: Music of the Middle Ages

7.15-7.50pm

Enter the sound world of the Middle Ages as **Ypotryll** perform secular music from 1200 to 1500. Voices combine with harp, dulcimer, psaltery, vielle, recorder and other period instruments in an atmospheric recreation of medieval music.

Wednesday 16th September

Lost Churches of Gloucester:

Karen Davidson

1.15-1.45pm

Senior Archivist **Karen Davidson** explores Gloucester's lost churches, drawing on surviving documents and images to uncover buildings that have vanished from the city. Discover what the archives can reveal about these forgotten landmarks and their place in Gloucester's history. *In partnership with Gloucestershire Heritage Hub*

Gloucester's Forgotten Founding Father: Button Gwinnett

3.15-3.45pm

Meet Gloucester-born Button Gwinnett as history students at the University of Gloucestershire take a closer look at the controversial life and legacy of the elusive signatory of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. Chaired by **Christian O'Connell**.

Chartism in Gloucestershire

5.15-5.45pm

History students at the University of Gloucestershire examine the fascinating story of the Chartist movement by looking at the legacy of the settlements at Snig's End and Lowbands, and the role of local Gloucestershire chartists. Chaired by **Christian O'Connell**.

Visit fascinating exhibitions about Chartism in Gloucestershire & The Controversial Legacy of Button Gwinnett in the scriptorium produced by the Cotswold Centre of History & Heritage.



Lassington Oak: Fifty Years of Morris 7-7.45pm

Celebrate fifty years of Lassington Oak Morris with stories, music and dance. Discover the history of their dances, costumes and traditions, learn some favourite steps and enjoy a glimpse behind the scenes before watching an outdoor Morris dance in front of Blackfriars.

Thursday 17th September

History with Jackson

The Graces: Women of the Restoration Court

1.15-1.45pm

Breeze Barrington introduces the remarkable women at the heart of the Restoration court. Discover Maria of Modena and the women around her whose creativity, ambition and influence have too often been overlooked by history. Interviewed by Jackson van Uden.





Kith and Kin: An Anglo-Saxon Woman Speaks

5.15-5.55pm

Leela Bunce brings ninth-century Wessex vividly to life through the voice of an ordinary Anglo-Saxon woman. Blending Modern and Old English with humour, music and powerful storytelling, *Kith and Kin* reveals the hardships, loyalties and hopes of a turbulent age.



Music from Ukraine

7.15-7.55pm

Odesa-born violinist **Tetiana Hnilytska** brings the music of Ukraine to the Scriptorium. Formerly a member of the Odesa Philharmonic until the invasion forced her to leave, she has played for the Hans Zimmer Orchestra and toured all over the world. She performs a programme of Ukrainian music together with other classics.

Explore the King's Bastion Tour

10.30am - 11am & 11.10-11.40am Tickets £8

Two special half-hour tours offer a rare chance to climb down under the streets of Gloucester to see the extraordinary King's Bastion for yourself. Numbers are limited so book early and tickets must be reserved in advance on the Festival website.

With thanks to the Museum of Gloucester and the Civic Trust

Hear The King's Bastion Story

1.15-1.45pm

Join City Archaeologist **Andrew Armstrong** in the scriptorium to hear the story of Gloucester's King's Bastion, where Roman walls and later defences survive beneath the modern city. Discover how this hidden structure protected Gloucester across centuries. His talk is free and no booking is needed.



Members' Tea with Janina Ramirez

3.15-3.45pm Members Only

Join Festival President **Janina Ramirez** for tea, cake and excellent conversation! Meet fellow Festival members, share your views and hear Janina share exciting plans for the future. Book your free tickets on the Festival website.

History Rage Live

5-5.30pm

What's the one historical 'fact' you really wish everyone would just stop believing? Historian **Nathen Amin** joins host **Paul Bavill** for a special live recording of the **History Rage** podcast



Mother's Ruin: A History of Gin

6.30-7.30pm Tickets £15 to include a selection of 4 gins or alcohol free botanicals

Gin expert **Andy Cole** uncovers gin's colourful journey from medicinal spirit to eighteenth-century craze and British favourite. Discover why it became notorious as 'Mother's Ruin', how the Gin Craze transformed society and how changing laws and fashions have reshaped its reputation. All whilst enjoying a guided tasting of a delicious selection of gins or alcohol-free botanicals.



The Romans Return to Gloucester!

The Ermine Street Guard Encampment and Display

10am-4pm

Explore an authentic Roman encampment created by one of Britain's leading Roman military re-enactment societies. Discover armour, weapons and tents as the Guards bring the discipline, skills and everyday life of the first-century Roman army vividly to life.

Meet the Roman Guard

11.15-11.45am

Meet the Ermine Street Guard and discover the weapons and armour of Rome's soldiers. Find out how legionaries trained, fought and defended themselves before seeing some Roman swordsmanship,

Roman Life Behind the Armour

1.15-1.45pm

Go behind the armour to discover what daily life was really like for a Roman soldier. Explore training, camp routines, food and equipment with the Ermine St Guard

Scrolling Back Through Time

3.15-3.45pm

History has gone viral! **Dr Amy Boyington** (@history_with_amy) with over 3 million followers and **Han Parker** (@historical_han) with almost 400,000 reveal how social media is revolutionising storytelling, smashing barriers and inspiring vast new audiences to explore the past. Chaired by **Janina Ramirez**.



Chocolate Night: A Delicious Journey Through History

5-6.30pm Tickets £15 including a selection of craft chocolates



Unwrap chocolate's irresistible history as food historian **Sam Bilton** follows cacao from the ancient Americas to European courts and fashionable chocolate houses in a compelling new talk. **Kathryn Laverack** of Cocoa Encounters then leads a delicious guided tasting of carefully selected chocolates.



Flick: The Story of Female Pleasure
8-9pm Saturday 19th September FREE



From ancient goddesses to the contraceptive pill, women's pleasure has been celebrated, controlled and enjoyed throughout history. Historian Kate Lister joins Janina Ramirez for a frank, funny and revealing journey through changing attitudes to female sexuality.

Sunday 20th September

Meet the Friars of Blackfriars

Founded around 1239, Gloucester Blackfriars is one of England's best-preserved Dominican friaries. Meet Brother Thomas and Sister Hild throughout the day as they recreate its medieval devotions, community life and final years before Henry VIII's religious changes ended the friary.

Life as a Dominican Friar

11.15-11.45am

Discover the daily life of a Dominican friar at medieval Blackfriars. Brother Thomas and Sister Hild explore prayer, preaching, study, discipline and the rhythm of the religious day before inviting the audience to join one of the community's devotions.

The Founding of Blackfriars

1.15-1.45pm

Hear how Gloucester Blackfriars was established around 1239 with royal support and became an important centre of Dominican preaching, learning and worship. Discover the people, purpose and daily devotions of the thriving community at the heart of medieval Gloucester.

The Friars Leave Blackfriars!

3.15-3.45pm

Henry VIII's religious revolution brought centuries of Dominican life at Gloucester Blackfriars to an end. Brother Thomas and Sister Hild recount the Dissolution, departure of the Friars and the building's remarkable afterlife before offering what may be their final devotions at Blackfriars Priory.



Medieval Music from Bygonz

Bygonz fill the Blackfriars courtyard with medieval music between today's events. Meet musicians **Rob and Gillian Guest** and find out the history of the instruments they play.

36

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”

Professor Janina Ramirez,
Festival President



Find out more: www.gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk

Free History Festival Tickets for Schools

Are you a student or teacher at a Gloucestershire school? You can now book free tickets for 20 Festival events as part of our School Access Scheme. Visit the Festival website to find out more.



Thank You

Thank you to everyone who has helped make this year's Gloucester History Festival a success. Particular thanks to Andrew Pitt whose especially generous financial and strategic support has again been integral to our success. Our continued warmest thanks to our Festival founder and former chair Richard Graham. And a special thank you to English Heritage for allowing the Festival to take place at Blackfriars Priory.



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9. **Blackfriars Priory
Gloucester History
Festival**
10. Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum
11. Mariners Church
12. National Waterways Museum
13. Llanthony Secunda Priory
14. Museum of Gloucester
15. Eastgate Chamber
16. Gloucester Guildhall
17. The Bandstand Gloucester Park
18. Motala & Sons



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Festival venue:

Blackfriars Priory, Ladybellegate Street, Gloucester GL1 2HN



24 hour parking is immediately opposite Blackfriars Priory. The Longsmith Street Car Park is 2 minutes walk away. Gloucester Docks Car Parks are 10 minutes by foot.



Train and Bus



Blackfriars Priory is 10 minutes walk from Gloucester bus station and Gloucester railway station through the historic city centre and Gate Streets.