

Blacon History Newsletter

October 2021



Welcome to the Blacon History newsletter, the Newsletter goes out either digitally or in printed format to a large number of Blacon residents. Our main aim is to research and distribute local historical information to our membership and the wider Blacon & Chester community. Additionally to work with the local community and schools to enable residents old and young to discover their local history and provide a sense of belonging. To work with other institutions to enhance and provide a local learning resource for those who are able and unable to access new technology.

Please contact us at blaconhistory@gmail.com

Or take a look at our website <http://www.blaconhistorygroup.org/>

For more information If you are unable to access technology then contact either

Dave Cartwright on 07854 681886 or Alan Smith on 07932556062

Blacon in the English Civil War

The English Civil War started in 1642 when Charles I raised his royal standard in Nottingham. The split between Charles and Parliament was such that neither side was willing to back down over the principles that they held and war was inevitable as a way in which all problems could be solved. The country split into those who supported the king and those who supported Parliament – the classic ingredients for a civil war .

Religion was a major factor in the conflict as parliament was occupied by many Puritans who feared King and his Catholic Queen would bring their children up as Catholics . Money also had a major impact King Charles had become tired of being refused funds to finance his life style and military operations.

Chester like many other places was taken by surprise by the news that a war had started between the King and parliament and initially like many other places tried to avoid being dragged into the conflict. But soon pressure was applied from both the King and parliament in forcing cities and towns to declare their support for the opposing sides.

Most of the gentry and wealthy traders in the city sided with the King including William Gamuel the wealthy leather trader. Parliament had their own puritan supporters in the area led by William Brereton a local land owner. In 1643 Brereton raised an army with their head quarters in Nantwich.

Chester was important to the Royalists as it was an important route for both the arrival of troops loyal to the King from North Wales and Ireland and holding it was of vital importance. In the early stages of the war the royalists gained the momentum but by 1644 the city commander Capell was replaced by

lord Byron who had been brought in by the King to try and halt the Roundheads advance.

Prince Rupert the military commander and cousin of the King came to the city in the same year and dug a trench for artillery along the site of Rock lane which is close to the site of where the entrance to the University of Chester is today. The Roundheads occupied the land close to Bache Hall near Morrisons and the lower reaches towards Blacon.

The Royalist forces in the city had also been careful not to leave any buildings outside the city for the Roundheads to make use of. This resulted in Royalists burning down Blacon Hall a large country house which once stood close to the site of where the Blacon nature park at the top of Gorst hill stands today. Farms and dwellings in Blacon may have also suffered the same fate under the scorched earth strategy used by the Kings forces.



Blacon Hall may have been like this

The Roundheads may have also travelled through Blacon when they made their assault on Morgan's mount on the City walls.

King Charles himself came to Chester in 1645 and while watching his armies defeat at Rowton from the Phoenix tower came close to becoming a victim of the battle, after a musket ball fired from just outside the wall by parliament forces just missed him narrowly. Fearing for his own safety the King fled and left the city under the command of Lord Byron once again.

In February 1646 after a long siege with many of the occupants starving and resorting to eating rats. Lord Byron's Royalist forces in Chester finally surrendered to William Brereton Roundheads bringing the battle of Chester to an end.

Halloween and All Saints Eve

By the time this monthly newsletter reaches you we will be in the period known as Halloween. or All Saints Eve and according to Wikipedia below :-

*“**Halloween** also known as **All Saints' Eve**, is a celebration [observed in many countries](#) on 31 October, the eve of the [Western Christian](#) feast of [All Hallows' Day](#). It begins the observance of [Allhallowtide](#), the time in the [liturgical year](#) dedicated to remembering the dead, including [saints](#) (hallows), [martyrs](#), and all the departed”.*

Due to its long existence our City has a vast array of stories and fables which are well documented and if you want to learn more about the past here are just two different alternatives listed below:-

1.Chester, City of Ghosts

By Mary Ann Cameron

“People have lived and died in Chester for over 2,000 years, and stories of ghosts have swirled around the city all that time. What is unusual about the city is the frequency of new sightings – fresh examples of paranormal activity.

Chester, City of Ghosts is a handy guide to these hauntings, both past and present, and clearly shows why Chester is in the running for most actively haunted settlement in the country. Read the stories, follow the maps, visit the buildings and soon you will agree – and you might even experience some ghostly activity yourself...”

2. Haunted Chester: A Spooky Stroll around the Roman-Walled City

“If you like ghostly goings-on and spooky stories, then this walking tour around the centre of the historic city of Chester offers tantalising tales of the supernatural.

We'll visit some familiar landmarks — but don't expect a dry history lecture. I know my home city well and will be highlighting some of the hidden corners that you don't find on typical tours. After all, I'm a local boy and I'll be sharing my insider knowledge.

On this tour, you'll hear about:

- Roman soldiers still guarding their historic garrison
- The grisly tale of Chester's last public execution
- The ghostly monk that haunts the city's spookiest passageway
- Chester's only official exorcism

Allow one hour for this walk. There are plenty of cafes and bars along the route for a quick coffee stop”

Tour Producer



David Atkinson

“Hi, I'm a Chester-based writer and tourist guide. I run a blog about travel around my home patch of Chester and North Wales. Find out more at www.atkinsondavid.com/tour-guiding.”

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We at Blacon History Group will look now forward to hearing about any of your own personal experiences if you would like to share them with us ?

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If you are interested in the History of the Celts and you are able to access BBC I player you might want to take a look at the this series of Programmes produced by the BBC and follow the link below. The Last in the series talks about the Roman attack on the Druids in Anglesey and the Roman victory over Boudica. The wooden Roman fort at Blacon may have been important in staging this attack and the Roman's based there may have been involved in the attack on Anglesey and the battle against Boudica.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b06kpzcv/the-celts-blood-iron-and-sacrifice-with-alice-roberts-and-neil-oliver->