



Chester Times

June 2023

u3a learn,
laugh,
live
Chester

Musings from the Chair

Your committee has decided that, starting in September, we will move our regular Tuesday meeting from the morning of the first Tuesday of each month to the afternoon. The Festival Church will be needed for its own activities on Tuesday mornings. We looked at various alternative locations and times but decided that it remains our preferred location for a variety of reasons. One of the key features is that we can stream and record the proceedings at very good quality and this has helped us to triple the audience for each of our Tuesday sessions. There are usually 70 or more members in the room, but the total number who have seen and heard the presentation by the end of the month is typically 300. This is almost a third of our membership, and we don't want to endanger this great outreach.

This month's **Wow!** was to have featured my favourite equations. However I have been advised by those close to me that this would be inaccessible to many readers so I have chosen another topic. If, however, you do have a favourite equation please email me. If I get a good response I might re-consider for a future month.

So, as a replacement I have chosen films, thereby making more problems for myself because there are so many to choose from. I am sure that I will omit

your favourites but I console myself with one of the best closing lines in the movies: "Nobody's perfect" (Joe E Brown in *Some Like it Hot*).

Another film with a memorable last line is *Casablanca*, which I used to say was my favourite film. On mature reflection (although maturity does not necessarily bring wisdom) I now prefer *Closely Observed Trains*. This is a tragi-comedy directed by the Czech Jiri Menzel in 1966, which seems to have been renamed *Closely Watched Trains* - a much less euphonious title. My list continues with *Thelma and Louise*, *The Last Picture Show*, *Cinema Paradiso* and *The Euler Identity*. I must stop myself there or I will run out of space.

For their body of work I nominate François Truffaut and Alfred Hitchcock. Nearly everyone likes Hitchcock but I have a particular penchant for French films, in which the characters seem unafraid of discussing ideas and emotions.

I notice that I have included no British film and only one British director: Should there be more in my list?

PS: Did you notice that I slipped in an equation after all? *The Euler Identity*, Leonhard Euler, 18th century, but not a film.

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Tuesday Monthly Meetings

Festival Church, Queen Street, Chester, 10.00am for 10.30am start

6th June: History Repeating Itself? The 2023 Gaziantep (SE Turkey) earthquake disaster, by Dr. Martin Degg, Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Environment, University of Chester

The February 2023 earthquakes that occurred in the district of Gaziantep caused widespread destruction in south-eastern Turkey and northern Syria, making over 1.5 million people homeless and killing circa 60,000. In the immediate aftermath of the events President Erdoğan stated that 'it's impossible to prepare for disasters this big' (BBC, Feb 6).

This talk explores the naturalness of disasters such as this in the context of the longer-term seismic history and recent record of earthquake impact in Turkey, and relates the 2023 loss experience to the current UN agenda for disaster risk reduction.



Photo: M Degg

Thursday Monthly Meetings

St Columba's Church Hall, 10.00am for 10.30am start

15th June: 'Lorna, Her Life in Belfast' - Lorna Thompson
'Send My Friend to School' - Elise Holly and Emily Middleditch

Lorna will be telling us about life in Northern Ireland, from the beautiful scenery through to the troubles; she will also be telling you about her Ireland away from Belfast. It is also an opportunity for you to get to know Lorna as she will be replacing me at St Columba's for the Thursday meetings. I will remain in the background working on the speaker list.

After Lorna's presentation we have the opportunity to listen to Elise and Emily, who have been selected to take part in the campaign 'Education in Emergencies'. Together with many other schools who are coming together to say 'Let My Friends Learn', they are asking the UK Government to Prepare, Protect, Invest and Act, so that every child can learn in times of emergencies. In April Elise and Emily presented to Parliament a report outlining the reasons why the UK Government should invest in education in emergencies.



Elise and Emily will be accompanied by a teacher from their school
Please support Lorna, Elise and Emily

Jenny and Lorna (Thursday team)



Social Events

Thursday 22nd June: Canal Trip from The Cheshire Cat, Christleton Road to Wharton Lock.

Please arrive at the car park of the Cheshire Cat by 9.15am and walk through the gate onto the canal towpath. You will need to bring a packed lunch but free tea/coffee and biscuits will be provided. We will return around 3.30pm. Our boat is called Pot of Gold. £15.



Friday the 11th August: Shrewsbury Flower Show

A really good day out with plants, talks, demos, shows and of course flowers. Plenty of eating places too. Pick up at Hough Green at 9.00am, Delamere St at 9.10 and Sainsbury's at 9.20. £29, if paid by end of June.

For any of the above trips, please contact Liz on 01244 341097 or see her at the meetings



A photo of our trip to Liverpool on 10th May for our cruise on the River Mersey.

We enjoyed the ambience of being in Liverpool at this special time. It was a good thing that we got the 11am ferry as the queue for the 12 o'clock was enormous.

Photography Group

Here are some of the photographs which were submitted this month on the subject of architecture. We are not telling you for the moment where these were taken, as we thought you might like the challenge of working them out. The names of the photographers are given below each one. Hopefully, all will be revealed next month!



Dave Clapperton



Ian Nixon



John Quinn



David Leach



Alan Millard



Jane Dodd



Jo Poppy

Thursday Strollers

The group meets on the first and third Thursdays of every month, aiming to leave at 10.30am. We usually do a round trip from a pub/eatery. The walks are about 3.5 to 4 miles and take about 2 hours. Walks are mainly within 30 minutes drive from Chester and are not arduous, hence the name - Strollers.

Suitable footwear for country walking is suggested. Organisers give information by email on hazards such as stiles and steep or muddy bits.

We go to a pub or similar for an optional lunch after the walk. Menu choices usually have to be given to the walk organiser in advance. Members pair up to organise a month's worth of walks at a time, according to a rota.

Recent walks have included a trip around the city walls, a walk along the canal near Bunbury and a visit to the Port Sunlight River Park, with great views over the Mersey.

Here are some comments/feedback from newer members:

Sue – 'I joined when I retired, to do more walking. Been on some great walks to places I didn't know existed and also some lovely meals; places that I wouldn't have gone to on my own. However one



memorable time we arrived at the Ship in Parkgate like drowned rats. Lesson learnt, always wear the right gear or bring a change of clothes! The other members are very friendly and I look forward to our walks.'

Gilly – 'I joined the Strollers in the Autumn of 2022. The group facilitator was helpful and friendly as were all of the group members. I enjoyed every walk. They have been gentle strolls through different places in the local area. And then we have lunch together!

Graham - Without further ado, I apply for join the Strollers. Look forward to seeing you, very friendly group.

Pam Rushworth (Group co-ordinator)



Groups News

The **Wine Appreciation Group** began meeting on Zoom in 2020 and is meeting (very successfully) monthly in person now. They have had a number of approaches from people who are interested in joining, However, mainly because of limitations of space at venues plus the number of tasting measures that can be squeezed out of a bottle of wine, the group isn't able to take any more members. I would be very happy to facilitate setting up a new group, so do please get in touch to register an interest in developing WAG2 by emailing Mal Waite at groups@chesteru3a.org.uk.

The **Poetry Appreciation Group** is currently looking for two new members to join our group. We meet on the third Tuesday afternoon at 2pm at members' houses in the Chester area. Please contact Thelma Stockley, Group Coordinator. Email poetryappreciation@chesteru3a.org.uk.

Singing for Pleasure

Chester u3a had a thriving Singing for Pleasure group which met in person until the beginning of 2020 and on Zoom for a year or so after that. I had the pleasure of leading and accompanying it during that time. However, there came the day when the group was unable to find a new coordinator, and according to our constitution that means that the group could not continue. I have been contacted by a number of people, both former members and potential new ones, asking if the group can start up again. I am happy to try to facilitate forming a new group but to make it happen, we need two things, or more specifically, people:

1. A coordinator – it shouldn't be an arduous job but the accompanist is unable to deal with the mechanics of liaising with members, setting up the meeting and collecting money as well as the music.
2. An accompanist – sadly, my voice has changed in the last few years and, although I can still sing, I can no longer sing for two hours in the keys necessary to give the singers a lead.

So, would you be interested in joining a new Singing for Pleasure group?

Would you be prepared to coordinate such a group?

Do you play an instrument and would you like to accompany a group of enthusiastic singers who just want to enjoy singing together for fun? (I am happy to offer help and can pass on the music that was used in the past, if it's of any use.)

Please get in touch with me at groups@chesteru3a.org.uk



Source: openclipart.org

History Group

We are coming towards the end of our project on the history of the Netherlands, and will be starting work on 'History through Maps' at our July meeting (27th July). Members of the group have found it interesting to look at Dutch history which is a subject that very few of us were at all familiar with before we embarked on this topic. I'm confident that the same will be true for our work on maps, which is what we'll be concentrating on for the rest of this year.

We'll be looking at how maps can help us to understand the history of particular places at various times, taking into consideration who compiled them and for what reason. How far could they be relied on? How far were they accurate? This won't be so much a history of cartography as a look at the usefulness of maps as historical source material. We'll cover a very extensive period of time, from ancient Greek and Roman maps, through to modern developments such as aerial photography, Lidar and GPS - and everything in between!



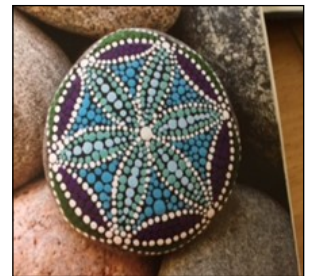
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We have room to take some new members, so if you are interested please email history@chesteru3a.org.uk for more information. We meet at All Saints Church Hall in Hoole on the 4th Thursday of each month. With our new topic starting in July, now would be a good time for us to welcome new members.

New Craft Group

This new group is now meeting on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, from 10:30 - 12:30 at Hoole Community Centre, Westminster Road, Hoole. There is plenty of parking available at the centre, and a great community café on site too.

The group is open to everyone to do whichever craft they would like, sharing individual expertise or learning new crafts together, or simply concentrating on your favourite craft. Knitting, crochet, mandala stone painting, bunting, quilting, needle felting, quilling, card making, cross-stitch, glass painting are some of the crafts that members are planning to do. If you are interested in attending or for more information please contact the group co-ordinator via the groups link (groups@chesteru3a.org.uk)



Traintrips Group

On **Thursday 8 June** we are going to the Ffestiniog Railway, taking the 08:55 train from Chester to Blaenau Ffestiniog and then the steam heritage railway down to Porthmadog. We'll be returning to Chester at 19:49. You will need to buy your train tickets. Contact the group organiser, Michael Ross, at traintrips@chesteru3a.org.uk for more details.

On **Friday 9 June** there is an evening Music Train on the Mid-Cheshire Line from Chester to Knutsford. Music on the 18:56 train to Knutsford and at the pub (the Angel on King Street) is by Nelson Peach. Returning to Chester at 22:38. Music Trains are organised by the Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership. You need to buy a train ticket. There is a collection for the band. No need to book unless there are eight or more people travelling together. Contact Michael Ross at traintrips@chesteru3a.org.uk for more details.



Members' Feedback

Here are a couple of items sent in by members in response to the Chair's 'Wow!' selections. Hopefully this can be the start of a page of readers' comments. Please send in your contributions to chestertimes@chesteru3a.org.uk

Last month our Chair recommended his Wow! list of modern novelists. Here are two more. David Lodge is always good, but I recommend *Deaf Sentence*, described as 'a black comedy of ageing and bodily decay'. After reading it, you will never forget your hearing-aid batteries. An American writer little known in this country is Carl Hiaasen, who succeeds in making sex and violence inoffensive and extremely funny. His twenty or so novels are set in Florida, with a strong political and environmental subtext. A favourite of mine is *Lucky You*.

A keen reader

For sheer quirkiness, I recommend "A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian", by Marina Lewycka. Pure joy. If this leaves you wanting more, she has written five further novels so far. In contrast, one of the saddest but most beautifully written novels I have ever read is "Stoner", by American writer John Williams. It's a book which will stay with you.

A member

Schedule of groups to help at Monthly Meetings

We would hope that groups will cooperate in providing help to the volunteers who are already working hard to facilitate our two monthly meetings. However, in an emergency situation, please email committee@chesteru3a.org.uk so that all members of the committee are aware of the need to provide additional cover.

	Festival Church	St Columba's
June	Tuesday Film Appreciation 1 and Film Appreciation 2	Thursday French Conversation and French Conversation 2
July	Tuesday French Film Group and French Improvers	Thursday French Intermediate and Friday Walking

The cut-off date for the next Chester Times is Thursday 20 June 2023.

Please send contributions to: chestertimes@chesteru3a.org.uk or: PO Box 167 Chester CH1 9FB.

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