



# Gloucester History Festival

12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> April 2024

## Spring Weekend



[gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk](http://gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk)

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EXTRA

**I'm so thrilled that the  
Spring Weekend is back!**

Our new Spring programme has been a real labour of love and I can't wait to welcome you to Blackfriars Priory this April. Routes and Rebels is our theme and some of the nation's most brilliant historians, broadcasters and actors take us on a journey across the planet and deep into ancient history.

So here's to beautiful buildings, inspiring speakers, shedding our winter layers and blossoming into a history-lovers Spring!

Dr Janina Ramirez  
President of the  
Gloucester History Festival

Welcome to the  
Gloucester History Festival

# Spring Weekend 2024



History comes alive again with the return of our 2024 Spring Weekend. It comes as our bestselling autumn History Festival confirmed that interest in history past and present has risen with modern uncertainty and conflict, all with roots in the past. This year we criss-cross the globe without forgetting history under our feet here in Gloucester.

So do see the range of talks and book online at **[gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk](https://gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk)** and please 'save the dates' for this year's Gloucester History Festival 7th-22nd September. Meanwhile our King's Talks continue (see page 10). So come and discover history near and far with us this Spring.

*Richard Graham*

Richard Graham CMG  
Chair of the Gloucester History Trust

# Visiting the Spring Weekend

Jeremy Bowen, Sathnam Sanghera, Peter Frankopan, Michael Wood, Dom Joly, Philippa Langley, Suzannah Lipscomb, Stephen McGann and Will Hutton are just some of Britain's top historians, broadcasters and authors at this year's Spring Weekend. Join them for a feast of compelling events in the magical setting of Blackfriars Priory, home of Britain's oldest surviving library.

## How to Book

Book tickets:

[gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk](http://gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk)

Bookings by phone: 07834 406228

Book in person at: Museum of Gloucester, Brunswick Road, Gloucester. Tuesday - Saturday 10am-4pm, Sunday 11am-3pm  
Closed on Mondays.

There is a Box Office on site but we recommend booking ahead to avoid disappointment.

Reservable seating: you can now choose and book specific seats when you book online, via phone or in person.

Book signings are organised by Waterstones and take place after each event.



**The Spring Pass** Quench your curiosity and enjoy one of our great value festival passes. Limited numbers are available and often sell out quickly.

**Spring Pass: £155** offering entry to all 17 Spring Weekend events saving 20%.

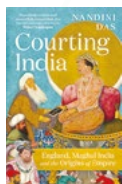
Visit: [gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk](http://gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk)



# Blackfriars Talks Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April

## Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire

Nandini Das 12-1pm £10



Prize-winning Oxford historian **Nandini Das** explores the British arrival in India in the early 17th century through the story of Thomas Roe, James I's first Ambassador to the Mughal Empire. When Roe landed in India in 1616 he swapped the chaotic Jacobean Court for the cultured heart of one of the richest empires in the world. During his four years in India he witnessed palace intrigue and scandal. Nandini Das tells Roe's thrilling story exploring the sights and sounds of Jacobean London and Imperial India, taking us right to the heart of the dazzling Mughal Empire. Chaired by **Jo Durrant**.

## The Making of the Modern Middle East

Jeremy Bowen 2-3pm £15



**Jeremy Bowen**, the BBC's International Editor, has been covering the Middle East since 1989 and is uniquely placed to explain its complex past and trouble present. From countries as diverse as Erdogan's Turkey, Assad's Syria and Netanyahu's Israel, he takes us on a journey across the Middle East and through its history meeting ordinary men and women on the front line, and their leaders, whether brutal or benign. He offers a gripping and invaluable guide to the modern Middle East and what its future might hold.

## NATO at 75: Does It Still Matter?

Ben Wallace & General Sir Tim Radford 4-5pm £12



Former Defence Secretary **Rt Hon Ben Wallace** and former NATO Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe **General Sir Tim Radford** have been at the heart of NATO's political and military decision-making when peace in Europe has broken down, the Middle East looks more precarious than ever and the whole world seems a lot more fragile. They join **Richard Graham**, Chair of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, to explore how NATO is evolving. While it has two new members - Finland and Sweden - and looks more united, will current and future challenges prove its making or undoing?

## In the Footsteps of Du Fu: China's Greatest Poet

**Michael Wood** 6-7.15pm £14



Acclaimed historian and filmmaker

**Michael Wood**, whose documentaries and books include the classic *In Search of the Dark Ages* and *The Story of China*, explores the life and times of one of the world's greatest poets, Du Fu. Born in the tumultuous 8th century, Du Fu's remarkable life opens a fascinating window onto an ancient Chinese world. In

an epic journey across China in the poet's footsteps, Michael reveals an extraordinary era of war, famine and upheaval and shares fascinating stories of China past and present.

## Elizabeth I & Mary I: Princess, Prisoner, Queen

**Nicola Tallis** 8-9pm £10



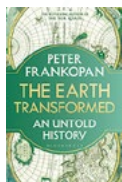
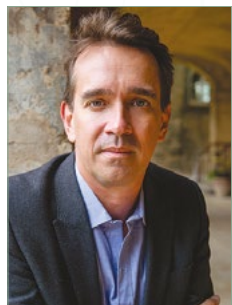
Implicated in the Wyatt Rebellion of 1554, a plot to topple her half sister Mary I from her throne, the young Elizabeth I was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where her mother Anne Boleyn had lost her life. She spent the remainder of Mary's five-year reign under a dark cloud. Acclaimed historian **Nicola Tallis**

charts the fascinating relationship between Elizabeth and Mary and explores the Virgin Queen's tumultuous childhood, facing the predatory attentions of Thomas Seymour and enduring a heartbreaking rift with her stepmother Katherine Parr.

# Blackfriars Talks Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April

## Peter Frankopan

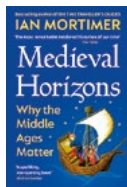
**The Earth Transformed** 11am-12pm £12



Acclaimed historian **Peter Frankopan**, bestselling author of *The Silk Roads* and the ground-breaking *The Earth Transformed: An Untold History*, joins **Janina Ramirez** to explore how a changing climate has dramatically shaped the development - and demise - of civilisations across time. Ranging from savage storms and devastating droughts to how growing demands for harvests resulted in the increase of slavery, they discuss how the natural environment is a crucial, if not the defining, factor in global history. They ask: what lessons can it teach us as we face a future of rapid global warming?

## Why Do the Middle Ages Matter?

**Ian Mortimer** 12.30-1.30pm £10



From the murder of Thomas Becket to the Peasants' Revolt and the Black Death, we sometimes think of the Middle Ages as a dark, backward and unchanging time, characterised by violence, ignorance and superstition. But we couldn't be more wrong. Bestselling historian **Ian Mortimer**, author of *The Time Traveller's Guide to Medieval England* which revealed the sights, sounds and smells of medieval life, shows how between 1000 and 1600 the medieval world was in fact a revolutionary age marking the transition between a warrior-led society and the Elizabethan Age.

## Not Just the Tudors

## Tudor to Stuart: Regime Change from Elizabeth I to James I

**Suzannah Lipscomb & Susan Doran** 2-3pm £10



This is an unprecedented opportunity to listen in on a live recording of an episode of the hit podcast *Not Just the Tudors*. Host **Suzannah Lipscomb**, the award-winning historian, author and broadcaster, is joined by **Susan Doran**, a Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford who has written extensively on the Tudors. Together they discuss the transition from Elizabeth I to James I, including his dramatic accession and the tumultuous first decade of his reign.

## Empireworld

**Sathnam Sanghera** 4-5pm £14



**Sathnam Sanghera's** award-winning *Empireland* started a national conversation about how we talk about race and imperial history in Britain. Now with *Empireworld* he traces the legacies of the British Empire across the globe exploring how 2.6 billion people live in former British colonies. His journey takes him from Barbados and Mauritius to India, Nigeria and beyond, demonstrating just how deeply British imperialism is baked into our world. And why it's time Britain was finally honest with itself about empire. In conversation with historian and BBC broadcaster **Kavita Puri**.

## Women: Medieval to Modern

**Janina Ramirez, Stephen McGann & Estelle Paranque** 6-7pm £12



From Anne Boleyn to Hillary Clinton, the role of iconic women in history is complex and compelling. Yet the stories of the majority of women remain untold. Using Joan of Arc, Anne Boleyn and Jennifer Worth as

starting points, bestselling *Femina* author **Janina Ramirez**, Call the Midwife actor **Stephen McGann** and Tudor expert **Estelle Paranque** explore how women are portrayed in history, fiction and drama. They share stories both of women hidden from history, and of those who've become emblematic of their age.

## The Conspiracy Tourist

**Dom Joly** 8-9.15pm £15



Did we really land on the moon? Was Paul McCartney cloned? Did aliens land at Roswell? Conspiracies used to be fun! Nowadays in a world of fake news and social media algorithms, they're often a cause of mistrust. But why do so many people doubt the official histories? Multi-award-winning comedian **Dom Joly**, star of *Trigger Happy TV*, journeys around the world talking to leaders and followers, taking a sideways look at conspiracy theories and finding the quirky and funny along the way.

# Blackfriars Talks Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April

## The Siege of Gloucester

Jon Eeles, Phil Moss & Mark Turnbull 10.30-11.30am £10

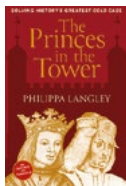


This event is recorded for a Cavaliercast podcast special edition.

The 1643 Siege of Gloucester is one of the pivotal moments of the English Civil War. After the success of the 'Royalist Summer', Charles I came to grief at Gloucester as commander Edward Massie and the townsfolk stood resolute for 26 days against 30,000 Royalist soldiers. Leading Civil War historian **Mark Turnbull** is joined by well-known historians **Phil Moss** and **Jon Eeles** to explore the strategic importance of the stand-off, what life was like for the imprisoned townsfolk, and the impact of the Siege on the city and nation's history.

## The Princes in the Tower

Philippa Langley 12-1pm £12



**Philippa Langley**, who famously discovered Richard III under a Leicester car park, shares her discovery of groundbreaking evidence about history's greatest cold case. She reveals new research showing that the Princes in the Tower were not murdered on the orders of their uncle Richard III in 1483 but did in fact survive. She joins **Janina Ramirez** to discuss her astonishing discoveries, explored in her recent Channel 4 documentary, and the fascinating detective work she undertook challenging 500 years of accepted views about the fate of the young Princes.

## Eastern Journeys: The Incense Route

Janina Ramirez 2-3pm £12



Follow frankincense and myrrh on a historic journey through the desert with **Janina Ramirez**, star of BBC2's *Raiders of the Lost Past*. Spanning more than 1,200 miles, the Incense Route was used by ancient traders from the 3rd century BC to carry their precious cargo through the Negev Desert from Yemen and Oman to the shores of the Mediterranean. Retracing their steps, she tells the story of the road that linked continents and cultures, sharing for the first time extraordinary new archaeological discoveries made at the oasis city of Al-Ula.



## Ukraine: What's Really Happening?

**Victor Sebestyen, Olesya Khromeychuk & Richard Graham** 4-5pm £10



Events in Ukraine are hard to read. Can Ukraine win if the West gives enough support? Is a ceasefire the best hope or will Putin persist? How could Ukraine change post war in new relationships with the West? Our panel explore Ukrainian and western attitudes, where this might lead – and why it matters to the UK. Renowned historian of Eastern Europe and BBC reporter who witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall **Victor Sebestyen**, Ukrainian Institute Director **Olesya Khromeychuk** and Chair of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and Gloucester MP **Richard Graham** join **Vernon Harwood** to ask: what happens next?

## Never Had It So Good? Britain Since 1945

**Will Hutton & David Kynaston** 6-7pm £10



Former Observer Editor and top economic commentator **Will Hutton**, author of the classic *The State We're In* and *This Time No Mistakes*, joins Britain's foremost historian of 20th century Britain **David Kynaston** whose acclaimed book *A Northern Wind* explores life in the Sixties. They discuss British politics and society since 1945 and ask some tough questions. Did we really 'never have it so good'? Or were important opportunities missed by those on both sides of the political divide? From Wilson to Blair, Macmillan to Margaret Thatcher, how have they shaped the way we are now? Chaired by BBC broadcaster **Vernon Harwood**.

## Charles I: From Glory to Gloucester

**Mark Turnbull** 7.30-8.30pm £10



**Mark Turnbull**, one of Britain's leading Civil War historians and broadcasters, explores the momentous events that marked the 24 years of Charles I's reign by offering a remarkable new insight into the man at their epicentre. Based on his recent discoveries about the monarch's private life from contemporary letters and documents, he explores Charles I's role in the Civil War, the battle for Cirencester and offers an intriguing new perspective on Charles I and the 1643 Siege of Gloucester.

# The King's Talks Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March

## 200 Years of Gloucester Docks: Histories & Stories from the Port

**Tony Conder** Ivor Gurney Hall, King's School Gloucester 6-7pm £7



Gloucester Docks, the most inland seaport in Britain, opened to the firing of guns and the ringing of church bells in 1827 and its history offers a fascinating insight into Victorian city and maritime life. Historian **Tony Conder** tells the story of the Tall Ships that came from the Continent, the Baltic and North America and explores the people and events that shaped the 160 years of the working port. Tony Conder is one of Britain's leading experts on canals and waterways. For 25 years he was Curator of the British Waterways Collection and opened Gloucester's National Waterways Museum in 1988.



Gloucester  
History Festival

## The Festival Patron's Scheme

Enjoy an exclusive early booking hotline, use of the VIP Room, our new Patron's gathering, a Festival book chosen by Janina Ramirez and many other benefits when you join the Festival Family. Donation: £500 annually



Find out more: [www.Gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk/support-us/](http://www.Gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk/support-us/)



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# Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has helped make the Spring Weekend a success.

And particular thanks to Andrew Pitt whose especially generous financial support has again been integral to our success.



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Thank you to all of our individual Festival Patrons for their kind support. We acknowledge all of our Patrons ahead of each Blackfriars Talk and also on our website.



# Gloucester History Festival

**7<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024**

Max Hastings, Dan Jones, Robert Harris, Kate Mosse, Jonathan Dimbleby, Tracy Borman and Nathen Amin are just some of the leading speakers who share their love of history in Gloucester this September. Join over 100 top historians for two weeks of extraordinary events. Programme out in July.



[gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk](https://gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk)