

## **Background information showing the key time periods covered:**

### **ROMAN GLOUCESTER**

Gloucester began as a Roman town. It lies at the first point where the river Severn can be easily crossed, so it was a natural place to build a town. About 49 AD the Romans built a fort to guard the river crossing at Kingsholm. In 64 AD they built a new fort on the site of Gloucester town centre.

About 75 AD the Roman army moved on, but the site of the fort was turned into a town for retired soldiers. The new town was called Glevum. Roman Gloucester was laid out in a grid pattern. In the centre of the town was a forum. This was a market place lined with shops and public buildings.

However in the 4th century Roman civilization went into decline. The last Roman soldiers left Britain in 407 AD. Afterwards most Roman towns were abandoned.

### **SAXON GLOUCESTER**

After the Romans left Britain it is thought that Gloucester was probably abandoned, although there may have been a small number of farmers living inside the walls and farming the land outside.

The Saxons captured Gloucester in 577 AD after they won a battle against the native Celts. We do not know if there were people living in Gloucester at that time.

In the late 7th century the Saxons founded a monastery at Gloucester and the town began to revive. Craftsmen and merchants came to live in Gloucester once again. In the early 8th century a writer called Gloucester 'one of the noblest cities in the kingdom'.

In the late 9th century the Saxons created a network of fortified towns called burghs. In the event of a Danish attack all the men in the area would gather in the burgh to fight. Gloucester was made a burgh. In 915 AD men from

Gloucestershire gathered in the town then went out to fight the Danes and defeated them in battle.

Gloucester flourished in the 10th century. During this century it had a mint factory. A suburb grew up outside the North gate.

In 909 AD the remains of St Oswald were brought to Gloucester. In those days people would go on long journeys called pilgrimages to visit the remains of saints. Many people came to Gloucester to visit the remains of St Oswald. During their visits they often spent money in the town. In 1153 the church which housed St Oswald's shrine was turned into a priory (a small abbey).

## **GLOUCESTER IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

William the Conqueror came to Gloucester in 1085 and while he was there he ordered that the Domesday Book be written.

Gloucester may have had a population of about 3,500 in the Middle Ages. By the standards of the time it was a fairly large town. (In those days towns were much smaller than they are today). Gloucester, it was said, ranked 10th among the towns of England for wealth.

In the late 11th century the Normans built a wooden castle in Gloucester. In the 12th century it was rebuilt in stone. Gloucester was strategically important in the 12th and 13th centuries because there was frequent warfare between the Welsh and the English. The people of Gloucester benefited from the warfare since the garrison of the castle provided a market for their goods.

In 1155 the king gave Gloucester a charter (a document giving the townspeople certain rights).

The main industry in Medieval Gloucester was wool making. Raw wool was brought to the town from the Cotswolds. In Gloucester the wool was woven then fullled. That means the wool was cleaned and thickened by pounding it in water and clay. When the wool dried it was dyed.

There was also a large leather industry in Medieval Gloucester. There were tanners and craftsmen who made things out of leather, such as shoes and gloves. In Gloucester iron was worked to make nails, weapons and tools. Cloth and grain were exported from Gloucester and wine was imported from France. There was also a considerable fishing industry in the Severn.

In towns in the Middle Ages fire was a constant risk, since most buildings were made from wood with thatched roofs. In 1223 a fire destroyed part of Gloucester. As a result thatched roofs were banned.

There was a community of Jews in Gloucester in the 12th century. They were falsely accused of a ritual murder in 1268. In 1275. As a result of this false accusation all Jews were forced to leave Gloucester and go to Bristol.

In the 13th century the friars arrived in Gloucester. Friars were like monks but instead of withdrawing from the world they went out to preach. Franciscan friars arrived in 1231. They were called Grey friars because of the colour of their clothes. Dominican friars, known as black friars, followed in 1239.

In 1327 the body of King Edward II was buried at St Peters Abbey. Afterwards there was a stream of visitors to his tomb, which added to the prosperity of Gloucester.

In the early 15th century the New Inn was built. It was built on the site of an earlier inn, hence the name. However Gloucester declined in the 15th century and the town entered a long economic depression. The main reason was probably increasing competition from other towns in the wool trade. An additional reason may have been the fact that Wales had now been conquered and Gloucester was no longer in a strategic position.

In 1483 Richard III gave Gloucester a new charter. This time the merchants were given the right to elect a mayor and 12 aldermen.

## **GLOUCESTER IN THE 16th CENTURY**

The Fleece Hotel was built as an inn in about 1500. In 1541 Gloucester was given a Bishop and the Abbey Church was made the new Cathedral. Henry VIII (1509-47) and his son Edward (1547-53) introduced religious changes to England. However Henry's daughter Mary, tried to undo the changes. She burned many Protestants. One of them was John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, who was burned for heresy in St Marys Square in 1555.

Meanwhile In 1540 a grammar school called the Crypt School opened in Gloucester.

During the 16th century and 17th century the wool trade continued to decline. Gloucester also suffered from frequent outbreaks of plague. There were epidemics in 1565, 1573, 1577, 1580, 1593 and 1637.

## **GLOUCESTER IN THE 17th CENTURY**

By the early 17th century Gloucester was less important than it had once been. Nevertheless it was still a fair sized town with a population of about 4,000.

Gloucester was still a busy port and a market town for the surrounding region. Furthermore although the cloth industry declined pin making boomed in Gloucester in the 17th century.

By the late 17th century the population of Gloucester was probably about 5,000.

Gloucester suffered severely in the civil war between king and parliament, which lasted from 1642 to 1646. Most of the south west supported the king but Gloucester supported parliament. The people demolished the houses outside the walls to deny cover to the enemy and erected some earthwork defences. In 1643 the king's army laid siege and their cannon fired into Gloucester. Nevertheless Gloucester held out and the royalists withdrew when they heard that a parliamentary army was coming.

In 1662 in an attempt to curry favour with the King the city erected a statue of King Charles I. However he was not impressed and ordered the destruction of the walls around Gloucester.

Gloucester gained its first fire engine in 1648

## **GLOUCESTER IN THE 18th CENTURY**

Ladybellgate house was built around 1704. Then in 1751 the cross which had stood in the town centre for centuries was demolished. In 1761 an infirmary was opened. The East gate was demolished in 1778 to make it easier for traffic to enter and leave the town.

In 1768 two new market sites were created to house all the stalls that were impeding traffic and causing congestion. One was in Eastgate, the other in Southgate. In the 1780s North Gate, Outer North Gate and South Gate were all demolished to make way for traffic. In 1791 a new prison was opened on the site of Gloucester castle.

In the 18th century the wool industry died out altogether in Gloucester but pin making continued to flourish.

## **GLOUCESTER IN THE 19th CENTURY**

In the 19th century conditions in Gloucester improved. In 1820 Gloucester gained gas street lighting and in 1831 a dispensary where the poor could obtain free medicines opened. Then in the 1850's and 1860s a piped water supply was built. In the late 19th century a network of sewers were built. In 1872 a school of art and school of science opened. Then in 1879 horse drawn trams began running in Gloucester.

At the beginning of the 19th century pin making was Gloucester's main industry and it employed about 20% of the inhabitants.

In 1819 a dry dock was built where vessels could be repaired. Another followed it in 1853. In 1827 a ship canal was built from Gloucester to Sharpness. Timber from Scandinavia was brought along this canal. North Warehouse was built in 1827. Biddles warehouse was built in 1830. In 1840-2 more warehouses were built, Vinings and Reynolds.

Victoria dock opened in 1849. Three more warehouses, Phillpotts, Herbert and Kimberley were built in 1846. A Custom House was built in 1845 and the Mariners Chapel opened in 1849.

The railway reached Gloucester in 1840. In the late 19th century a new industry began - making railway carriages. There was also flour milling, timber milling, making farm machinery and some shipbuilding. On the other hand pin making went into decline and had ended by the mid 19th century. Although Victorian Gloucester was not a manufacturing centre it was an important market town.

Eastgate market portico was built in 1856. A monument to Bishop Hooper, who was martyred in 1555, was erected in 1862. Another landmark, Addison's Folly was built in 1864.

Gloucester grew rapidly in the 19th century. By 1851 the population of Gloucester reached 17,500. By the end of the century the population was about 47,000. In the late 19th century growth spread to Kingsholm and Tredworth.

## **GLOUCESTER IN THE 20th CENTURY**

Gloucester grew rapidly in the 20th century. In the 1900s growth spread to Tuffley, Wotton, Hucclecote and Longlevens. Gloucester spread outwards engulfing the surrounding countryside.

Conditions in Gloucester improved rapidly in the 20th century. Gloucester gained an electricity supply in 1900 and in 1904 the horse drawn trams were replaced by electric ones. These were, in turn, replaced by buses in 1929.

A museum opened in Eastgate Street in 1902 and a fire station was built in Southgate Street in 1913. A new one was built in Eastern Avenue in 1956.

Slum clearance began in Gloucester in the 1920s. The slums were replaced by council houses. The Oxbode was built in 1929 on the site of Oxbode Lane, a street of slums. Gloucester folk museum was opened in 1933.

Eastgate shopping centre was built in 1973. A museum to Beatrix Potter was opened in 1979. In 1984 a Museum of Packaging and Advertising opened in Gloucester.

In 1987 the city council moved to a refurbished warehouse by the docks. In 1988 the rest of the docks was opened as a heritage centre.

Gloucester continued to grow rapidly in the late 20th century. In the 1950s council estates were built at Lower Ruffieu, Podsmead, Elmbridge and Matson. Slum clearance continued in Gloucester city centre. Private houses were built in Barnwood, Hucclecote, Saintbridge and Abbeymead.

Aircraft manufacture began in Gloucester in 1915. A municipal airport opened in Gloucester in 1936. In the later 20th century, Gloucester docks declined.

In the late 20th century industries in Gloucester included making farm machinery and railway rolling stock, aircraft manufacture, timber mills, ice cream manufacture and printing. Nevertheless manufacturing industry in Gloucester declined in importance, while service industries like banking and insurance increased.

## **GLOUCESTER IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY**

2007 – Floods in Gloucester

Development of Gloucester Docks into shopping area and restaurants

Re-enactment of Coronation of King Henry III at Gloucester Cathedral.

Filming of Harry Potter at the Cathedral.

Cathedral Skate, Skate park set up inside the Cathedral. First Cathedral in the country to have this.

Rugby World Cup comes to Gloucester.

Gloucester Rugby open their doors for several music events e.g. Elton John and Tom Jones.



## **Detailed Time Line of the History of Gloucester:**

### **ROMANS**

- 64            The Romans build a fort on the site of Gloucester
- 75            The Roman Army moves on but the site of the fort is turned into a town for retired soldiers
- 407          The Roman army leaves Britain, Roman towns go into a steep decline

### **SAXONS:**

- 577           The Saxons capture Gloucester
- c. 680        The town of Gloucester revives
- 909           St Oswald's remains are brought to Gloucester
- 915           Men from Gloucester defeat the Danes in Battle

### **MIDDLE AGES:**

- 1085          William the Conqueror visits Gloucester
- 1155          The people of Gloucester are given a charter (a document granting them certain rights)
- 1200          Gloucester has a population of about 3,500. Gloucester is famous for its wool industry
- 1223          A fire destroys part of Gloucester

- 1231 Franciscan friars (grey friars) arrive in Gloucester
- 1239 Dominican friars (black friars) arrive in Gloucester
- 1275 All Jews are expelled from Gloucester
- 1327 Edward II is buried at Gloucester
- 1483 Richard III gives Gloucester a new charter, however the town is in decline

### **16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GLOUCESTER**

- 1540 A grammar school opens in Gloucester
- 1541 Gloucester is given a bishop and the Abbey Church is made a Cathedral
- 1555 The Bishop of Gloucester, John Hooper is burned to death for heresy
- 1565, 1573, 1577, 1580, 1593, 1637 Gloucester suffers outbreaks of plague

### **17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GLOUCESTER**

- 1643 During the Civil War the Royalists lay siege to Gloucester but fail to capture it
- 1662 Charles II orders the destruction of the city's walls
- 1680 Gloucester has a population of about 5,000

### **18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GLOUCESTER**

- 1761 An infirmary opens in Gloucester

1791 A prison is built on the site of Gloucester Castle, the wool industry has vanished

## **19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GLOUCESTER**

1820 The streets of Gloucester are lit by gas. A pin making industry in Gloucester flourishes

1827 A ship canal is dug to Gloucester

1831 A dispensary where the poor can obtain free medicines opens

1840 The railway reaches Gloucester

1879 Horse drawn trams begin running in the streets of Gloucester

1849 Victoria Dock opens

1851 The population of Gloucester is 17,500

1862 A monument to Bishop Hooper is erected

1864 Addison's Folly is built

1895 Smallpox kills 434 people in Gloucester

## **20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GLOUCESTER**

1900 The population of Gloucester is about 47,000. Gloucester gains an electricity supply

1902 A museum opens in Eastgate

1904 Horse drawn trams are replaced by electric trams

1915 Aircraft manufacture begins in Gloucester

1923	Smallpox kills 3 people in Gloucester
1929	Trams are replaced by buses
1933	Gloucester Folk Museum opens
1936	A municipal airport opens
1973	Eastgate Shopping Centre opens
1979	A Museum of Beatrix Potter opens
1984	A Museum of Advertising and Packaging opens
1988	Part of the Docks opens as a heritage centre

## **21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GLOUCESTER**

2011	The population of Gloucester is 116,000
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WHAT ELSE DO WE KNOW?

## Gloucester Maps

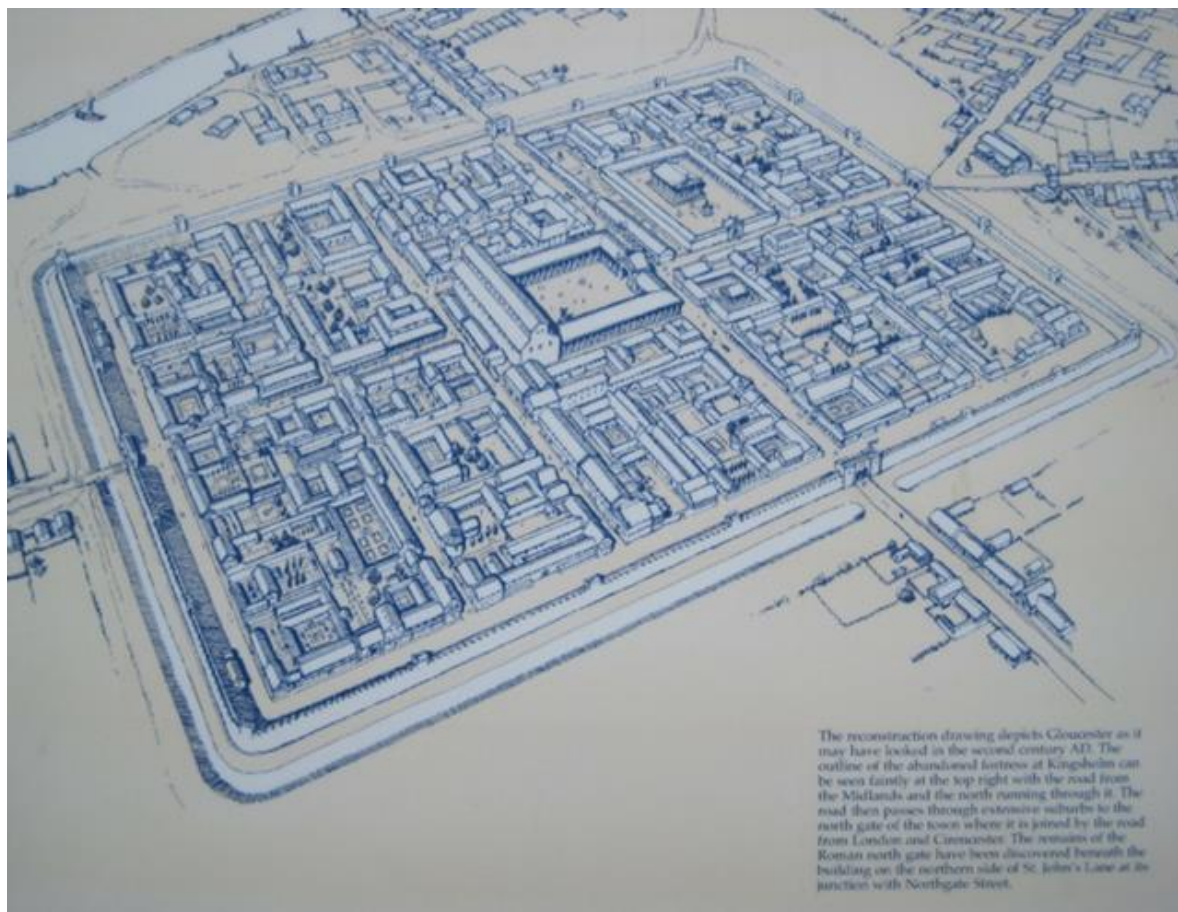


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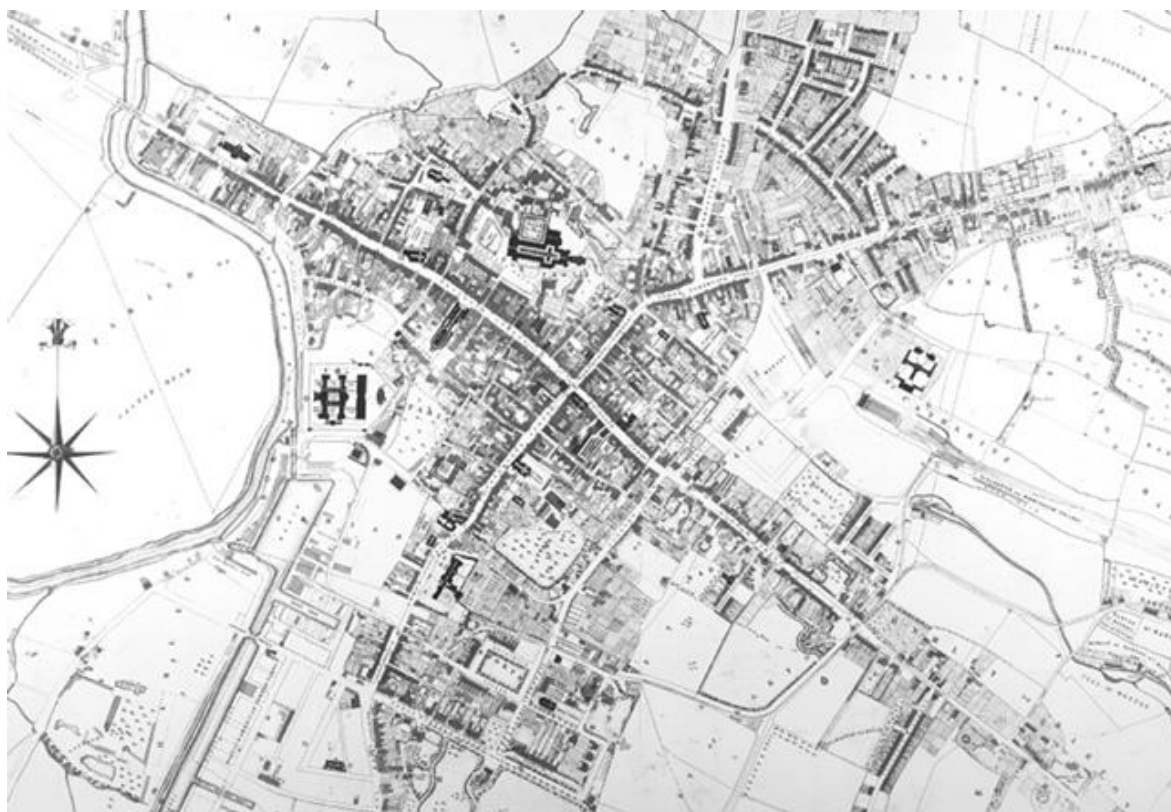


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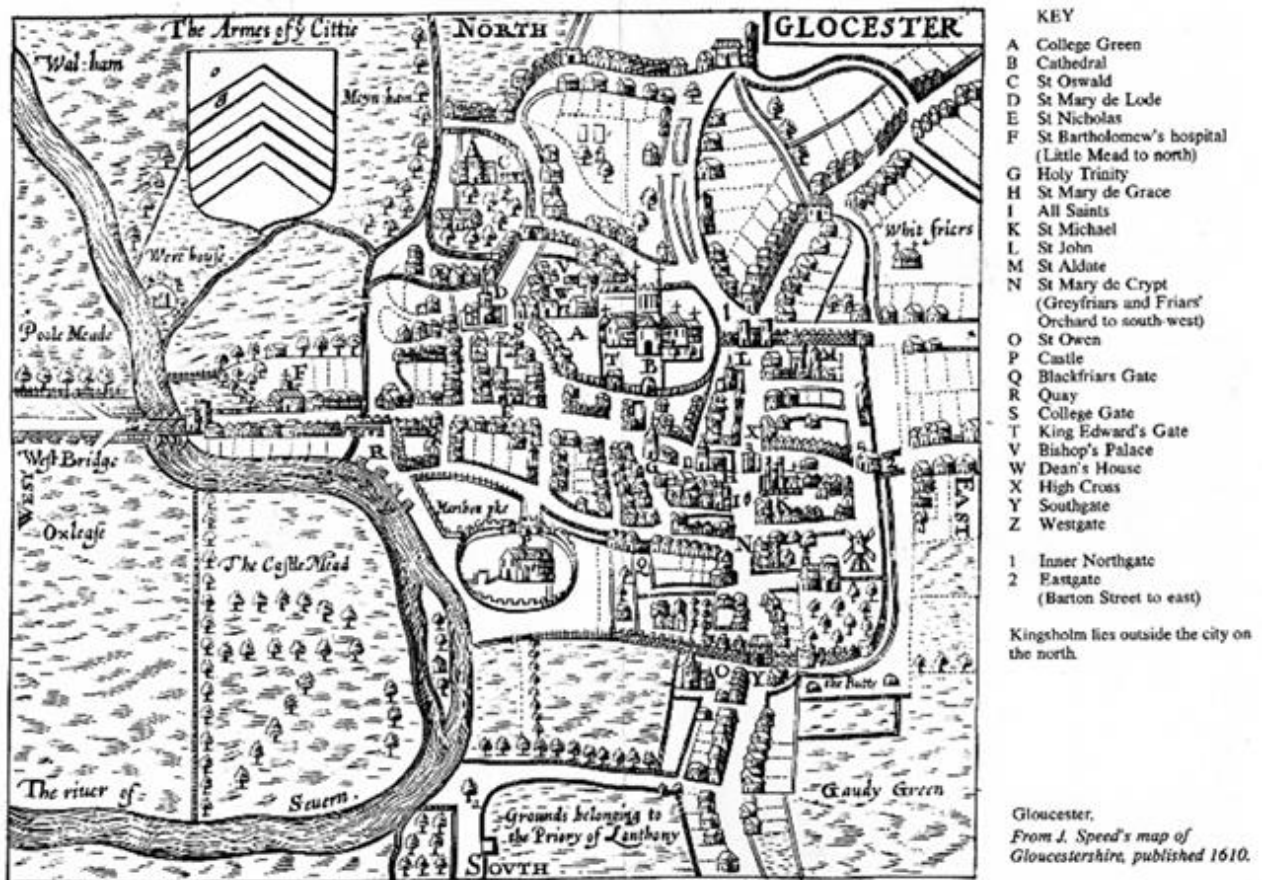




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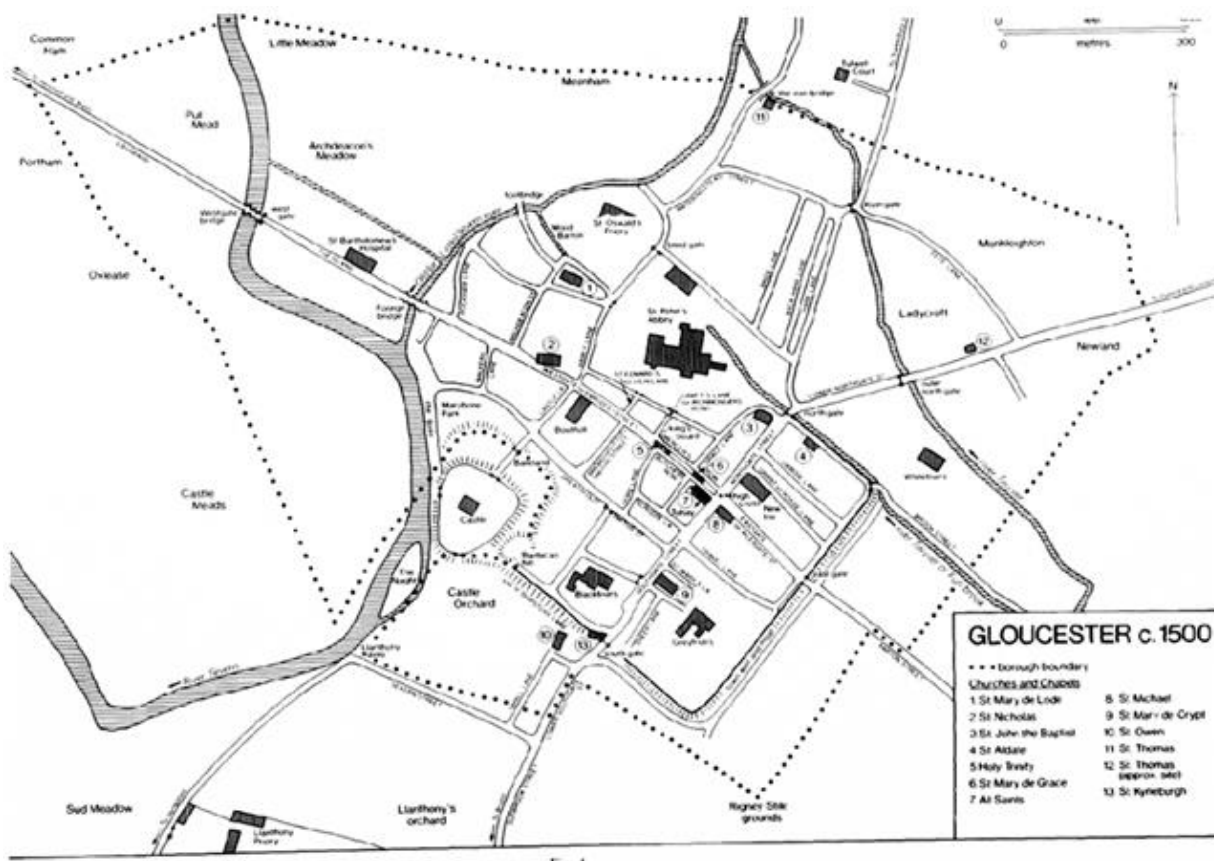


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## Gloucester Old Buildings and Views



From VCH vol 4 26 Westgate Street side elevation. Sketch by FW Waller 1877

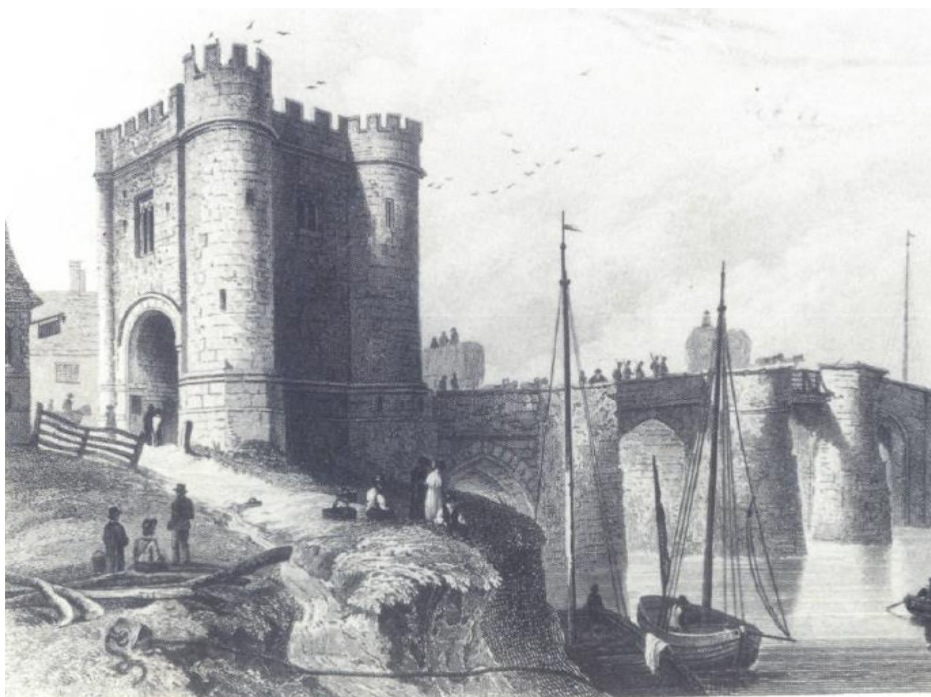




From VCH vol 4 The old Ram Inn, Northgate Street. Lithograph by G Rowe c 1840 Copy in Glos Archives



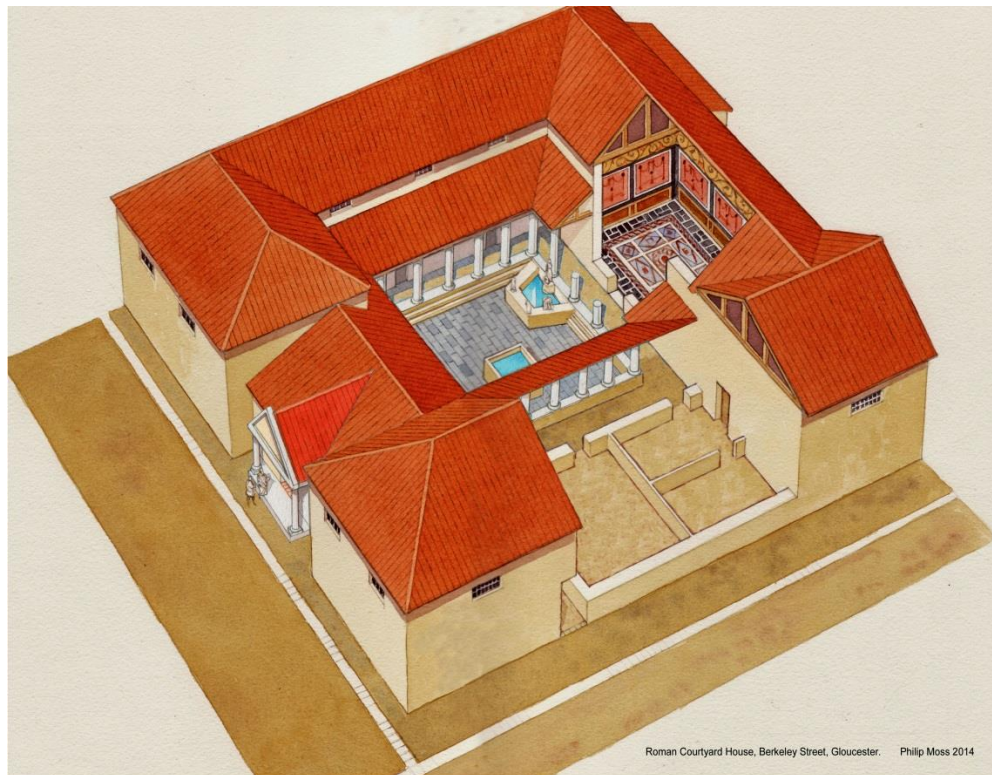
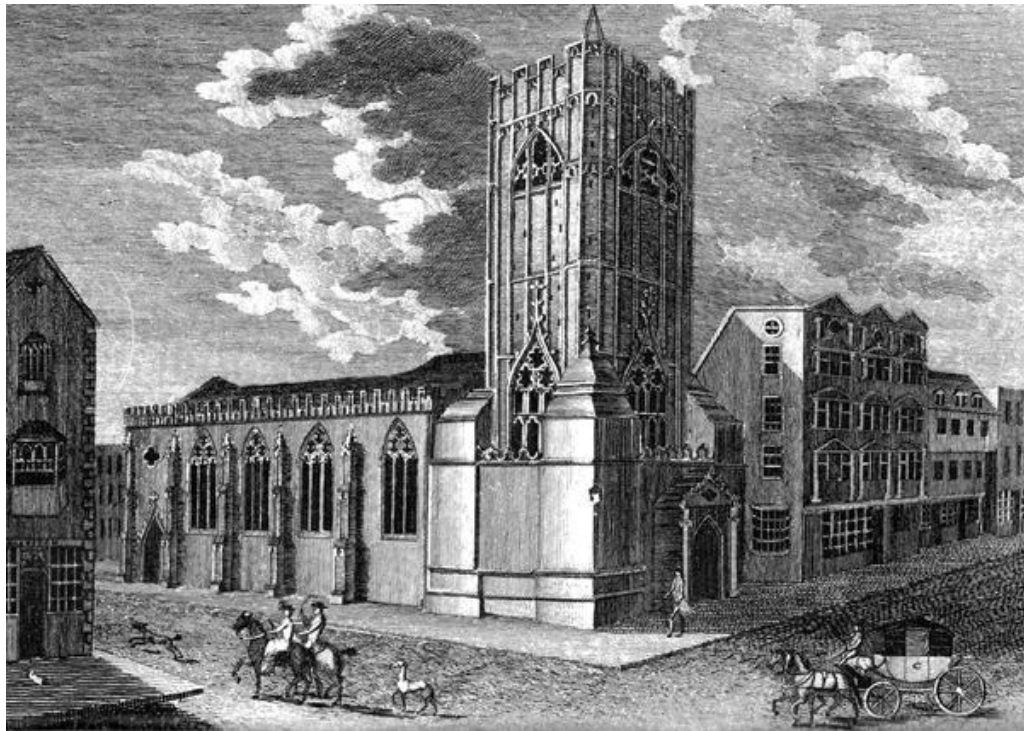
Wood carving of a medieval street scene [www.historyextra.com](http://www.historyextra.com)



From VCH vol 4 Gloucester's medieval Westgate and Westgate Bridge. Engraving from a drawing by J Carter 1796 published in J Britton Picturesque Antiquities of English Cities 1836



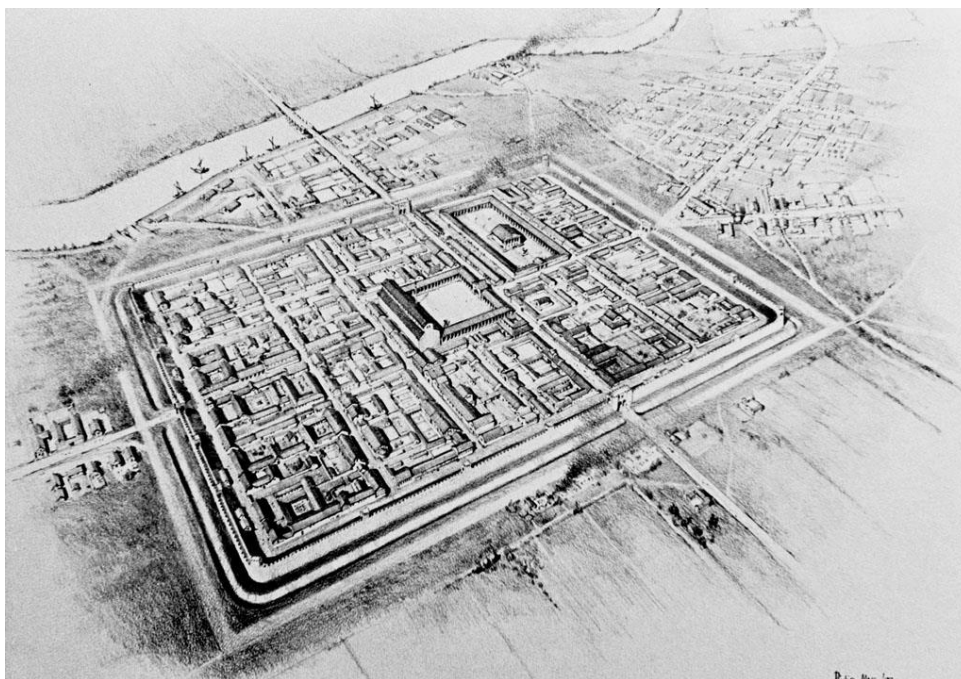




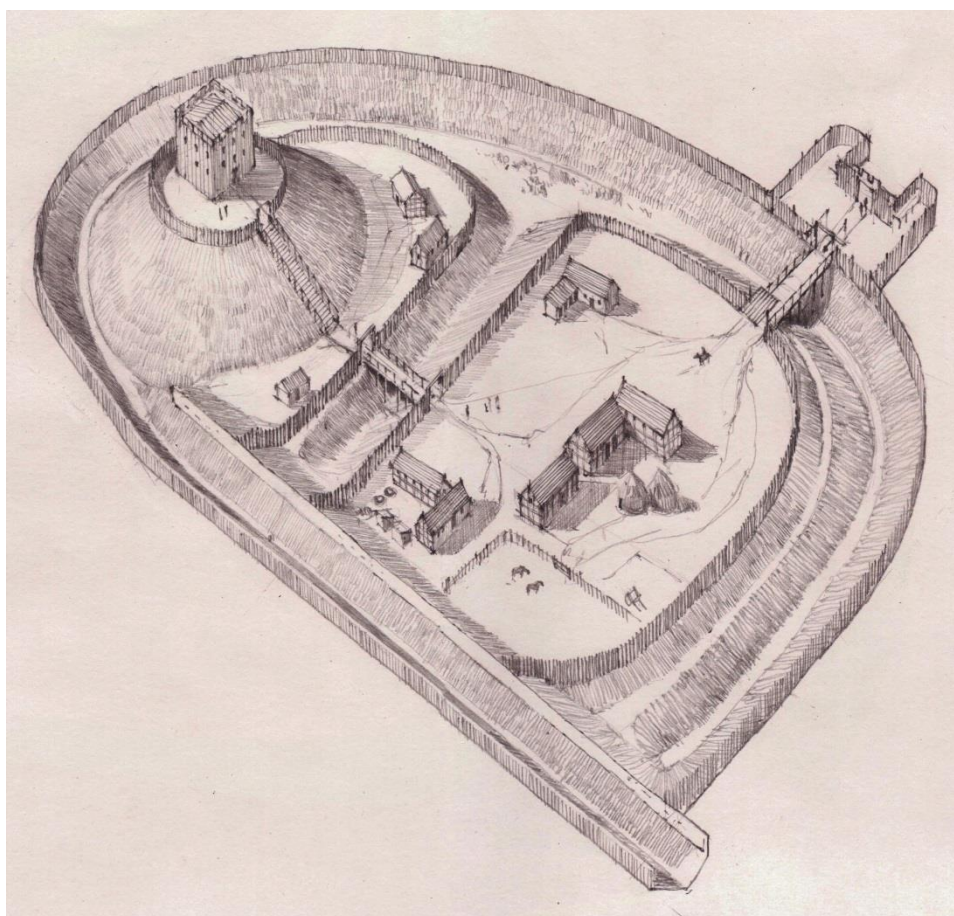
Roman Courtyard House, Berkeley Street, Gloucester. Philip Moss 2014

Reconstruction drawing of Roman Townhouse found in Berkeley Street, Gloucester. P Moss

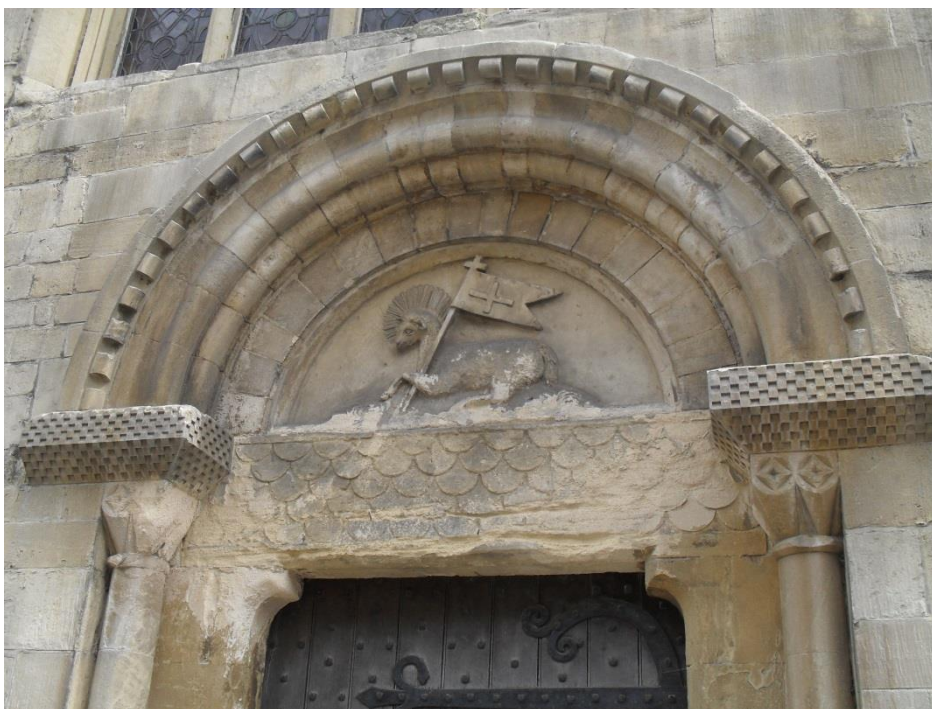




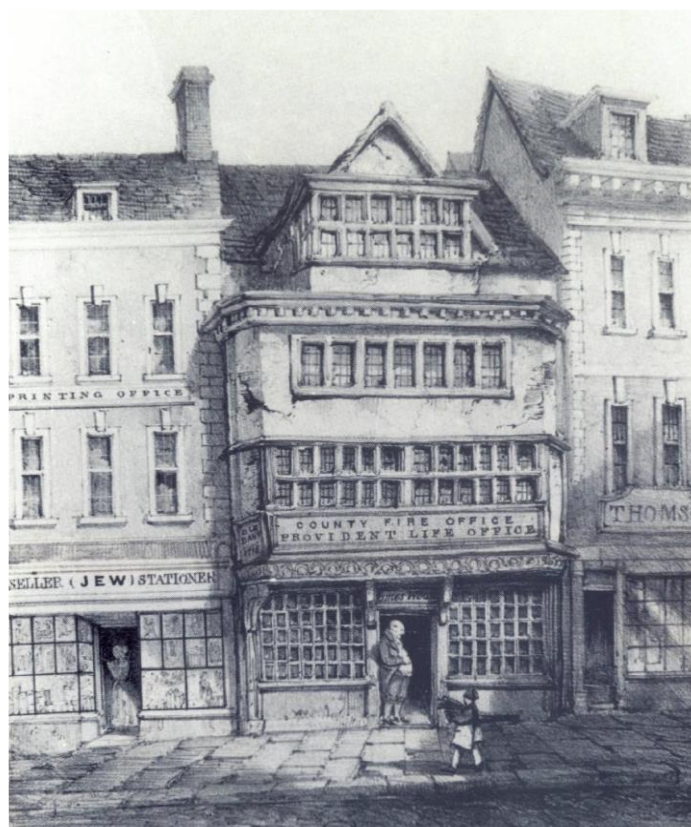
Roman Colonia c.2AD P. Moss



Gloucester's Norman Castle. P. Moss



Norman Arch over doorway to St Mary DeCrypt Church



From VCH vol 4 Jemmy Wood's house and bank in Upper Westgate Street. Lithograph by G Rowe 1839. Copy in Glos Archives





From VCH vol 4 View down Westgate Street in 1824 - Engraving by J and H.S Storer, published in 'Delineations of Gloucester' 1825-7