

Siege of Gloucester

Civil War

King v Parliament. High Church v Puritans. Nobility & peasants v middle class & tradesmen.

Elizabeth I, James I (divine right of kings) Charles II

Parliament – advisory committee called by King to raise taxes for wars. 11 years from 1629 King ruled.

Unpopular 'Ship's Tax'

King arrested Parliamentarians

Gloucester

17th Cent Gloucester – narrow streets, wooden houses, street markets, High Cross – water supply from Robinswood Hill. Walls and 7 gates. Tolsey.

Population: 5,000. Mainly Puritan council. Unhappy about Ship Tax and King selling Forest of Dean to Catholic Sir John Wintour.

Prepared for war. Colonel Massey & 1500 troops sent. Housed in wheat market and private houses.

Guns and ammunition stored. Ditches dug. 7 gates locked at night – key with mayor.

Progress of War

1642 King raised his standard in Nottingham.

Initially went King's way – Worcester, Cirencester, Bristol - until Gloucester – turning point of (1st) war.

Feb 1643 – Prince Rupert took Cirencester and sent ultimatum to Gloucester – Massey refused to surrender to a foreign prince!

July 1643 – Bristol fell – bloody battle

The Siege

Gloucester (last Severn crossing), Forest iron, port taxes, only

Parliamentarian city before Lancashire. Expected Massey to surrender.

Aug 10th – King at Matson/Tredworth field, Princes Charles, 13 and James, 10 at Matson House. Prince Rupert to north. Kingsholm, Wooton, Llanthony .

King's proclamation – 2hr ultimatum. Mayor's dilemma. Rejected after 4 hours.

"We the inhabitants, magistrates, officers and soldiers within this garrison of Gloucester, unto his majesties gracious message, return this humble answer. That we do keep this city according to our oaths and allegiance, to and for the use of his majesty and his royal posterity, and do accordingly conceive ourselves wholly bound to obey the commands of his majesty, signified by both houses of parliament, and are resolved by God's help to keep this city accordingly."

Caps on in King's presence.

Suburbs burned – 1 house remained later destroyed.

Fri – Royalist guns at Gaudy Green. Cut water supply and diverted Twyver.

Main Characters – (Gloucester defenders)

Lt Col Edward Massey – Aged 23. Professional soldier. Fought in Holland and for King in Scotland. Refused commission so joined Parliamentarians. After siege joined Royalist. Knighted by Charles II. MP for Gloucester. Appointed Ambassador of Jamaica but did not take up post..

Mayor, aldermen and councillors

Thomas Pury – Alderman & one of Gloucester MPs. Puritan leanings. Joghnn Dorney - Town Clerk

Main Characters (Royalist attackers)

Charles I - King. Personally courageous but stubborn and poor leader of men. Executed on order of Parliament 1649.

Prince Rupert of the Rhine – Nephew of King Charles. Born in Prague. Excellent leader of Cavalry. Arrogant and austere – few friends

Southgate

Facing artillery. Blocked up with canon-proof earth dam.

Rebuilt after siege.

Outside 'A city assaulted by man but saved by God'

Inside 'Ever remember the 5th of September, 1643, Give God the Glory'

St Mary de Crypt

Crypt used as timber store.

Church – explosives factory and ammunition store

Sundial where cannon shot.

Greyfriars

Brewery

Severe damage from artillery fire.

Rignall Stile

Walls 6ft thick and less than 2 storeys high. Moat.

SE corner heavily attacked from Gaudy Green.. . Earthworks behind. Gate – sorties to spike guns, steal shovels and kill soldiers.

People peeping over wall were shot

Weapons

Cannon – for direct aim. Demi-cannon range 1600 yards/1463m (340yd/310m point blank). Saker range (1500 yds/1371m (300/274m point blank)

Mortars – for lobbing fire balls.

Limited effectiveness. Could be spiked. Shortage of ammunition – costly.

Muskets and pikes – for foot soldiers. Snipers

Humpty Dumpty

Could be large canon or biggest mortar in England. Or one of Dr Chillingworth's (Theologian/Mathematician) siege engine.

Humpty Dumpty fell in the beck

With all his sinews round his neck

All the King's surgeons and all the King's knights

Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty to rights.

(or was it Colchester!)

Boots mural

Romans. Barons war. Siege of Gloucester.

Eastgate

Tower ruins. Moat/washing pool.

Royalist miners (from Forest of Dean) tunnelled under gate but were flooded.

Prince Rupert – no hat

North side

NE corner gate?

North Gate (inner and outer). No wall. Earthworks. Boggy land.

24th August - Two lawyers Mr Bell of Sandhurst & Mr Hill of Tewkesbury sent by Royalists to negotiate surrender – no deal.

Cathedral

Tower used for lookout.

Mace bearer and 3 or 4 others went up tower to shoot Massey. – missed. Leader hanged, macebearers fingers chopped off.

Battle of Highnam

March 1643 –. Lord Herbert and 2,000 Welshmen. Massey attacked from Gloucester and Sir Wm Waller crossed river at Framilode and came up behind them. 1,594 surrendered imprisoned at St Mary de Lode. No food. Released if went home. Others killed at Rudford – memorial made of stone from city walls.

Charles II statue

Restoration of monarchy. Walls knocked down

The Old Crown Inn

Massey's accommodation. HQ? Canonball strike

St Nicholas Church

Original spire 200ft (61m). Hit during siege. Repaired but dismantled 100 years later as unstable. Now half original height

30 Westgate St

James Commeline (Dutch) Apothecary sitting in house. Cannon ball came in. Many pails of water to quench it.

Relief

Earl of Essex from London with 10,000 (left Aug 23) Prince Rupert attacked at Stow-on-the-wold but failed to stop them.. Fire on Wainlodes hill. King decided not to fight.

Siege lasted 26 days under Col Massey (23). 1500 men v 30,000 Royalists.

Relieved 5th September 1643 (Gloucester Day)

Only 3 barrels of gunpowder left.

50 killed cf 1,000 Royalists

Conclusions

Turning point of war.

Lack of ammunition. King had little money and had to purchase from continent.

Did King ever intend to take Gloucester or was it tactic to get Essex out of London?

Cost Gloucester dearly. Property, walls.

Letter from Sir William Waller to his Royalist friend Sir Raph Hopton

"...that great God which is the searcher of my heart knows with what a sad sense I go upon this service, and with what a perfect hatred I detest this war without an enemy; but I look upon it as sent from God and that is enough to silence all passion in me... We are both upon the stage and must act such parts as are assigned us in this tragedy. Let us do it in a way of honour and without personal animosities..."