

Cirencester History Festival

24 OCTOBER–2 NOVEMBER 2025



TICKETS NOW
ON SALE AT:

cirencesterhistoryfestival.org



Cirencester
History Festival

In association with



Gloucester
History Festival

A WORD FROM OUR FRIENDS AT GLOUCESTER HISTORY FESTIVAL



What is it about History Festivals? They're addictive! I was delighted by the success of the first Cirencester History Festival and I'm thrilled that it's back for a second year. Whether in Gloucester or Cirencester, whether exploring history ancient or modern, the thirst to understand the past - and perhaps even learn from it - is spreading across the nation. Just as my new book *Legenda* celebrates iconic women, it's fabulous that our two sister festivals, and the amazing women who run them, are welcoming a new generation of history-lovers. Join us in Gloucestershire to explore history this autumn!

Prof Janina Ramirez, President of Gloucester History Festival

HOW TO BOOK:

ONLINE: cirencesterhistoryfestival.org

Corinium Museum, Park St, GL7 2BX

Open: Mon-Sat 10-5pm & Sun 2-5pm. 01285 655611.

Local Information Centre: Bingham House, 1 Dyer St, GL7 2PP

Open: Mon-Fri 9-4:30pm & Sat 10-4pm. 01285 655646.

£5 YOUTH TICKETS are now available for under 22s, generously subsidised by the Woodroffe Benton Foundation & The Organic Farm Shop, and subject to availability.

MAPS, CAR PARKING & VENUE INFORMATION: cirencesterhistoryfestival.org/venues

BOOKS: authors will be **signing books** after their events, provided by Waterstones, Octavia's Bookshop and Corinium Museum.

SEE PAGE 16-17 for all the **walks, tours, films & exhibitions** running throughout the week.



BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW AT cirencesterhistoryfestival.org



TALKS



FAMILIES



MUSIC



TOURS



RESEARCH



ART & CRAFT

WELCOME TO CIRENCESTER HISTORY FESTIVAL



Welcome! I'm thrilled to introduce our second Cirencester History Festival, built on the overwhelming success of last year's. Thank you so much for your support, without which nothing would be possible.

Our events are drawn from right across historical time, place and genres and we have some very special treats, including the much-loved and renowned Sixteen choir who will be helping us celebrate Palestrina's 500th anniversary. I'm joined (see below) by Charlie Cooper, whose passion for history inspired us all last year. As well as being Festival Ambassador, he's returning to tell us what historical investigations he's been up to. I can't wait!

I know you'll love what's on offer this year, but there's also a deeper message. In these testing times, I believe it's more important than ever that we draw on history to help explain and understand today's tensions, challenges and opportunities. I know our programme will stimulate, provoke and delight, and I do hope you'll join us. Booking is now live at cirencesterhistoryfestival.org

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Fiona'.

Dame Fiona Reynolds, Festival President and former Director General of the National Trust

Last year I was ecstatic to learn that my home town, Cirencester, was having its very own history festival, so you can imagine my joy now being Ambassador! It's a real privilege to see a celebration of history taking root in a place with so much of its own to share. I've always loved history, particularly the weird, forgotten corners of it, and this year's programme truly has something for everyone. From the hands-on revival of lost skills like mending and corn dolly crafting, to talks on everything from backyard hens to medieval saints – whether you're a seasoned history lover or just curious, I hope you'll find something that surprises or inspires you.



One of the things I'm particularly proud of is the festival's commitment to younger audiences, with youth tickets now available for under-22s. Engaging young people in history can spark a lifelong passion, opening up a subject that's rich, complex, and endlessly fascinating. It's such a positive step, and I'm excited to see the next generation getting stuck in!

Charlie Cooper, Festival Ambassador, actor, writer and star of the BBC's This Country and Myth Country

CIRENCESTER HISTORY FESTIVAL is a project of Cirencester Community Development Trust (CCDT), charity number 1150810. It is organised with more than 30 local organisations and in association with Gloucester History Festival.

FRIDAY 24 OCTOBER

MUSIC

PALESTRINA AT 500 Cirencester Parish Church, 7–8:15pm
'The Prince of Music' by Candlelight with The Sixteen Choir. £15—£40



The Sixteen is one of the world's most renowned choral ensembles. For one night only, travel back half a millennium as they perform, *a cappella* and by real candlelight, in Cirencester's majestic twelfth-century wool church to celebrate the 500th birthday of great Renaissance composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-94). Described by Giuseppe Verdi as 'the real king of sacred music', Palestrina developed a famously ethereal and polyphonic (many voiced) sound, written for the Vatican's Sistine Chapel where musical instruments were prohibited. The programme explores some of his extensive output and his influence on those who learnt from him including Allegri, Felice Anerio, Asprillio Pacelli, Josquin des Prez and three trailblazing female composers of the time: Maddalena Casulana, Rafaela Aleotti and Caterina Asandra. An evening not to be missed!

SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER

TALKS

AMY JEFFS Corinium Museum, 12–1pm
Medieval Saints and Old Songs. £12



Join bestselling author **Amy Jeffs** for a journey through medieval and early modern England as she shares tales from her two most recent books, *Saints* and *Old Songs*. Drawing on medieval saints' legends (with severed heads that speak and geese that rise from the dead), as well as early modern folk ballads with their themes of witchcraft and fairy, Amy examines a worldview that shared our seasons and our skies but interpreted them in wondrous ways. From the end of Rome to the Protestant Reformation, discover how saints and songs provide a window into our forebears' imaginations and how they weathered the storms of change. Introduced by **Charlie Cooper**.

See Corinium Museum for Amy's linked workshops and immersive exhibition.

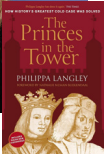
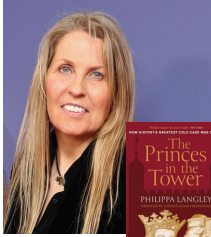
CHARLIE COOPER Cirencester Parish Church, 2–3pm
Trench Wars: Detectorist v. Archaeologist with Miles Russell. £12



During his sell-out talk at last year's festival, actor, writer and now Festival Ambassador **Charlie Cooper** confessed his secret love of metal detecting and put out an appeal for a local field or two to explore. Naturally, Cirencester delivered! This year Charlie returns to show us the best of his 2024/5 discoveries, from a fine Roman fibula brooch to medieval hammered coins and plenty of buttons, all found within a few miles of town. In a rare detectorist / archaeologist collaboration, Charlie is joined by renowned prehistory and Roman expert **Miles Russell**. Come and see them 'bury the hand axe' for a Time Team meets Antiques Roadshow Cirencester special. Charlie's finds will be on display in the Corinium Museum after the event.

PHILIPPA LANGLEY Cirencester Parish Church, 4:30–5:30pm

The Princes in the Tower: How History's Greatest Cold Case Was Solved. £12

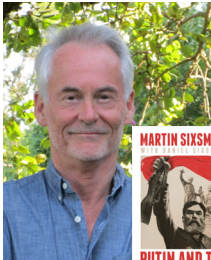


What happened in the summer of 1483 to the two boy princes in the Tower of London? Over the centuries, historians have debated tirelessly about the fate of Edward V and Richard, Duke of York: did they die in the tower? Did they escape? Were they murdered? After astonishing success in discovering and laying to rest Richard III, historian **Philippa Langley** turns her forensic focus onto this enduring case. She reveals the remarkable untold story which solves the mystery surrounding the Princes in the Tower once and for all. 'Philippa Langley has done it again', *The Times*

Event sponsored by Postscript Books

MARTIN SIXSMITH Cirencester Parish Church, 6:30–7:30pm

The Winstone Talk: Putin & the Return of History: How the Kremlin Rekindled the Cold War. £12



Putin's invasion of Ukraine, Trump's second term and current conflicts in the Middle East mark one of the most challenging periods in Europe's history since WW2. After the collapse of Soviet Communism, the West convinced itself that liberal democracy would be the dominant system of governance. However the rise of Vladimir Putin shows that it's often unwise to make such predictions. Former BBC correspondent and leading historian **Martin Sixsmith** traces the historical forces shaping Putin's politics, explores Russia's influence on current global conflicts and reveals how the Kremlin is rekindling the Cold War.

The Winstone Talk is sponsored by The K D Winstone Charitable Trust



PAINT LIKE TURNER Watermoor Hall, 2–4pm

A Practical Workshop with Cirencester Arts Society. Age 15+ (ish). £15

To mark the 250th anniversary of JMW Turner's birth in 1775, come for an exploration of his iconic expressive style with local artists **Liney Hill** and **Heather Teather**, and try your hand at a Turner-inspired masterpiece in acrylic, pastels and pencil. Includes a short introduction to Turner, plus demonstrations and dedicated tuition. All materials included and all abilities welcome.



THE OLD STATION EXPERIENCE Old Station Car Park, 10–4pm

Behind the Lines Tour, Exhibition, Listening Project & VR Experience. £FREE drop in

Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and opened in 1841, Cirencester Town was one of three stations that once plugged Cirencester into the national rail network. Come for a behind-the-scenes tour hosted by local architect and new station owner, **Jonathan Rixon**. Also includes a pop-up exhibition and community 'listening project' from those who remember the station in its heyday; plus virtual reality experience of the Victorian station developed for the festival by Rixon Architects with Cirencester College design students. Tea, coffee and light refreshments served on the old platform!

Event sponsored by the Daniel Bingham Foundation

THE LOST COLONY OF ROANOKE The Barn Theatre, 12–1pm

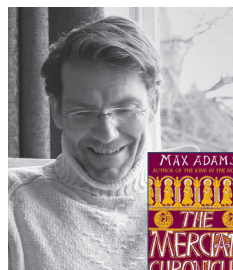
Mark Horton. £12



In 1587, a group of 117 English colonists, commissioned by Sir Walter Raleigh, landed on the island of Roanoke in North Carolina, earning the distinction of becoming North America's first permanent English settlement and home to the first English child born in the New World. But three years later a relief ship found the colony mysteriously abandoned, leaving behind only the word CROATOAN carved on a palisade – and one of the most enduring mysteries in American history. Were they massacred? Taken captive? Or did they assimilate with a local Native American tribe? In 2025, nearly half a millennium later, and after a decade-long excavation, archaeologist and BBC Coast regular **Mark Horton** finally unearthed the evidence that may have cracked the riddle once and for all...

MAKE MERCIA GREAT AGAIN! The Barn Theatre, 2–3pm

Max Adams chaired by Dave Musgrove. £12



The Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia was sandwiched in space and time between the other great kingdoms of the period, Wessex and Northumbria. But while Northumbria's story was well chronicled by The Venerable Bede, and King Alfred of Wessex had his own biographer in the monk Asser, Mercia lacks a great historical record to remind us of its contribution to the development of England. Join bestselling author and broadcaster **Max Adams**, in conversation with HistoryExtra's **Dave Musgrove**, to explore why Mercia deserves to be better known in this story – especially in the most contested of battlegrounds between Mercia and Wessex: Cirencester. It's time to Make Mercia Great Again!

Event sponsored by HistoryExtra

MOTHERLAND The Barn Theatre, 4:30–5:30pm

500,000 Years of African History, Cultures & Identity with Luke Pepera. £12



Leading historian, anthropologist and broadcaster Luke Pepera takes us back to explore fascinating figures from African history including Mansa Musa, the 14th century ruler of the Mali Empire and the wealthiest man who ever lived, and Kandake Queen Amanirenas, who defeated the Romans in Nubia. Through their lives and others he offers a revelatory new exploration of African culture and identity. One of the most exciting of a new generation of historians, Luke Pepera gives a dazzling talk based on his new book *Motherland* which is described by Tom Holland as 'a masterful achievement'.

'A wonderful debut by a talented and exciting young historian', Peter Frankopan.

MYTHICA Corinium Museum, 6–7pm

The Real Women Behind the Greek Myths with Emily Hauser. £12



Contrary to perceptions built up over three millennia, ancient history is not all about men. Join bestselling classicist and historian **Emily Hauser** for an epic journey to discover the extraordinary stories of the real Bronze Age women – from Briseis and Penelope to the Amazons – behind some of the western world's greatest legends. Piecing together evidence from Homer's original texts as well as astonishing archaeological finds and the latest DNA studies, Emily presents a groundbreaking reassessment of who these women – queens, mothers, warriors, slaves – were, how they lived, and how history has (or has not – until now) remembered them.

KEITH MURRAY: ART DECO CERAMICS New Brewery Arts, 7:30–9pm

Talk and Private View with the V&A's Kate Turner. £12 incl a glass of fizz.



Step into the sleek world of 1930s design with a one-night-only celebration of Keith Murray — architect, RAF veteran, and one of Wedgwood's most iconic designers. Known for his elegant, minimalist ceramics, Murray brought a modernist touch to British pottery, crafting vases and tableware with clean lines and subtle matt glazes that still feel fresh today. Join the V&A's Wedgwood ceramics curator, **Kate Turner**, for a short talk about Murray's artistry and design legacy, and a rare opportunity to see a newly gifted collection of his timeless pieces up close. Includes a glass of fizz.

ACTIVITIES



HISTORICAL COOKERY SCHOOL Corinium Museum, 11–1pm

Jane Austen's Regency Tea with Cotswold Cookery School Age 6–11 (ish). £20

To celebrate legendary English author Jane Austen's 250th birthday, come and learn how to make an authentic Regency (early nineteenth century) high tea with the **Cotswold Cookery School**. Includes strawberry tartlets, apple tarts, marzipan hedgehogs and hot chocolate. All ingredients included, modern tastes carefully accommodated and tea for four to take home! Parents can drop and go.



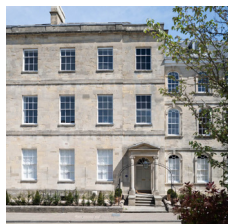
LOCAL HISTORY DISCOVERY DAY Cirencester Library, 11–3pm

Find Out All About Your Town, Street or Even House! £FREE drop in

Did you know that your local library holds a trove of historical records, including maps, newspaper archives and even subscriptions to genealogy websites such as ancestry.com – all free to Gloucestershire Libraries members! Join experts from Gloucestershire Archives and The Library to discover all the brilliant free tools available.

THE SECRETS OF DOLLAR STREET HOUSE Corinium Museum, 1–2pm

Restoring an Architectural Gem with **Charles Mullineux**. £12



30-32 Dollar Street, formerly known as Dollar Street House, was developed by lawyer Joseph Pitt (known locally for his work at Pittville Spa in Cheltenham) in 1725 as two splendid private residences. Its more recent history has been a common one for Cirencester's once-grand mansions: conversion into offices, with boardrooms replacing bedrooms and gardens making way for cars. Latterly, near dereliction left it on Historic England's national register of heritage at risk. Cheltenham-based architect **Charles Mullineux** reveals what it took to rescue one of Cirencester's most important historic buildings and restore it to its former glory, from original balustrades to Regency roof lanterns.

Event sponsored by Cirencester Civic Society

FROM ROMAN CORINIUM TO MEDIEVAL CYRESCESTRE RAU, 6–8pm

An Evening with Neil Holbrook and Simon Draper. Includes interval. £15



Everyone knows that Cirencester was an important Roman city and that the medieval town was dominated by an abbey. But how did the Roman city end and medieval town start, and what came in between? Cirencester is mentioned in Saxon and Welsh documents in the so-called Dark Ages but what exactly did they say? In an extended illustrated talk, Cotswold Archaeology's **Neil Holbrook** and **Simon Draper** of Victoria County History (VCH) examine how a once great city failed, ultimately to be replaced by something quite different, and what we can say about the bit in between. Includes brand new research from the VCH's ten-year project on Cirencester and surrounding parishes, due for publication in 2026.

Event sponsored by the Royal Agricultural University

ACTIVITIES



SPIES, CODES & HIEROGLYPHS Corinium Museum, 11:30–12:30pm

'Under Fire' WWII Espionage Workshop with **Sufiya Ahmed**. Age 8+, £6

It's 1943 and twelve-year-old Anglo-Indian boy Hasan is sent to Calcutta after his family's life in Coventry is upturned during the Blitz... Step into a world of inequality, secrets and decryption across continents with award-winning author **Sufiya Ahmed**, and even learn some Morse code! Includes codebreaking puzzles, reading, dressing up and Q&A plus signing afterwards at Octavia's Bookshop. Parents can drop and go.



THE LOST ART OF MENDING The Old Department Store, 11–4pm

Fix It with The Cirencester Workbench. £FREE drop in

Remember the days when things were precious and people knew how to look after them? Learn some practical skills and unlock your creativity at this free drop-in by **Cirencester Workbench**, from darning a sock to changing a plug or rejuvenating your secateurs. Bring along an object in need of some TLC and the Workbench volunteers will do their best to help!

THE MYSTERY OF THE COTSWOLD 'SPATHA' SWORDS Corinium Museum, 12–1pm Glenn Manning and Simon James. £12 (& discounted museum entry to see the swords).



In March 2023, homicide investigator **Glenn Manning** was at a detectorist rally in Willersey, North Cotswolds, when he recorded a strong signal on his machine.

What he initially thought to be a ring pull turned out to be one of the biggest and most significant detectorist finds ever unearthed in the Cotswolds: two exceptionally rare and richly decorated Roman swords, commonly known as spathae, along with remnants of their wooden scabbards and fitments. Subsequent excavations suggest the swords were buried at a grand Roman villa built on the site of an iron age settlement. HistoryExtra's **Dave Musgrove** interviews Glenn, alongside archaeologist **Simon James**, to get the full story – just as the restored swords go on display at the Corinium Museum.

JULIAN RICHARDS Ashcroft Church, 7–8pm Teenage Time Travel. £12



What would it be like to be a young person in the British Isles at different times in the past, even the very distant past? Would life have been freer, tougher, better or worse? What was it like before school, or the term 'teenager' was invented? Using a combination of traditional history, archaeology and the latest science, Stonehenge expert and much-loved presenter of BBC's *Meet the Ancestors* **Julian Richards** takes us on a brand-new journey of discovery to meet teens through the ages, from Stone Age apprentice hunter to Victorian chimney sweep. If you've hit those double-digit years, no matter how long ago, it's time for Teenage Time Travel!

Event organised and sponsored by Cirencester Archaeological & Historical Society

ACTIVITIES



THE LOST ART OF CORN DOLLIES New Brewery Arts 10–12:30 & 1–3:30pm Hands-On Workshop with Penny Maltby. All ages. £FREE drop in

Join maker and heritage craft expert **Penny Maltby** for a hands-on workshop celebrating one of our oldest rural traditions – corn dolly making! Learn how this humble material – straw – has shaped our communities, landscapes and customs for centuries and make your own corn dolly (or 'harvest trophy') using traditional methods. A perfect mix of craft, culture and countryside magic for all skill levels. Children accompanied by an adult please.



MAGICAL MEDIEVAL TALES Cirencester Library, 10:30–11:30pm An Interactive Storytelling Session with Elka Evalds. Age 5+, £FREE

Witches, giants, wolves and goblins: wondrous tales of the medieval world await! Come and enjoy an interactive, historical, medieval-inspired story session with children's author and historian **Elka Evalds**, and maybe you'll be brave enough to star in these tales yourself. Only children need to book but must be accompanied by an adult.

TALKS

BEYOND THE ARTS & CRAFTS SCENE The Kings Head, 9:30–11am

Sarah Beadsmoore and Valerie Michael. £12

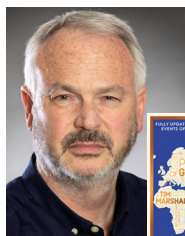


The Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen is the longest established association of professional makers in Britain, formed in 1933. Enjoy a buffet brunch with longstanding members **Sarah Beadsmoore**, textile designer and weaver, and **Valerie Michael**, author of *The Leatherworking Handbook* and designer/maker of hand stitched leather goods. Hear about the history of the guild plus stories of trips to Japan, Thailand and even an appearance on Trafalgar Square's Fourth Plinth!

Event organised by Cirencester Civic Society

TIM MARSHALL The Bingham Hall, 5–6pm

Prisoners of Geography. £12



Ten years since its first publication, **Tim Marshall's** international bestseller *Prisoners of Geography* has never felt more relevant. From China's ambitions to America's global power and as conflicts continue in Ukraine and the Middle East, he explores how geography shapes the world's politics and power struggles. Join the former Sky News Diplomatic Editor and foreign correspondent as he explains how geography is destiny and why understanding it is key to making sense of today's global events. 'Marshall is not afraid to ask tough questions and provide sharp answers.'

Newsweek

AN EVENING WITH MARY PORTAS & ANNIE GRAY The Bingham Hall, 7–8:30pm

The History & the Future of the High Street. £15



From medieval marketplace to Victorian butcher, baker and candlestick maker, the High Street was once the nerve centre of communities across Britain. But supermarkets, retail parks and online shopping have supplanted scores of high streets that once not only served communities' material needs but their social ones too. Join **Mary Portas**, the BBC's Queen of Shops, and **Annie Gray**, social historian and star of BBC R4's *The Kitchen Cabinet*, to discuss the past and future of the British High Street and explore what history can teach us about developing a consumer culture that might just keep our towns alive and thriving. Chaired by Festival President, **Dame Fiona Reynolds**, and introduced by the Long Table's **Tom Herbert**.

ACTIVITIES



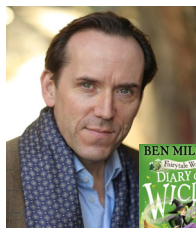
HISTORICAL COSTUMES New Brewery Arts, 10–12:30pm and 1:30–4pm

Kings and Queens of Stage and Screen with the Barn Theatre. Age 5+ (ish). £FREE drop in

From *SIX The Musical* to *Sinbad* and *Spamalot*, history's kings and queens are never far from the stage, providing some of the best stories, drama — and of course outfits — out there! Join the Barn Theatre's costume team for a hands-on workshop to make a historical royal accessory, from crowns to ruffs, scabbards, cuffs and glamorous jewellery, and learn some traditional old-fashioned costume making skills along the way. Adult supervision required.



BEN MILLER Corinium Museum & afterwards at Octavia's Bookshop, 11–12pm
Diary of a Wicked Witch. Age 7+ (ish). £12



Potions, magic and spells at the ready! Come and see actor, comedian and bestselling author **Ben Miller** introduce the latest story in his Fairytale Woods series: *Diary of the Wicked Witch*. Find out what Ben finds so inspiring about traditional fairy stories, what it takes to bring them up to date and why the Wicked Witch is so newt-poppingly furious! Halloween laughs guaranteed in this fun event for the whole family, with a reading, illustrated talk, Q&A, prizes for the best fancy dress witch or wizard and signing afterwards at Octavia's Bookshop.

HALLOWEEN SURPRISE WITH FAMILIAR SPIRITS! The Bingham Hall, 8–9:30pm
One-Night-Only Screening and Q&A. Age 15+ (ish). £15



'What's got four eyes, four legs, multiple BAFTAs and a lifelong fascination with the paranormal? The answer is a Halloween night to go down in history! Follow us on social media and join our mailing list at cirencesterhistoryfestival.org, where all shall be revealed... And make sure you come dressed to distress — historical Halloween costumes are highly encouraged.

ACTIVITIES



HOW WE LEARNT TO WRITE Cirencester Library, 1:30–2:30pm
A Hands-On History of Writing, from Clay to Biro. Age 7+, £FREE

Come and learn all about the history of how we write things down – from clay tablets and slates to quills and the modern biro – with local author and artist **Sarah Hitchcock**. Have a go at making your very own writing tablet and grapple with a real quill and scroll. Only children need to book, but must be accompanied by an adult.



CHOCOLATE, DEATH & DIA DE LOS MUERTOS New Brewery Arts, 11–12:30pm
Come and Make Chocolate the Authentic Historical Way! Age 15+ (ish), £15

Join food historian and archaeologist **Emma Kay** and work with historical Mexican artefacts to learn about chocolate's symbolic value – and grizzly role – in traditional Day of the Dead rituals. After grinding and blending cocoa beans to make an authentic spiced drink, take a trip across the Atlantic and find out how European tastes transformed chocolate into the commercialised Halloween staple we would recognise today. Master new skills and ancient techniques and walk away with a seasonal treat!

BENDOR GROSVENOR Cirencester Parish Church, 2–3pm

The Invention of British Art. £12

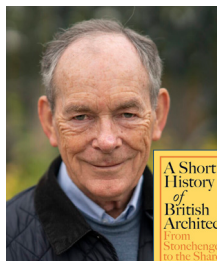


Join the nation's leading art historian **Bendor Grosvenor**, co-presenter of the BBC series *Britain's Lost Masterpieces*, for a dazzling illustrated journey through the history of British art. Was it the individual genius of artists like Hogarth and Constable that made British art 'great'? Or were their careers shaped by a distinctly 'British' society, culture and history? He reveals how British art was shaped and he challenges what we think we know about our national artistic identity. 'Inventive, profound, fabulously quirky, Bendor Grosvenor's journey to the heart of British art takes him in directions that have never previously been trodden... A triumph', Waldemar Januszczak

Event sponsored by The Arts Society Corinium

SIMON JENKINS Cirencester Parish Church, 4–5pm

A History of British Architecture: Who is to Blame? £12



From the ancient mystery of Stonehenge to the thrusting confidence of The Shard, bestselling author, journalist and conservationist **Simon Jenkins** tells the turbulent story of British architecture. Discover how, for a millennium, our towns and cities were shaped by the competing European traditions of classicism and gothic, and how postwar planners and architects ripped up the rule book. As historic centres were swept aside for tower blocks and flyovers, Simon spearheaded a conservation movement that urges us to consider the significance of our built environment, and what it says about our history and values. Join him in the gothic splendour of Cirencester's twelfth-century wool church to hear how the battles of the past live on today and how we can protect what's left of Britain's architectural soul.

JOHN SUCHET Cirencester Parish Church, 6:30–7:30pm

In Search of Beethoven. £12



For over 30 years **John Suchet** was an ITN reporter and newscaster, covering world events including the Iran Revolution and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, then presenting *News At Ten*. Now as a broadcaster on Classic FM, he shares his lifelong passion for the music of Beethoven. Join him for a gripping talk as he traces the composer's footsteps from his early years in Bonn to his dying days in Vienna, taking us on a journey through Beethoven's world and demonstrating the life changing power of great music. 'From palaces to war zones, John Suchet goes on a Beethoven odyssey.' *Daily Telegraph*

Event sponsored by Postscript Books



18TH CENTURY BOTANICAL COLLAGE New Brewery Arts, 11–3pm

Flower Collage Inspired by Mary Delany. Age 7+. £FREE drop in

Step into the colourful world of Mary Delany, an 18th-century artist who used tiny pieces of coloured paper to create stunning flowers so realistic that even her friends thought they were real. Now it's your turn! Join us for a fun and hands-on collaging activity where families can cut, stick, and create their own paper blooms, just like Mary did over 200 years ago, while discovering a little more about Mary's fascinating life, her love of nature, and how she turned everyday paper into a masterpiece. Materials provided. Children accompanied by an adult please.

Event sponsored by the Bathurst Estate



THE OLD STATION EXPERIENCE Old Station Car Park, 10-4pm

Behind the Lines Tour, Exhibition, Listening Project & VR Experience. £FREE drop in

Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and opened in 1841, Cirencester Town was one of three stations that plugged Cirencester into the national network during the golden age of rail. Come for a behind-the-scenes tour hosted by local architect and new owner, **Jonathan Rixon**, who has dared to rescue the building from dereliction. Also includes a pop-up exhibition and community 'listening project' from those who remember the station in its heyday; plus virtual reality experience of the Victorian station developed for the festival by Rixon Architects with Cirencester College design students. Tea, coffee and light refreshments served on the old platform!

Event sponsored by the Daniel Bingham Foundation



THE LOST ART OF ANCIENT GRAINS The Long Table, 11–12pm

Learn to Mill and Bake the Old Way with Tom Herbert. £15

Combine the best of the past with a nod to the future by learning how to stone mill and bake your own sourdough flatbread with ancient grain from Abbey Home Farm, topped with pesto of ground elder, which was brought to Britain for salads by the Romans! Followed by an optional pay-as-you-feel lunch with Tom and the team. Bring your own apron.

This event & charity partner session (see p.18) sponsored by Cotswold Lakes Brew Co



CHEDWORTH ON THE LOOSE! Cirencester Market, 9–5pm

Roman People, Roman Stuff with the National Trust £FREE

Step into Roman Britain as the Chedworth Roman Villa team bring the countryside to the heart of town, setting out their stall at Cirencester Market, just next to the War Memorial in the Market Place. Meet real Roman characters such as Appian the master mosaicist as he demonstrates the techniques that created some of Britain's finest floors, and handle genuine Roman artefacts and replicas, from mosaic pieces and ancient bones to everyday pottery and intricate jewellery.

HELEN FRY The Bingham Hall, 2–3pm

The White Lady: The Story of British Secret Service Networks Behind German Lines. £12



Helen Fry, one of Britain's most pre-eminent historians of 20th century espionage, unlocks the latest declassified archives to tell the remarkable story of two of the most important British Secret Service networks for the first time. At the heart of MI6's war efforts were two Belgian networks, WW1's The White Lady and its WW2 successor The Clarence Service. Who were the brave agents who acted as couriers, saboteurs and spies? How did they smuggle vital intelligence from behind enemy lines? In a brand new talk, hear how the agents risked their lives to gain control of Europe from Germany and the profound impact they had on the outcome of both World Wars.

HELEN CASTOR The Bingham Hall, 4–5pm

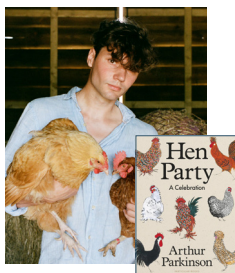
The Eagle and the Hart: The Tragedy of Richard II & Henry IV. £12



Bestselling Cambridge historian and broadcaster **Helen Castor** is the author of *She-Wolves* which became a major BBC2 series. She joins us for a compelling event exploring the intertwined lives and reigns of medieval Kings Richard II and Henry IV. The story of two cousins whose rivalry brought their nation to the brink of disintegration and back again, two men whose lives played out in extraordinary parallel until Henry deposed the tyrant Richard and declared himself King in 1399. Join her to hear 'a dazzling tour de force of epic royal history: a compulsive and unputdownable real-life thriller, a gripping portrait of ruthless power politics and a study of British tyranny', Simon Sebag Montefiore.

ARTHUR PARKINSON The Bingham Hall, 6:30–7:30pm

The Good Life: A Celebration of Fowls and Flowers. £12



'Home to roost', 'pecking order', 'rule the roost', 'hen pecked': one look at the English language reveals how chickens have been our domestic companions since time immemorial. Bestselling writer, gardener and top henfluencer **Arthur Parkinson** talks to Festival President **Dame Fiona Reynolds** about his long fascination with heritage breed chickens, as well as his passion for old-fashioned, nature-friendly gardening and the perils of modern consumer culture. Whether you're an experienced hen keeper, dreaming of the good life or just enjoy Arthur's stories about his beloved 'ladies', join us for what promises to be a unique and thoroughly entertaining illustrated talk – the ultimate hen party!

Event sponsored by Cacklebean Eggs



**Gloucester
History Festival**



**Cirencester
History Festival**

Gloucester History Festival

6th-21st September 2025

Alice Roberts, Frank Skinner, Celia Imrie, Peter Frankopan, Lyse Doucet, Michael Heseltine, Alan Johnson, Greg Jenner and David Olusoga are among the 150 top historians, actors and broadcasters appearing at Gloucester's magical Blackfriars Priory, home of England's oldest surviving library.

Enjoy the Festival in person in Gloucester or wherever you are with the Digital Festival. Buy tickets for online talks until 12 October.

Save the Date!
Gloucester
History Festival
Spring Weekend
is back 17-19
April 2026

The Winstone Talk

Putin and the Return of History: How the Kremlin Rekindled the Cold War

Martin Sixsmith

Saturday 25th October

6.30 – 7.30pm Cirencester Parish Church £12

Putin's invasion of Ukraine, Trump's second term and current conflicts in the Middle East mark one of the most challenging periods in Europe's history since WW2. Former BBC Correspondent and leading historian Martin Sixsmith traces the historical forces and myths shaping Putin's politics, explores Russia's influence on current global conflicts and reveals how the Kremlin is rekindling the Cold War.



Book Martin Sixsmith tickets: gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk or cirencesterhistoryfestival.org

Tickets and information: gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk

GOING ON ALL WEEK: WALKS, TOURS, TALKS,

All events on this page are organised by festival partners.

GOING ON ALL WEEK

ON DISPLAY ALL WEEK AT THE CORINIUM MUSEUM (OPEN: MON-SAT 10AM-5PM; SUN 2-5PM):

- AMY JEFFS EXHIBITION OF WOODCUTS INSPIRED BY MEDIEVAL SAINTS (SEE TALK ON SAT 25 OCT).
- CHARLIE COOPER'S DETECTORIST FINDS (SEE TALK ON SAT 25 OCT).
- SPATHA SWORDS (SEE TALK ON WED 28 OCT).
- NEWLY RESTORED ROMAN TETTINE CUP, ORIGINALLY FOUND AT THE BRIDGES GARAGE SITE WITH THE CHILD'S BRONZE & ENAMEL COCKEREL THAT INSPIRED OUR FESTIVAL LOGO.
- 'BRICKUS ORPHEUS' TRAIL. PART OF PROJECT ORPHEUS, CELEBRATING 200 YEARS SINCE THE DISCOVERY OF CIRENCESTER'S FAMOUS ORPHEUS MOSAIC (ALSO ON DISPLAY IN THE MUSEUM).

COME & PLAY SOME ANCIENT GAMES IN CIRENCESTER LIBRARY. £FREE.

A SELECTION OF ROMAN BOARD GAMES LENT BY CHEDWORTH ROMAN VILLA FOR FESTIVAL WEEK.

EXHIBITION: SALVATION ARMY HALL, THOMAS ST. (OPEN: MON-SAT 11AM-4PM; SUN 2:30-4PM) . HISTORY OF THE OLDEST TEMPERANCE BUILDING IN THE WEST COUNTRY, BUILT IN 1846. £FREE

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION: HISTORICAL CIRENCESTER: A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE. DANIEL BINGHAM FOUNDATION GALLERY, DYER ST. (OPEN: 9:30-4PM MON-FRI; 10:30-3:30PM SAT) £FREE. DISPLAY OF WINNERS IN A COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION ORGANISED BY CIRENCESTER ROTARY CLUB & CONCORDFOTO, SUPPORTED BY CIRENCESTER CIVIC SOCIETY.

SAT
25
OCT

11AM **WALK: CIRENCESTER IN THE CIVIL WAR.** BOOK VIA CORINIUMMUSEUM.ORG

2:30PM **TOWN WALK:** CIRENCESTER CIVIC SOCIETY (£FREE). MEET AT PARISH CHURCH. *

SUN
26
OCT

11AM **WALK: THE HARE TRAIL RELAUNCHED** (£FREE). MEET OUTSIDE CORINIUM MUSEUM.

2:30PM **TOWN WALK:** CIRENCESTER CIVIC SOCIETY (£FREE). MEET AT PARISH CHURCH. *

7-9PM **FILM: THE RETURN** (15). BARN THEATRE. BOOK: BARNTHEATRE.ORG.UK

MON
27
OCT

10-4PM NEW BREWERY ARTS ADULTS' WORKSHOP: **INK FROM PLANTS WITH FIONA MCINTYRE.** BOOK: NEWBREWERYARTS.ORG.UK

10:30-1:30PM **FILM: INDIANA JONES & THE DIAL OF DESTINY** (12A). BOOK: BARNTHEATRE.ORG.UK

2-4:15PM **FILM: DOWNTON ABBEY: THE GRAND FINALE** (PG). BOOK: BARNTHEATRE.ORG.UK

TUE
28
OCT

11AM **WALK: ROMAN CIRENCESTER.** BOOK VIA CORINIUMMUSEUM.ORG

2:30PM **PARISH CHURCH GUIDED TOUR.** NO BOOKING REQUIRED. *

2:30PM **WW2 WALK,** LIVING MEMORY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION (£FREE). MEET AT AIR RAID SHELTER. *

EXHIBITIONS, WORKSHOPS, FILMS & GAMES

Please visit their websites for booking & further info.

WED
29
OCT

10–12PM **TALK: THE AMAZING MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY** BY CIRENCESTER U3A MILITARY HISTORY GROUP, COXWELL ROOM, CIRENCESTER BAPTIST CHURCH. £5 ON THE DOOR, INC TEA / COFFEE.

10–4PM NEW BREWERY ARTS ADULTS' WORKSHOP: **NEEDLEFELT MEDIEVAL MARGINALIA WITH SARAH RICHARDS**. BOOK: NEWBREWERYARTS.ORG.UK

10:30AM **PARISH CHURCH GUIDED TOUR**. NO BOOKING REQUIRED. *

11AM **WALK: VOTES FOR WOMEN WITH SUE JONES**. BOOK VIA CORINIUMMUSEUM.ORG

THUR
30
OCT

10–4PM NEW BREWERY ARTS UNDER 18S WORKSHOP: **INK FROM PLANTS WITH FIONA MCINTYRE**. BOOK: NEWBREWERYARTS.ORG.UK

10AM, 2PM & 6PM: **BINGHAM HOUSE AND GALLERY TOUR** (£FREE)*
BOOK: INFO@DANIELBINGHAMFOUNDATION.ORG.UK

11AM **WALK: MEDIEVAL CIRENCESTER**. BOOK VIA CORINIUMMUSEUM.ORG

12:30PM **TOUR OF OLD DEPARTMENT STORE**. BOOK VIA THEOLDDEPARTMENTSTORE.CO.UK

2:30PM **PARISH CHURCH GUIDED TOUR**. NO BOOKING REQUIRED. *

5–6PM **TALK: A JOURNEY THROUGH STORIES: 120 YEARS OF THE BINGHAM LIBRARY & THE HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATED BOOKS** (AGE 11+, £3). LIBRARY. BOOK: GLOSLIBRARIES.UK/EVENTS

FRI
31
OCT

10:30AM **PARISH CHURCH GUIDED TOUR**. NO BOOKING REQUIRED. *

12:30PM **TOUR OF OLD DEPARTMENT STORE**. BOOK VIA THEOLDDEPARTMENTSTORE.CO.UK

2:30PM **TOWN WALK: CIRENCESTER CIVIC SOCIETY** (FREE). MEET AT PARISH CHURCH. *

SAT
1
NOV

10–12:30 & 1:30–4PM NEW BREWERY ARTS ADULTS' WORKSHOP: **CYANOTYPES WITH LAURINDA BELLEW**. BOOK: NEWBREWERYARTS.ORG.UK

10–11.30AM & 12.30–2PM **OUTDOOR LIVING HISTORY WORKSHOP** (AGE 7+, £FREE). WHITTILING, FIRE-MAKING, GRINDING GRAIN & BREAD MAKING AT CIRENCESTER COLLEGE. BOOK: SUNDIAL-THEATRE.CO.UK

11AM **CIRENCESTER WOOL WALK**. BOOK VIA CORINIUMMUSEUM.ORG

12:30PM **TOUR OF OLD DEPARTMENT STORE**. BOOK VIA THEOLDDEPARTMENTSTORE.CO.UK

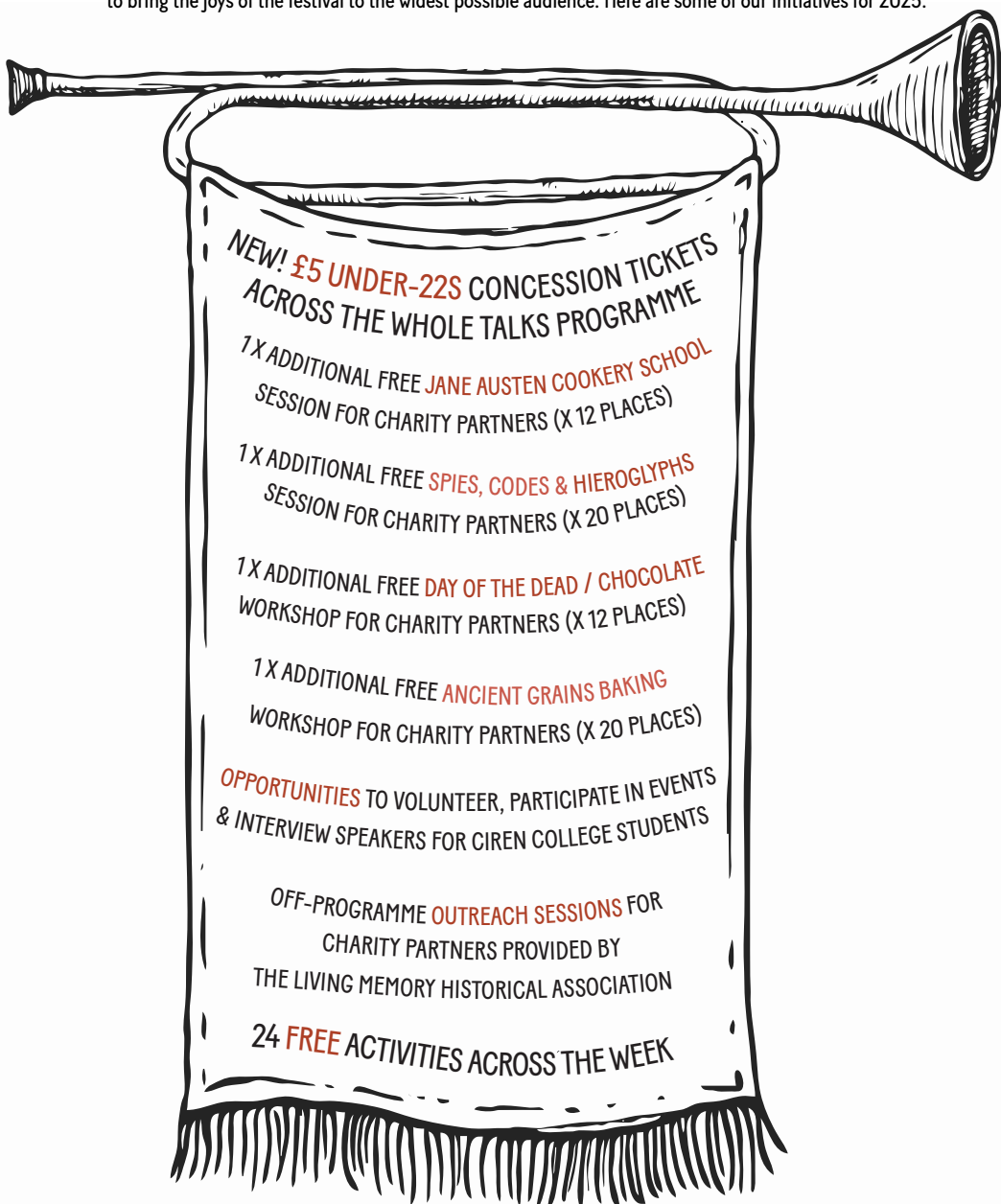
2:30PM **TOWN WALK: CIRENCESTER CIVIC SOCIETY** (FREE). MEET AT PARISH CHURCH. *

SUN
2
NOV

2:30PM **WALK: PUBS PAST & PRESENT**. CIRENCESTER CIVIC SOCIETY (FREE). MEET AT PARISH CHURCH. *

CIRENCESTER HISTORY FESTIVAL IN THE COMMUNITY.

We're very proud to collaborate with and champion our brilliant local cultural organisations, schools and charities, and to bring the joys of the festival to the widest possible audience. Here are some of our initiatives for 2025:



NEW! **£5 UNDER-22S** CONCESSION TICKETS
ACROSS THE WHOLE TALKS PROGRAMME

1 X ADDITIONAL FREE **JANE AUSTEN COOKERY SCHOOL**
SESSION FOR CHARITY PARTNERS (X 12 PLACES)

1 X ADDITIONAL FREE **SPIES, CODES & HIEROGLYPHS**
SESSION FOR CHARITY PARTNERS (X 20 PLACES)

1 X ADDITIONAL FREE **DAY OF THE DEAD / CHOCOLATE**
WORKSHOP FOR CHARITY PARTNERS (X 12 PLACES)

1 X ADDITIONAL FREE **ANCIENT GRAINS BAKING**
WORKSHOP FOR CHARITY PARTNERS (X 20 PLACES)

OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER, PARTICIPATE IN EVENTS
& INTERVIEW SPEAKERS FOR CIREN COLLEGE STUDENTS

OFF-PROGRAMME **OUTREACH SESSIONS** FOR
CHARITY PARTNERS PROVIDED BY
THE LIVING MEMORY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

24 **FREE** ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE WEEK

Please get in touch if you would like to support us, whether by volunteering or becoming a Friend or Patron.
email: di@cirencesterhistoryfestival.org

WITH THANKS TO OUR PATRONS & SPONSORS

We couldn't do it without you!



The K D Winstone
Charitable Trust



Cirencester
Society in
London

Jeremy
Lodwick

Sir Michael
McWilliam

Dame Fiona
Reynolds

Paul & Vivian
Styles

Anna
Vaughan

With special thanks to the Woodroffe Benton Foundation & The Organic Farm Shop for their support helping young people access the arts, culture and heritage by subsidising our £5 youth tickets.



This programme is printed using vegetable-based inks on FSC accredited paper from recycled and sustainable sources.



MAP

- 1 Old Station
- 2 Corinium Museum
- 3 Octavia's Hall
- 4 Salvation Army
- 5 New Brewery Arts
- 6 Ascroft Church
- 7 Parish Church
- 8 Kings Head
- 9 Long Table & Old Dip Store
- 10 Library
- 11 Waterloos Hall
- 12 Bingham Hall
- 13 Barn Theatre
- 14 R.A.U
- 15 Cirencester College
- 16 Baptist Church
- Public Car Park
- Birmingham Hall Car Parking Only

