



Chester Times

September 2023

u3a learn,
laugh,
live
Chester

Musings from the Chair

Let me start with a couple of reminders: The first is that from our next meeting on 5th September, Tuesday talks will be in the afternoon, with doors opening at 14.00 and the talk starting at 14.30. The second is that during September nominations will open for next year's officer and committee positions, closing on 7th October.

Thirty years ago, on 7th September 1993, the first meeting of Chester U3A was held. Only four months later 168 members had signed up, so the take-up was rapid. Today we have more than 900 members and I hope that many of you will join me at one of our meetings next month to cut a cake in celebration. Watch out for more details by email.

My **wow!** thoughts for September relate to classical music - a long-time passion of mine. I was lucky enough to go to a Prom in August, evoking memories of when I was a young man and just made it at the end of the queue, being the very last to be admitted to standing room in the gallery.

The Director of Music at my school was the distinguished baritone, John Carol Case, but I was totally unappreciative of this at the time, despite his best attempts to educate our ears. My lifelong passion for classical music was awakened in the sixth form by a more sophisticated fellow-pupil (well, I thought he was sophisticated) who suggested that we go to the Royal Festival Hall to hear Bartok's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*. It was wonderful, and my interest was reinforced by an enlightened aunt who gave me, to take to university, the Readers Digest collection

of Greatest Classical Music. I played those 12 LPs (and a few others) non-stop for 3 years. Only one of my **wow!** pieces this month comes from that collection, and it is Franck's *Symphony in D*, but Bartok features in my second choice with his *Concerto for Orchestra* and my third entrancing piece is Bach's *Double Violin Concerto in D minor*. Life on a desert island would be tolerable with just these three pieces, but it would be enhanced (and made more exciting) if I could also take Janáček's *Sinfonietta* and play it very loudly.

I could not finish without paying homage to the man whose symphonies I now enjoy more than those of any other composer: Mahler. I like all of his symphonies, but a recent highlight was hearing the 8th at The Albert Hall on the occasion of Gwen's 80th birthday.



Contents

Monthly meetings	2	Advance Notice of AGM	8
Social events	3	Friday Walking	9
Social Psychology	4	Members' Feedback	10-11
Science	5	Monthly meetings group rota	11
Wine Appreciation	6-7	Chester Times cut-off dates	11
Chester u3a Birthday	7	Contacts	11
Art Appreciation 2	8		

Tuesday Monthly Meetings

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

5th September: Keeping Safe Online by DC Andy Kevan

We have all seen and heard about people being scammed - having their identity stolen or losing thousands of pounds. We all think (or hope) that we're smart enough to spot it or that it won't happen to us, but how cyber safe are you really?

DC Andy Kevan heads up the Cyber Crime Team for Cheshire Constabulary and is passionate about his work. He will be talking about Cyber Crime and helping you to stay safe online. He will outline some of the ways in which you are vulnerable or can become a target for online fraud and also ways of reducing your risk. His talk is entertaining and informative, drawing on real life examples and covering practical ways of avoiding them and helping to prevent yourself becoming another statistic, another victim of fraud.

Paula Yates



"Data Security - Cyber Crime - Hacking" [perspec photo88](#) CC BY-SA 2.0.

Thursday Monthly Meetings

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

21st September: Witches and Superstition by Jean Finney



Halloween
<http://www.freepngimg.com/>

We might like to think that in an age of scientific rationalism we are free from the effects of demonology. Not so! Jean Finney, a singer songwriter, poet, musician, artist, model and speaker, will both amuse and educate us. She has entertained us before with her lively talk on Joyce Grenfell, which some of you may remember.

Coffee at 10.00- speaker starts at 10.30am. Please remember to bring your cup!

Come along and enjoy!

Jenny and Lorna (Thursday team)



Social Events

Friday 8th September: Trip to Ludlow

This should be an enjoyable journey through lovely Cheshire countryside and the understated beauty of Shropshire.

LUDLOW is a thriving market town with many half-timbered medieval buildings, including the renowned Feathers Hotel. Broad Street lives up to its name and in times past was the main thoroughfare for trade and passenger coaches. Bodenham's has been trading in this street since 1860 from a 600-year-old timber building.

St Laurence church, built in the 11th C, has a magnificent 41ft. tower which is prominent in the skyline. The museum in Castle Square is a place to while away an hour, learning about the history of the area before having a coffee or lunch in one of the many coffee shops or cafes in the town. The more adventurous may enjoy a 30-minute walk from the castle gardens downhill to the Millennium Green and the River Teme. The castle, museum and St Laurence Church are close to Castle Square where our coach will be able to drop us off.



"The Feathers - Ludlow" by [Dave Hamster](#) - CC BY 2.0

The day of our visit is the first day of the annual Food Festival. This festival is a showcase of local produce with over 180 stalls. There will be demonstrations and many tasty treats to sample.

The coach will be between £15 and £20 and will be confirmed as soon as we have names. Pick up times will be Hough Green 9.00, Delamere St 9.10, and Sainsbury's 9.20. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested in joining us so that the exact cost can be assessed.

Sandra Moffat social@chesteru3a.org.uk

Wednesday 18th October: Peter Pan Goes Wrong

A matinee performance of the West End smash hit disaster at Liverpool Empire Theatre.

This is not a Pantomime! It is one of "MISCHIEF'S" unique brand of hilarious gut-busting comedies. so brace yourselves for a big adventure.

I have tickets in the stalls and circle, but I need to pay for these by 14th September, at the latest, to get the group rate of **£33.50**.

Please ring me to secure your place. Liz Flanagan
341097 or social@chesteru3a.org.uk



El Pollock / The Empire Theatre, Lime Street, Liverpool
/ CC BY-SA 2.0



Group News

Social Psychology



Have you ever wondered why we procrastinate or have free will or not? Have you thought about Learned Helplessness or Unrequited Love? Are you concerned about the rapid rise in Artificial Intelligence and how it will change our societies, work distribution and the need to rethink the distribution of wealth?

What do you think about censorship and why is some art hidden from our view? Why has so much of the Social Psychology research been focussed on WEIRD societies (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic)? How do non-WEIRD countries behave and interact with each other. Do they have ingroup-outgroup anxiety? Do they have Minority influences affecting the Majority?

Why do we like Horror stories so much? Have you considered Mourning Sickness and what exactly is the Psychology of Lying?

Do we know how Psychedelic drugs work?

These are just some of the topics we have debated in the 43 sessions we have had to date.

Many of the current group members joined around Sept 2019 and we were going strong until Covid struck and we had to rethink how we worked. During lockdown most of the members moved on to Zoom and we continued to meet virtually throughout this period. Once we had the

opportunity, we started to meet outside in members' gardens and eventually returned to having hybrid face to face meetings on the first Tuesday of every month.

We have a large master list of topics to access and we also use Ted talks, TV programmes and other sources of material as a basis for our discussions. Each member takes it in turn to research a topic of their choice and they prepare pre-read material, or they may choose to deliver a presentation with stops for debate. If there is pre-read, the researcher will lead the debate and we all join in with views and opinions.

Our maximum group size is 10 – limited by venue.

Here are some comments from newer members on why they enjoy the group: -

"Everyone is friendly and receptive to opinions. Although I am a new member, I feel at ease within the group."

"I appreciate the hybrid sessions as it is difficult for me to get to someone's house in the morning."

"Our differing backgrounds and careers result in broad knowledge and debate about the topic of the session. The small group works well for me and allows all to participate."

"Being a member of the group encourages me to read and analyse subjects that I might not necessarily think about with much greater attention."

"We are all beginners so the discussions feel absolutely egalitarian and non-judgemental."

"Thanks to the pre-read, the intro to the topic in the meeting tends to be quite short and the majority of the meeting is discussion, which is what I enjoy."

"We also focus on how the insights apply to everyday situations, current affairs and our own experiences."

Alan Fuller (Co-ordinator)



Science

Lise Meitner



*Lise Meitner 1906
- Public Domain*

Chris Robinson, a member of the Science group, gave a presentation on Lise Meitner. Many of you will not have heard of Meitner, but her work in physics caused Einstein to praise her as the 'German Marie Curie'.

Lise was an Austrian-Swedish physicist born in Vienna in 1878 and educated at the University of Vienna. She received her doctoral degree and moved to work at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin. Things were not easy for her at first as women were not allowed in the institute proper and she was confined to working in a wood shop in the basement. She had to use the toilet in a local restaurant! She met Otto Hahn, and they formed a close professional collaboration. Working with Hahn, Meitner researched radioactivity, nuclear physics and developed an understanding of nuclear fission. Working with her nephew, Otto Frisch, Meitner realised that nuclear fission occurs when a larger nucleus (for example, Uranium) splits into smaller nuclei (for example, Barium). This was an idea that both Hahn and Meitner were initially reluctant to accept.

*Otto Hahn and Lisa Meitner in their laboratory 1912 –
Public Domain*

Lise was Jewish and her situation working in Nazi Germany became increasingly untenable. She regretted not leaving Germany earlier in 1933 and she eventually fled from Berlin in 1938, barely escaping with her life. Hahn and Meitner continued to collaborate even though they were living in different countries. Hahn was awarded the 1944 Nobel prize in chemistry for the discovery of nuclear fission although an extremely strong case can be made that Meitner's contribution to the work was at least equal to that of Hahn's and probably greater.

Meitner was nominated for the Nobel prize in chemistry 19 times and the Nobel prize in physics 30 times. One cannot help thinking that a male scientist of Meitner's accomplishments would have been awarded it. However, as Chris told us, Meitner gained something far more lasting than a Nobel prize. She was one of only twenty people to ever have an element named in her honour. Element number 109 is named Meitnerium.



If you would like to attend a science meeting, then please come along on the **second Thursday of the month at 2:00pm to 4:00pm at St Mary's Church Centre, Handbridge, CH4 7HL.**

Jeff Howard





Wine Appreciation

Visit to Wroxeter Roman Vineyard on 24th July

Organised by Nicola Runnels-Moss

Wroxeter was a large Roman settlement, a garrison town, with some interesting ruins remaining (now run by English Heritage), and the vineyard was established nearby in 1991 by David Millington, currently run by Martin and Amanda Millington. Website: wroxetervineyard.co.uk



Most of the group (15 of us in total) travelled by train to Shrewsbury and then taxi to the vineyard. There was a slight hitch at Chester station, as the train had to be re-routed through Crewe and Nantwich, due to a cow on the line, evidently called Penelope. Once we were all safely at Wroxeter, Martin gave us a very knowledgeable and in-depth tour of the vineyard, followed by a tasting of five of their wines – three whites, a rose, and a red. Contrary to popular belief, it is possible



to produce acceptable red wines in the UK, partly due to climate change.

The 8-acre site is in an excellent position for favouring vine growth, because of the Foehn effect – the prevailing winds from the Shropshire/Welsh hills (visible from the vineyard) push wet weather upwards, causing a thinner cloudbase, which leads to higher-than-average hours of sunshine than surrounding areas (over 1000 hours). They use four varieties of grape: Riechensteiner, Madelaine Angevine, Regner and Dornfelder. The last is for red wine – it takes 110 days from flowering to harvest, as opposed to the white varieties, which take only 65 days.

The vines are spaced out with the rows running in a N/S direction to capture more light. They are far enough apart (8 feet) so that one row does not cast a shadow on the adjacent row. Each vine is estimated to produce 1.5 – 2 bottles per year. The vineyard can therefore produce anything between 15,000 and 32,000 bottles a year, but one year of bad frost (1995) damaged the vines, so no wine was produced. In order to minimise frost damage, smoke is generated around the vines, as particulates in the air help to stop the frost settling and can raise the temperature by 3 or 4 degrees C.

When ready for harvesting, the grapes are handpicked into buckets and trays, and taken into the wine production area. The press has a capacity of approximately 1 ton of grapes, and the





pneumatic press operates at a pressure of 1.9 bar (35 psi). Actually, feet are best at crushing grapes, but this is not usual nowadays due to H & S concerns with toenail fragments and dried skin...

For white wine, the juice from the press can be used directly. Red grapes go through a fermentation process first, to allow the colour to be extracted from the skins, before going through the press. If the wine is allowed to ferment with just its natural yeasts, it will have a lower alcohol content, but a more intense flavour. If cultured yeast is added, the alcohol content will be higher, but the flavour will not be as good.

Interesting fact: if someone has had 'a skinful', this proverbially derives from the goatskins which were used by the Romans to store wine.

The Tasting

(the bit we were all waiting for)

All the wines were from 2022, with an alcohol strength of 11.5%, and no added chemicals were

used in the production process. The five wines we tasted were:

- Madeleine Angevine – white, very pale lemon, similar to Sauvignon Blanc
- Phoenix – white, very pale, clear, Chardonnay with attitude
- Noble Roman – white, very pale, clear, not as dry
- Emily Rose – rose, intense colour
- Roman Red – red, medium intensity, Beaujolais style

All the wines were very flavourful and fairly dry, with a long finish.

After this, it was a return to Shrewsbury by taxi, with some of the group staying for a meal and overnight. It was a very interesting day out, and we all learnt something new with respect to the growth and production processes.

Hazel Lloyd

Chester u3a 30th Birthday!

As part of our celebrations, we would like to make contact with founder members and others who were involved in the earliest stages of growing the organisation. Please contact the chair if you are such a member or know of anyone who might be. Email: chair@chesteru3a.org.uk





Art Appreciation 2

Our last review of Art Appreciation activities said our next meetings would consider Turner Prize winners. The work of better-known names such as Anthony Gormley, Grayson Perry and Chris Ofili were discussed but two submissions, new to most of the group captured some imaginations. Veronica Ryan's sculptures of three Caribbean fruits positioned in a Hackney, East London street and an architectural/artistic community project improving four streets in Toxteth, Liverpool won our approval.



Whistlejacket by George Stubbs- Public Domain CCO

Our next choice of theme turned out to be possibly the most popular choice we've had. Horses produced more volunteers to make presentations than any other subject; the choices ranged from paintings from prehistoric times in the Chauvet Cave, SE France to works from very recent times. George Stubbs had to be included, Picasso was the choice of two members, David's Napoleon Crossing the Alps and several other painters through to Eric Ravilious and Cy Twombly were featured.

Most recently we considered artists using "State of Mind" as the topic. As you would expect Van Gogh, Munch (but not the Scream) and Goya made the line-up for obvious reasons but the mood was lightened by the joyous moments captured in works by Matisse and Chagall. Paintings by Lowry and Charles Rennie Mackintosh were also covered. However, the most moving presentation discussed the work of Brian Charnley, a British artist who had paranoid schizophrenia and explored its effects in his work. In 1991 he painted a series of seventeen self-portraits chronicling his experiences in a diary to accompany those portraits. Thanks, Louise.

Our next meeting is scheduled to consider a much lighter subject: Kandinsky and Der Blaue Reiter.

Terry McHugh

Advance Notice of AGM

Our AGM will be held on 7 November in the Festival Church. Please nominate candidates for the offices of Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Business Secretary and also for general membership of the committee. Nominations should be sent by email to the Business Secretary, businesssec@chesteru3a.org.uk with a proposer and seconder, and the nominee should agree. You can propose yourself!



Friday Walking

'Friday Walking' is Chester u3as group that aims to cater for those members who would like to do fairly challenging full day walks, typically up to 10 miles often in hilly terrain. During the winter we tend to stay closer to home and reduce the walk length because of the shorter days.



Our August walk was a lovely day by the sea! The walk started from the Beacons car park which is just beyond Conwy Marina. From here we walked for about 40 minutes into Conwy town including a short climb through Bodlondeb Woods. We then only had to wait a few minutes before taking a bus to Llandudno town centre from where we recommenced our walk along the impressive Victorian promenade towards the Great

Orme. We climbed the Orme via Happy Valley to reach a point giving wonderful views over Llandudno and its long pier.

We then carried on past St Tudno's Church and made a circuit on the summit taking us to the far side from where we descended, eventually reaching Llandudno West Shore. From here it was a flat coastal walk back to the marina where we had a well-earned drink at the Mulberry pub which overlooks the marina.



Total walking distance was about 11 miles with 1300 feet of total ascent.

Unfortunately, over recent months we have had low attendances on our walks and I will be standing down as coordinator at the end of the year. As yet no replacement has been identified. But if this type of walking appeals to you please feel free to make contact in case a way can be found for the group to continue. fridaywalking@chesteru3a.org.uk.

Mike Clark





Members' Feedback

Joyce Carrington suggested that members might like to share their favourite cathedrals with others. David Savage rose to the challenge.

A FAVOURITE CATHEDRAL

My favourite cathedral is the Cathedral Church of St Peter, St Paul and St Andrew in Peterborough. It's not very well known, being away from the main tourist routes, but it is one of the four great cathedrals of Eastern England, Ely, Lincoln, Durham and Peterborough. To me it's an architectural gem, but I must admit to some bias as I was born in Peterborough.

It is noted for being the burial place of two queens, Mary Queen of Scots and Catherine of Aragon, although the former was later reinterred in Westminster Abbey.

Probably its main architectural feature is the magnificent West Front. The three giant arches and the later inserted porch provide a magnificent sight as you enter the precinct from the city through Abbot Benedict's Outer Gate. The picture shows this view.

However, not everyone agrees with me. Pevsner, writing in 1968, dismisses these niches as 'an unhappy addition' and the three gables above



"The West Front, Peterborough Cathedral, Peterborough, England" by Spencer Means is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

them as 'nonsense'. The later inserted porch, he claims, does 'yet more damage to the west view'.

I disagree with Pevsner and I think the picture provides the evidence. What do you think?

David Savage

And the Chair's Musings on **CITY WALLS** produced this response from Don McIntyre:

Unlike Wes Anderson's Asteroid City, the Bavarian town of Nördlingen actually exists. It was built in an asteroid impact crater and is enclosed by a circle of intact city walls, dating from the 14th century. The impact created an estimated 72,000 tons of micro diamonds.



Nördlingen <http://openverse.org/>

And feedback about Sue Foy's **TRAILS AND TREASURE HUNTS** – a message from a contented customer.

Thank you, Sue. I always love to watch the videos even when I have attended the talk.

I have been informed that you are responsible for the u3a Walk and Treasure Trails. Well, may I offer you my most heartfelt congratulations. I have only managed to complete the one walk so far "Medieval Chester" but it was superb. I went with a friend, who is very knowledgeable about Chester's history, and even she found out all sorts of interesting facts that she had never known. We both thought your work was brilliant, very interesting and informative. So thank you very much indeed. You must have worked very hard.



*Three Old Arches, a familiar medieval structure-
Courtesy of Sue Foy*

With kind regards, Lynette Paul

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 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
September	Tuesday	Thursday
	Golf	History
October	Tuesday	Thursday
	Industrial Heritage	Industrial Heritage 3 and Italian Beginners

The cut-off date for the next Chester Times is Sunday 20th September 2023.

Please send contributions to: 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

Membership: Jeff Howard: members@chesteru3a.org.uk **Website:** www.chesteru3a.org.uk

Postal address: PO Box 167 Chester CH1 9FB

Reg. Charity No 1048416