



# Chester Times

November 2023

u3a learn,  
laugh,  
live  
Chester

## Musings from the Chair

Welcome to November and, possibly, winter. I have now been your chair for a year and my first reflection is that I have made so many new friends because I have now met so many more members. I had enjoyed my membership previously but I was cocooned in the warm embrace of a couple of excellent groups (you know who you are) and I rarely met any of the other 900 or so members. Now I have not only met more people, but they have universally been so interesting and helpful. I want to thank a few of them particularly - those officers and committee members who step down at the AGM, in many cases after years of service. Without your help (and again you know who you are) our u3a would not have been able to survive my first bungling year. I knew nothing, and you helped and guided me. Thank you.

I hope that by now you have voted for our new officers and committee members, but if you are reading this early in the month you still have time: the deadline for voting is 5th November.

My Wow! list this month is cities. Gwen and I are avid train travellers and as a consequence we often holiday in cities rather than in the countryside or on beaches. My criteria for a good city include the opportunity to go to the theatre and listen to classical music or opera, at least one modern art gallery, some stunning buildings and a cafe or bar culture which makes it easy

to sit down and relax between activities. Luckily, there are many cities which meet these criteria so my choices are just idiosyncratic. I could give you a specific reason for putting each of these on my list, which in alphabetical order is Berlin, Boston, Chicago, Cordoba and Prague. You might be surprised at my omissions - London, Milan, New York, Paris and Venice, for example. I have enjoyed these, and been to the opera in all of them, but they don't quite live up to the "sit down and relax" ideal. I realise too that my list only includes cities in Europe and the USA, so I offer my apologies to the rest of the world.



*The Chicago Bean - courtesy Peter Goodhew*

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## Tuesday Monthly Meetings

Festival Church, Queen Street, Chester, 2.00pm for 2.30pm start

**7<sup>th</sup> November: AGM** followed by:

### **Fat Cats and Fairness – What Should You Be Paid? by Frank Hogan**

Frank Hogan has spent many years wrestling with pay and conditions in organisations large and small. He is currently chair of the Remuneration Committee of Aldridge Education and during COVID was involved in a national working group on Executive Pay.

In this talk he will explain the key drivers of pay decisions, the current state of the pay market, and how the UK stands on key "fairness" indicators.



*'Fat Cat' - courtesy of Frank Hogan*

## Thursday Monthly Meetings

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

### **16<sup>th</sup> November: The Gretna Girls and the Devil's Porridge by David Skillen**

Everyone has heard of Gretna Green yet few people have heard of HM Factory Gretna.

In 1915, a huge and top-secret factory was constructed to provide ammunition for the war effort. It was designed and built in a matter of months and staffed by women and girls from all over the UK and beyond. Two new towns, Gretna and Eastriggs, were built to accommodate the workers.

This amazing achievement was vital in helping the British Army to final victory in World War One. In this fully illustrated talk we will look closely at the fascinating story of the people who lived and worked at Gretna, making the very dangerous "Devil's Porridge".

Since retiring from the civil service, David has given talks on a variety of historical subjects to groups all over the country.



*A commemorative sculpture of a Gretna Girl courtesy of David Skillen*



## Social Events

### Friday 1st December 2023: Macclesfield Silk Museum and Little Moreton Hall

*All places on this trip have been taken, but Liz and Sandra have set up a waiting list.*

If there are any queries, please phone either **Sandra 01928 740754** or **Liz 01244 341097**.

The morning will be spent looking at the very interesting history of silk weaving, the machinery, a collection of textiles, and fabric designs at the Macclesfield Silk Museum.

People will be expected to make their own lunch arrangements in Macclesfield.

In the afternoon we visit Little Moreton Hall, a 500-year-old National Trust property with a quirky charm, especially as it will be decorated for Christmas.

Pick-ups will be Hough Green 9.00am, Delamere Street 9.10 and Sainsbury's 9.20.

The cost will be £32.00 or £20.00 for National Trust members.



"Little Moreton Hall" M McBey CC BY 2.0.

Payment can be made at the Thursday meeting this month or to Liz by post.

Liz Flanagan

### Saturday 16th Dec 2023: Royal Court Liverpool – Stocking Fillers

Following the success of last year's show, **STOCKING FILLERS** is back with seven, brand-new 10 minute plays.

A Merry mix of comedy and drama to make you laugh or cry, sing or shout.

You will feel all Christmassy from your head to your mistletoe-toes. So come along with us to the Royal Court Studio and enjoy the show.

You will be shouting for more myrrh.

1.30pm. £12.

Phone **Liz Flanagan** to reserve your seat. **01244 341097**.



[Christmas Stocking](#) – Open Clipart

## Group News

### Music Performing, by Rob Green



*Courtesy of Music Performing Group*

We are a group of around 10 musicians of varying abilities and experience. We meet as a full group on the third Friday of each month. Between these meetings, members are encouraged to meet in twos and threes (usually a pianist or guitarist plus another solo instrument) to learn new pieces, which they then bring along to the monthly meetings either as a performance piece for themselves, or to introduce to the rest of the group for others to join-in with if they wish. All genres of music are encouraged from classical to popular (musicals, film, folk, pop etc.), with the emphasis being on enjoyment and playing with others.

The following is a play-list from one of our recent meetings. We usually begin and end each meeting with something that everyone can join in with, typically songs by The Beatles or Simon & Garfunkel, though we have also attempted collective performances of classical pieces (e.g. Fauré's Pavane) and traditional folk tunes (from [tuneworks.co.uk](http://tuneworks.co.uk))

<b>Playlist – monthly meeting</b>	
Let It Be (The Beatles)	Everyone
Lady Madonna (The Beatles)	Everyone
You'll Never Walk Alone (Carousel)	Piano duet
Black Magic Woman (P. Green)	Electric guitar duet
Down by the Sally Gardens (H. Hughes)	Flute, violins, cellos, piano
Morning Mood (Grieg)	Piano duet
Dream a Little Dream (The Mamas and The Papas)	Flute, piano, guitar
Salute d'Amour (Elgar)	Violin, piano
Take it easy (Eagles)	Piano, guitar
Can You Feel the Love Tonight (Lion King)	Piano duet
Foggy Day (Gershwin)	Piano, guitar
Simple Gifts (Shaker hymn)	Flute, piano, cellos, violin
Lying Eyes (Eagles)	Piano, guitar
Hello (L. Richie)	Flute, piano, guitar
Homeward Bound (Simon & Garfunkel)	Everyone
Sound of silence (Simon & Garfunkel)	Everyone

Meetings end with tea and coffee, and a chat.

The group would welcome new members – particularly woodwind and string players





## Photography Group, by John Quinn

In July, we had a day out at New Brighton where we looked at the street art.



*Guide Dogs - Alan Millard.jpg*



*Elle Edwards - David Fulwood.jpg*

Guide Dogs commemorates the 2 women who founded the guide dog charity and were from the Wirral.

Elle Edwards was tragically shot on Christmas Eve while out with friends and family.



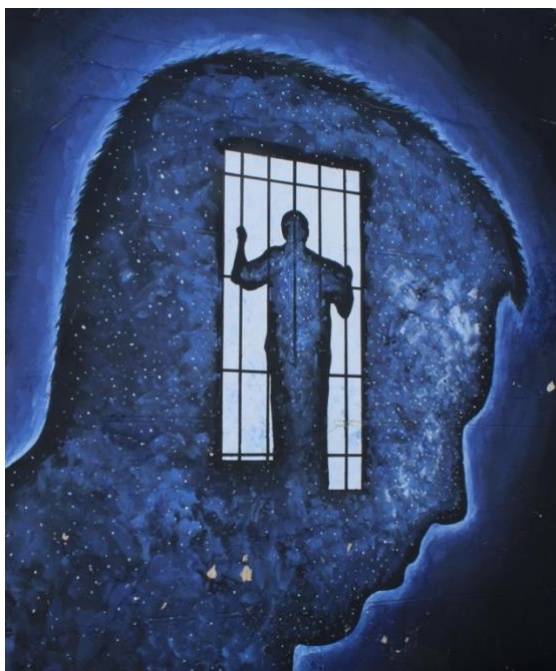
*No 10 - Sue Foy.jpg*



*Behave - Glennys Hammond.jpg*



*RNLI local volunteer - Alan Gray.jpg*



*Trapped - Jane Dodd.jpg*



*Diver - Jo Poppy.jpg*

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## Cryptic Crossword Puzzles Group, by Vivian Downing

We are a small, friendly group who meet on most Friday afternoons in a house in Guilden Sutton, to solve cryptic crossword puzzles. We work together, puzzling over the same clues at the same time, and bounce ideas off each other, until we solve the clues. Mostly, we do the Daily Telegraph and Times crosswords and feel a great sense of achievement when we finish them!

We have a mix of abilities, and with the beginners or less experienced members, we always explain how we solved the clues, so that they can gradually learn the crossword "lingo". Also, we recommend the excellent book "Learn How to Solve Cryptic Crosswords - A Course for Beginners" by Henry Howarth, who is the U3A National Subject Advisor for Cryptic Crosswords.

With meeting in a house, we are restricted as to the size of the group and are pretty well full at the moment. However, if anybody wished to start a 2nd group, we would be happy to help them and to share our experience.

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## Mindfulness Group, by Ann Wilkinson

Would you like to enrich your life---

overcome anxiety, stress, anger, pain, fatigue and more----and/or---just get to know yourself and discover what makes you tick?

Experience all this and more at the MINDFULNESS group held in Christleton every Monday morning.

Contact Ann via the website (See page 9 for details on contacting group coordinators.)



## Latin Group, by Joyce Carrington

Latin is an important language that has played a significant role in shaping the English language. It may be a 'dead' language, but its influence on modern English is undeniable. It is also a useful basis for learning the 'romance' languages derived from it, such as French, Italian and Spanish.

You may or may not have studied Latin at school; you may or may not be a member of the u3a Latin group, but I am certain that you all know far more Latin than you assume. You may like to have a go at this light-hearted quiz and fill in as many of the answers as you can. (Answers on page 10)

1. and others e \_ c \_ \_ \_ \_
2. that is i \_ e \_ \_
3. for example e \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ g \_ \_ \_ \_
4. for this specific purpose (literally 'for this') a \_ h \_ \_
5. in its original place i \_ s \_ \_ \_
6. after death p \_ \_ \_ m \_ \_ \_ \_
7. a great work m \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ o \_ \_ \_
8. reciprocal (literally 'this for that') q \_ \_ \_ p \_ \_ q \_ \_
9. in fact d \_ f \_ \_ \_ \_
10. among other things i \_ \_ \_ \_ a \_ \_ \_
11. without which, nothing (a necessary condition) s \_ \_ \_ q \_ \_ n \_ \_
12. by itself p \_ \_ s \_ \_
13. in proportion p \_ \_ r \_ \_ \_
14. by head (of population) p \_ \_ c \_ \_ \_ \_
15. the current state of affairs s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ q \_ \_
16. it does not follow n \_ \_ s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
17. an unwelcome person p \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ n \_ \_ g \_ \_ \_ \_
18. the other way round v \_ \_ \_ v \_ \_ \_ \_
19. seize the day c \_ \_ \_ \_ d \_ \_ \_
20. out of many, one (USA presidential seal) e p \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ u \_ \_ \_
21. (A bonus question for any Everton fans out there!)  
nothing but the best is good enough n \_ \_ s \_ \_ \_ \_ n \_ \_ \_ o \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

## Scrabble Group

The previous coordinator of the Scrabble Group is no longer able to host this group, but if anyone else would like to take over, we have two very attractive sturdy Scrabble boards for you to use. Sue Foy is currently holding them.

*Courtesy of Sue Foy*







## Industrial Heritage Group 3

### Visit to Llangollen Railway, Machine Shop, Locomotive Workshop and Engine Shed, by Peter Robson

On 6 September 2023 Peter Robson led a party of 10 to Llangollen Railway. The visit began at Corwen to view the recently constructed new station complex comprising two island platforms, ticket office, subway, waiting room/toilets, signal box, water tank, run around loop and associated signalling. Most of the new build construction was completed by a small group of volunteers over several years.



Peter explained the railway originally ran from Ruabon to Barmouth with a connection at Corwen to Ruthin. It was built by Thomas Brassey, a Cestrian, in 1865. The line was closed as part of the Beeching plan in the 1960s. Volunteers started reopening the line in phases from 1975 and reached east Corwen in 2014. The final extension and construction of the new Corwen complex was completed on 1 June 2023.



We departed from Corwen on the 11h50 diesel multiple unit and arrived at Llangollen at 12h30 for a private tour of the workshops. After a short safety briefing explaining the hazards associated with entering an engineering workshop, we were introduced to our specialist guides, Dave and Bill, who took time off from their normal volunteer duties of fabricating special components for locomotives. They explained how all their old lathes, drills and cutting tools operated and how they compare to modern CNC machines (which are on their Christmas wish list). Despite the age of the current equipment, the workshops have the capability of producing many spare parts to keep the railway fleet operating.







We then went into the adjoining engine shed which housed several diesel and steam locomotives – some in working order ready for their next run out and some partially stripped down ready for rebuild. Many of the visitors had never been so close to a locomotive at ground (rail) level and were surprised by the physical size. Dave and Bill continued to entertain their visitors with many interesting facts and figures – the most surprising being that locomotive wheels have a tyre which can be reprofiled by lathe or changed if badly worn. We

finally went into the locomotive yard and observed a steam locomotive on the examination pit, the coal bunker and the 50-tonne crane.

The party departed the workshops and walked through the station into Llangollen for lunch at the Corn Mill. We left Llangollen for the return trip to Corwen on the 15h30.

Photos from Peter Robson

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## Meeting Spaces for Groups

Several people have mentioned the difficulty of finding suitable rooms for their meetings. Here is one suggestion from Vivian Downing.

**Guilden Sutton Village Hall** has 3 rooms to hire, accommodating 120, 50 or approx. 20 people. All the rooms have access to a kitchen.

The small one in particular would suit many u3a groups and is only £6.60 an hour to hire in the daytime. Please contact the booking secretary, Stephanie Pinder, at [gsvillagehallbookings@gmail.com](mailto:gsvillagehallbookings@gmail.com) or leave a message on 07739 104147 and Stephanie will return your call.

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## How to Contact a Group Coordinator

If you want to find out more about a group, go to the Groups page of our website <https://u3asites.org.uk/chester/groups> scroll down to the list of groups (you might be surprised at how many there are), click on the group that interests you and it will show the contact details for the coordinator.

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## Members Feedback

In response to our Chairman's non-fiction recommendations, I'd like to suggest two others. The first is *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, published in 1997. It is subtitled *A Short History of Everybody for the Last 13,000 Years* and is a transdisciplinary discussion by Jared Diamond about how some societies succeed and others fail. Diamond's arguments are very persuasive, and the book is an easy but compelling read even if you don't agree with every point he makes.

My second choice is *Otherlands* by Thomas Halliday, published in 2022. It describes the epic story of the Earth; worlds existing before ours. Any book which can tell us that if all 4.5 billion years of Earth's history were condensed into a single day, the extinction of the dinosaurs would occur 21 seconds before midnight, and that written human history would begin in the last two thousandths of a second, must be worth reading, mustn't it?

*A Member*



## Schedule for 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](mailto:committee@chesteru3a.org.uk) so that all members of the committee are aware of the need to provide additional cover.

You are very welcome to use these sessions as an opportunity to seek new members or promote your activities by bringing along flyers or photographs, setting up a stand or even asking if you can take a few minutes to talk to the whole group.

	Festival Church at 2.00pm	St Columba's at 10.00am
<b>November</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	Italian Beginners 2 Italian Improvers Jazz Appreciation	Jazz Appreciation 2 Jigsaw, Knitting Latin
<b>December</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	Line Dancing Literary Appreciation 1, Local History	Mahjong Metaphysics for Dummies

**The cut-off date for the next Chester Times is Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023.**

Please send contributions to: [chestertimes@chesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:chestertimes@chesteru3a.org.uk) or: PO Box 167 Chester CH1 9FB.

This month's editor: Gwen Goodhew

Next month's editor: Joyce Carrington

### Contacts

**Chair:** Peter Goodhew: [chair@chesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@chesteru3a.org.uk)

**Membership:** Jeff Howard: [members@chesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:members@chesteru3a.org.uk)      **Website:** [www.chesteru3a.org.uk](http://www.chesteru3a.org.uk)

**Postal address:** PO Box 167 Chester CH1 9FB

**Reg. Charity No** 1048416

### Latin Answers

1. et cetera
2. id est 3. exempli gratia
4. ad hoc
5. in situ
6. post mortem
7. magnum opus
8. quid pro quo
9. de facto
10. inter alia
11. sine qua non
12. per se
13. pro rata
14. per capita
18. vice versa
20. e pluribus unum
21. nil satius nisi optimum
19. carpe diem