



Chester Times

February 2026



Greetings from the Chair

I am always quite an upbeat person who tries to see the positive things around us, so I'm looking forward to the year ahead – lots of reading of new books, seeing exciting films, visiting theatres with the new Theatre Buddies group and enjoying time with friends and family.

February seems like the time when we get rid of any January Blues, look at nature emerging and set our agenda for the year ahead, which is hopefully full of **interesting experiences**.

I know one of the things many in Chester look forward to is the races, and whilst I haven't been for quite a few years, the racecourse has an interesting history and it all started in February! The site was originally home to the famous and bloody Goteddsday [football](#) match. However, the game was very violent and, in 1533, banned by the city, to be replaced in 1539 by horse racing. The first recorded race was held on 9 February 1539 with the consent of the **Mayor Henry Gee**, whose name led to the use of the term "gee-gee" for horses. Henry Gee is said to have sorted out the Corporation – "he banished idle beggars and vagabonds, regulated the Corn Market, established the first school board, kept up the quality of fish, didn't allow giddy unmarried girls to keep ale houses and stopped immorality at feasts"!

Your committee is also looking forward to the year ahead, and Sue has organised some **great speakers for our meetings**. We have also started to look at our **Website** and **Chester Times**, to ensure that they meet our members' needs. Diane on the committee asked 'AI' what it thought about our communications and we had some useful feedback which we are in the process of implementing. If you have any thoughts, let me know. Catherine, a committee member, is also starting to plan the short talks for our **September Showcase**, on the theme of **The Environment**, so if you, or your group, want to contribute, get in contact.

I have booked myself onto a **4-week u3a AI Introduction Course** this month. It is 4 x 2-hour sessions so doesn't take up too much time. I saw it on the **u3a National Newsletter** and thought it would be interesting. It is something I don't know much about and I want to see what the positive uses of it are. There are lots of **free u3a Zoom courses** – it is just a pity I don't have enough free time to learn more. January included How Medicines Work, Ancient History, Building Confidence in Later Years, AI, a Live Cooking Demo and Laughter Yoga. Well worth checking out February events through this link. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events>

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Tuesday 3rd February
Picturehouse, 2pm for 2.30pm

Andy Porter: Neighbour's Got a New Hot Tub - Wit, rhyme and observational humour with the 'Bard of Barrow'

Andy Porter is a Chester-based poet. He started writing poetry consistently in 2020 and has completed around 300 mostly satirical and humorous poems. A Mancunian now living in rural Cheshire, Andy's observational work has the feel of the unlikely progeny of a liaison between John Cooper Clarke and Pam Ayres. A scriptwriter, producer and director, he ran his own commercial production company for thirty years. Andy's debut poetry collection, *Neighbour's Got a New Hot Tub* was launched in July 2025 by independent Irish publisher, Luain Press. In August 2025, Andy appeared with Rising Tide Events at *Electric Picnic*, Ireland's biggest music and arts festival.



Thursday 19th February
St Columba's Church Hall, 10am for 10.30 start



New Year, New You 3a!

Looking to take up a new interest in 2026? Join us at this special meeting to get some suggestions. This will be a social get-together where Group Leaders will share information about their activities and encourage everyone to try something new. It will be particularly useful if you have recently joined as it will be a great opportunity to meet other members and find out how to get the most out of your membership. However, whether you are a newbie or an old hand, you should find something of interest.

Attending monthly meetings

Monthly meetings are free of charge to all Chester u3a members, including refreshments (but please try to remember to bring your own cup). Members can bring a non-member guest to one meeting as a "taster" for the u3a, but the guest must join if they wish to attend further meetings. The number of members attending has increased significantly in recent months, so please help the meetings run smoothly by not leaving empty seats in the middle of rows and by keeping belongings off adjacent seats so that members know they are available.

Dates for your diaries

Our [website](#) now shows lots of exciting talks scheduled for 2026. Have a browse and make a note of anything that interests you. If you have any suggestions for the 2026 programme, please email speakersec@chesteru3a.org.uk.



Free Events during February

Chester Cathedral - Museum of the Moon artwork - From Thursday 12th February to Sunday 15th March 2026. Marvel at the moon's beauty or join us at one of the many events and activities that will be taking place in the moonlight, including family events, talks, concerts, and more. Measuring six metres in diameter, the moon features 120dpi detailed NASA imagery of the lunar surface. At an approximate scale of 1:500,000, each centimetre of the internally lit spherical sculpture represents 5km of the moon's surface. The installation is a fusion of lunar imagery, moonlight and surround sound composition created by BAFTA and Ivor Novello award winning composer Dan Jones. (See the cathedral website [Museum of the Moon](#) for details.)

Grosvenor Museum - Object of the Month 12th February 1-1.30pm. (See the museum website for more [details](#))

Chester University - The Gothic and the Desire for Social Reform in The Story of Willie Ellin and Jane Eyre by Chloe Roberts. Wheeler Building, Wednesday 4th February, 4pm – booking required (see www.chester.ac.uk/events for details)

Chester University - Rethinking Faith, Values and the Limits of Pluralism by Mona Siddiqui, School of Education, Thursday 12th February, 6pm – booking required (see www.chester.ac.uk/events for details)

Chester u3a Monthly Quiz (answers on p10)

1. Which Warrington-born actor recently received a Golden Globe award?
2. Which football team from Cheshire beat a Premier League team in the 3rd round of the FA Cup?
3. Who is the Prime Minister of Greenland?
4. Who won the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize?
5. What is the name of the novel by Maggie O'Farrell about Shakespeare's family? It has recently been in the news because of a film based on the book,
6. Why has Wing Cdr Sasha Nash been in the news recently?
7. At which Scottish castle is The Traitors filmed?
8. What is the name of the spaceship soon due to be launched to the moon?
9. What was the name of the storm that hit parts of the UK on 8th January 2026?
10. Where will the Winter Olympics be held this February?



Report on January Monthly Meetings, by Diane Williams

Tales from Chester Asylum: the first 100 years

At our first talk of the new year, Claire Chatterton explored the early history of the Chester asylum, once located where the Countess of Chester Hospital now stands. Researching it is not straightforward: many records were destroyed when it closed in 2005. Most of what survives is held by Cheshire Archives, the university's Riverside Museum and the Wellcome Collection..

The asylum opened on 25 August 1829, the same year Chester's population stood at around 23,000 and the Grosvenor Bridge was completed. Before its opening, care for people with mental illness was provided by the Royal Infirmary, the workhouse, or by 'private madhouses', which were increasingly criticised for poor standards. An Act of 1808 allowed counties to open asylums, though few did at first; a further Act in 1845 made provision compulsory.

Although the building's façade was impressive, conditions inside were far more modest. Initially there were just two part-time doctors, about a dozen nurses (then known as "keepers"), 110 beds and ten acres of land. Chronic staff shortages led to the appointment of a full-time, live-in Medical Superintendent, and later Assistant Medical Officers. Staff worked extremely long hours, with ill-health a common reason for early retirement. The first female doctor was not appointed until around 1915.

Treatment reflected changing ideas about mental health. From the late 18th century, the concept of 'moral management', pioneered by William Tuke at the Retreat in York, emphasised kindness, occupation and recreation rather than restraint.

Life in the asylum was strictly segregated by gender, both for patients and staff. Mental health nursing, then as now, employed both men and women, and was notable for strong trade-union organisation, culminating in the founding of the National Asylum Workers' Union in 1910.

By 1871, overcrowding was so severe that Parkside Hospital had to be opened in Macclesfield. By 1929, the Chester asylum had grown to nearly 1,600 beds spread across 249 acres - a striking reminder of how central such institutions once were to public health.

Aggie: the life and adventures of Dame Agnes Hunt

For our second talk, we were given a compelling dramatic performance in which the speaker stepped fully into the role of Agnes Hunt, telling her life story in her own words, based on her memoirs. The result was immersive, moving, and utterly memorable.

Born in 1866, Agnes's childhood was shaped by hardship. Her mother bore eleven children. She discouraged them all from ever making a fuss. When Agnes developed a blister on her heel, she said nothing until it became infected. Sepsis followed, leaving her with permanent pain and damaged mobility. Long periods of her early life were spent immobilised in a special frame, yet she was urged never to feel self-pity or expect special treatment.

Words given to her by a clergyman became a life-long guide - and now appear on her tombstone: 'Reared in suffering thou shalt know how to solace others' woe.'

After her father's death, the family emigrated to Australia. Later illnesses further tested her resilience, yet she persisted in her ambition to nurse, despite repeatedly being told she was 'too lame'. Eventually she was accepted for training. She went on to work in district nursing and midwifery in some of the poorest communities in England.

The heart of Agnes's legacy began in 1900, when she and her formidable mother established a small convalescent home in Baschurch. Within forty years it had grown into a teaching hospital, served wounded soldiers during the First World War, and ultimately became what we now know as the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital.

Agnes died in 1948, shortly after a devastating fire at the hospital and just weeks after the founding of the NHS. It was 28 years since the death of her companion Emily Selina Goodford, after whose death Agnes wrote a moving tribute.

The performance gave a vivid portrait of courage, endurance and compassion, brought to life through an outstanding act of storytelling. **Many thanks to Hazel Phillips for suggesting this speaker.**

A Member Remembers

Christine Robinson in conversation with Fran Reading

Having spent a couple of hours chatting with Christine, I now have a new respect for the key role which pharmacists play in our lives from birth to our final hours. Nowadays it is unlikely that you will see the same doctor on each surgery visit, but with a local community pharmacist you can build an on-going relationship.

Christine decided to become a pharmacist at the age of six when, having been stung by a bee, she was whisked to a Timothy Whites and made better. This experience stayed with her and, after studying for her degree at The School of Pharmacy, University of London, she moved to Birmingham Children's Hospital to get her membership of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. She then worked at the Chester group of hospitals before heading south to work in a hospital in Australia for 16 months.

Pharmacists are the 'gatekeepers', using their extensive knowledge to ensure that prescriptions dispensed are correct and safe. Christine owned and ran a community pharmacy in Cheshire for 20 years, eventually offering additional services such as care of the dying support, a minor ailment scheme and other health promotion schemes. alongside a post office, where she trained as Post Master.

Bringing up her young family at the same time certainly stretched her skills, but I can see that Christine wanted to learn how to manage all areas, and to manage them well, aiming to be the best at what she does. Later, she was part of the Local Pharmaceutical Committee, where as the only front-line representative from the pharmacist community, she had a key role to play. Her thinking and approach were definitely before their time.

Working in the community was often a challenge, but it also gave Christine the opportunity to really get to know the locals, to understand their needs, to offer support and a shoulder to cry on if needed, as well as seeing families grow up. She was awarded North West Community Pharmacist of the Year in 1999 to recognise her key role. However, she also

experienced some challenges. These included having three days to move into her re-furbished pharmacy (only ask for drugs A – P on the 4th day as Q – Z were still moving!) and an armed robbery at the Post Office – all taken in her stride, alongside her valued team.



After the community pharmacy, Christine worked as a hospital pharmacist supporting clinical trials before she retired. Christine has since dedicated herself to supporting many groups including Handbridge WI, volunteering at Storyhouse, participating in the Handbridge Community Association, walking with a local group, local history with Lache History group, and being an active member of Chester u3a, where she is a member of the History and Science groups.

In the last year she has also been very active attending Jane Austen events to celebrate 250 years since Jane's birth. Christine has a love of reading across a wide range of topics, but her love for Jane Austen has been constant since early childhood, including receiving Jane Austen books as a school prize.

Having travelled extensively over the years, and made many great friendships along the way, Christine is looking forward to further travel, including hopefully Madagascar to see the Baobab trees, and the 5-Stans, as well as places closer to home. We both agreed that as you grow older it is important to keep your mind active by learning new things and making and keeping friends. Christine said that you do have to work at those things. She has certainly done so and has had a very interesting life, supporting others in and out of work, challenging and asking questions and making the most of every day.

Thursday Strollers, by Pam Rushworth

The group meets on the first and third Thursday mornings of every month, leaving at 10.30am.

We do walks which are usually a round trip from a pub/eatery; the walks are about 3.5 to 4 miles and take about 2 hours. They 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 sections.

We go to a pub or similar for lunch after the walk. This is optional, though prior notice of menu choice usually has to be given to the walk organiser. Members pair up to organise a month's worth of walks at a time, according to a rota.

Chester is very well placed, and a huge variety of walking opportunities are available, such as the Wirral Way and the Dee coastline, Delamere forest, the Whitegate Way and many ambles along canal towpaths in the county. There are also walks from and around the city centre, making another choice. We don't mind if we have been there before. We can always do a walk the other way round or in a different season. We don't mind a bit of wet either.

Among our walks over the last months, some memorable moments have included:

- A wet June walk around Blakemere Moss, when we realised the path was moving! Further inspection revealed hundreds of tiny froglets making their way from the Moss into the big wide world.
- The discovery of a tearoom, unknown to most of us, near Puddington on a hot and sunny July day - always a win.
- From Telfords pub at the canal basin into town and along the walls via the Roodee, a different way to see our beautiful city.
- Most recently in snowy January, exploring historic Bunbury, alongside the partially frozen canal. We got a toot and a wave from an Avanti train driver on the Chester to Crewe line, which greatly pleased our inner Railway Children!



The group's Christmas lunch at the Morris Dancer, Kelsall

One of our more recent members said: 'As a new member, I've found everyone very friendly and enjoyed new walks which I've tried to repeat with my husband and dog... not always the exact same route due to poor memory and the fact I've walked and talked a lot at the same time, but I always remember the fabulous pub venues. I had fun planning my walk. We went on a circular loop in Farndon which I picked due to a good pub... the Raven.'

There are loads of opportunities with Chester u3a to get walking, with a myriad of groups appealing to different levels of walkers. Being out in the fresh air does you good, as my mother used to say.



By the canal at Bunbury

Newspaper Archives, by Tom Welsh

Newspaper archives are a useful resource for research. The possibilities are not confined to social history or genealogy, although it might often seem so. There is a guide by Denise Bates on [Historical Research Using British Newspapers](#) (Pen & Sword 2016), with a strong social history orientation. So how might newspaper archives help scientific research?

An obvious example is the weather through time. Newspapers recorded extreme weather events – storms, floods and disasters. But they also record incidental weather, in conjunction with sports, public gatherings, garden parties and excursions. These could be used to chart local weather over time, and perhaps to investigate climate change.

At Chester Races on Tuesday 30th April 1867 ([Chester Courant](#) 1 May 1867, p8), the commentator observed: ‘The very agreeable change that took place in the weather on Sunday, and the mild and spring-like atmosphere of yesterday, led us to hope that spring had fully set in with brightening influence; but early this morning rain came steadily down, which continued until ten o’clock, and which made the course heavy going. In the afternoon the sun broke forth, and the racing was enjoyed under beautiful weather’.

The development of on-line newspaper archives has made a huge difference, compared to the former slog through hard copy newsprint or microfilm. With the right key words, you can search all the likely relevant material for a project. The best-known resources are through the family history website [Findmypast](#) or its counterpart, the [British Newspaper Archive](#). You pay for access time, and an annual subscription for the latter is about £90. There is a resource for Welsh newspapers provided free by the [National Library of Wales](#). Subscribers to [The Times Online](#) can access their archive for the price of digital readership of current news, and there are special rates for researchers. You can get free access to most of these resources through your local library, or by using your library card online ([Cheshire West and Chester Libraries](#)).

One key application of newspaper archives is to research industrial history. You can, for example, chart the history of a factory or a business, partly because they advertised in the press, but also because, when they changed hands, they were described in detail. A good example is Crook Street Iron and Brass Foundry of c1830 to 1876. Started by John Parry, and then by partnerships of Taylor and Parry, it made stationary and travelling steam engines within a hundred metres of Watergate Street. It had a blast furnace with a cupola, the draught provided by a steam engine, and a factory chimney. We know a great deal from sale of premises 6th May 1846 and 14th June 1882 in [Chester Courant](#), and a retrospective in [Chester Chronicle](#) 18th and 25th September 1886, and a row over pollution in the Chronicle 19th October 1849.

Another industrial application concerns quarries used for building stone. It is often possible to find out what quarries were supplying Chester with building stone and even to find references to stone going to specific building sites. With sufficient comparative evidence this might allow analysis of stone in buildings to identify the precise source. In [Chester Chronicle](#) (18th October 1816, p3), at the end of an article about a Chester hoax, there is a chance mention of an accident at an otherwise little-known quarry in Handbridge. One of the masons carrying stone from the quarry on the riverside near Heronbridge House over-balanced, fell in the River Dee and sank. His body was not found until the following morning. The stone was being delivered to the brewery, then under construction, at the foot of Barrel Well Hill in Boughton. Iron Bridge quarry, as it was referred to, is probably the quarry in Handbridge that disposed of its remaining stock in 1826 ([Chester Courant](#) 29th August 1826 p2). Otherwise, the time at which this quarry was worked has long been a mystery.

It can be seen from the above examples that newspaper archives can provide a range of environmental information, such as climate, sources of pollution, and sources of building stone.

The Dee Bore - Tides & Times, by Paul Hyde

A bore is a series of waves moving upstream in a river channel as the tide turns to rising. The name comes from the Old Norse *bara* meaning wave. It involves a sudden change in state from the seemingly gentle downstream ebb to an abrupt surging upstream flow. The frontal wave can be breaking and the waves that follow it are called whelps.

According to the UK's National Oceanography Centre around 100 rivers worldwide have a bore and some 20% of these are in the UK. Other sources suggest that the global number may be 400. Whichever the case, a bore is a relatively uncommon event. While not the largest (that accolade goes to the Severn Bore in the UK, and globally to the 'Silver Dragon' on the Qiantang River in China) the River Dee has a bore. This provides an opportunity for those living in the Chester area to witness this special phenomenon – it is part of the area's natural heritage.

There are two key requirements for bore formation - a high tidal range and a funnel-shaped body of water. The UK has a high tidal range, and bores notably occur during episodes of spring tides, which have the lowest low water and highest high water. A common misconception is to suppose that spring tides are seasonal tides. However, they occur just after each new and full moon since this is when the moon is aligned with the sun, causing the greatest gravitational pull on our watery planet. It is best to think in terms of spring as a jump or an upwelling of water. Spring tides occur approximately every two weeks based on the lunar cycle. The Dee has a funnel-shaped estuary. This has a wide mouth between the Point of Ayr and Hilbre Point and then tapers before joining a narrow channel (the New Cut – engineered in the 1730s) at Connah's Quay. The river then has a long straight section orientated north-west to south-east to Saltney. As a spring tide rises the water becomes increasing constrained and so forms a bore.

Witnessing a bore can be a mindful experience as it means paying attention to the present, appreciating what is happening and enjoying something simple associated with nature and planetary forces – as well as being outdoors. It is also an opportunity to interact with other people at the event. While the passing of

the bore at any one point is rapid (a matter of seconds), part of the experience can be watching it approach and then progress upstream. The straight section of the River Dee either side of Saltney Ferry Footbridge is therefore an excellent platform to view from – especially for those new to bore watching. Importantly, the bore's distinctive sound as it approaches and passes is also part of a memorable encounter.

Bores can be expected to arrive at Saltney Ferry Footbridge approximately 1.5 hours before high water in Liverpool (at the lock to Gladstone Dock). The most decent bores tend to be when high water at Liverpool (HWL) is predicted to be 10m or more. However, a HWL of 9.5m or more is also worth considering, and if there has been a period of drought then lesser spring tides can also produce a notable bore. To obtain high water forecasts for Liverpool (and lunar phases) consult the National Oceanography Centre's webpage for Liverpool (<https://ntslf.org/tides/uk-network/tidepred?port=Liverpool>). This gives tidal predictions for the next 28 days. However, Laver's Liverpool and Irish Sea Tide Table booklet is a handy pocket-sized reference that provides tidal data covering an entire year. This is available direct from Laver's (<https://www.laverpublishing.com/>), as well as from certain outlets – the 2026 edition costs £2.60. Both sources show times as Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

Within the first three months of 2026 it is likely that the most decent bores will be in the spring tide episode after the new moon on Thursday 19th March. Estimated times for a bore to arrive (in daylight) in the following days at Saltney Ferry Footbridge are set out in the table.

Possible Bores (<i>in daylight</i>) in the Spring Tide Episode after the New Moon on 19 th March 2026 in-place				
Day/ Date	Predicted HWL height (m)	Predicted HWL time (GMT)	Bore Expected at Saltney Ferry Footbridge (GMT)	Suggested Time to Arrive at Viewing Location (GMT)
Thursday 19.03.2026	9.6	11:16	09:46	09:16
Friday 20.03.2026	9.8	11:52	10:22	09:52
Saturday 21.03.2026	9.9	12:29	10:59	10:29
Sunday 22.03.2026	9.7	13:08	11:38	11:08

Source of Tide Data (High Water at Liverpool – HWL): Laver's Liverpool & Irish Sea Tide Table 2026
Note: Local time GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) until 29.03.2026 when British Summer Time (BST) begins

It is worth getting to Saltney Ferry 30 minutes before the estimated arrival time as the bore can be early (as well as late). This also provides time to watch it approach – at first as a line across the distant straight channel but with it becoming progressively more defined. Another viewing point can be the Blue Bridge at Queensferry, where the bore tends to arrive around 2 hours before HWL. Note: British Summer Time (BST) begins on 29th March 2026 and during BST add one hour to the estimated arrival time when using tide tables shown in GMT.

Bores can be less pronounced (and therefore somewhat disappointing) even if a HWL of 10m or more is forecast. Several factors can influence this. One determinant is if there is a high depth of water already in the river as the bore approaches (due to a period of wet weather or because of changes in the river channel shape). It can be useful to take this into account especially if planning any first field trip to witness a Dee Bore.

All photographs by Paul Hyde



01.09.2023 The bore approaching Saltney Ferry Footbridge, propelling kayakers upstream. Predicted High Water at Liverpool (HWL) 9.8m.



01.09.2023 The bore progressing upstream beyond Saltney Ferry Footbridge. Note the change in state of the river and the whelps. Predicted High Water at Liverpool (HWL) 9.8m.



12.03.2024 People gathering on Saltney Ferry Footbridge in anticipation of witnessing the Dee Bore. Predicted High Water at Liverpool (HWL) 10.3m.



12.03.2024 People watching the bore progress upstream having passed under Saltney Ferry Footbridge along with a kayaker negotiating the whelps. Predicted High Water at Liverpool (HWL) 10.3m.

Paul Hyde (a geography graduate) was the Heritage Interpretation Officer at Chester City Council, and he continues to be fascinated by what makes places special. This article summarises the key points made in his illustrated talk '*Time & Tide – it's a Bore!*' given to Chester u3a on 4th December 2025. The talk provided a more comprehensive account of the Dee Bore.



Group Engagement Report 2025 (Small Group Leader meetings), by Steve Moore

During 2025 the Group Coordinators met face to face with Group Leaders in a series of informal meetings. These were intended to raise the profile of the Group Coordinators, open up communication channels within and between groups and to provide support and advice where necessary.

The initial meeting held at Storyhouse, early in June, was cancelled in the absence of any representatives, but subsequent meetings proved much more successful – particular after the venue was moved from Storyhouse to the Cheshire Cat in Christleton. Five meetings were held between June and October with 4-8 Group Leaders in attendance at each.

Turnout was less than 50% of all groups (N=35/83) but this was necessarily limited by group size for each meeting. It is proposed that further meetings be attempted during Spring 2026 to ensure effective coverage – this will be subject to Committee approval owing to the financial outlay required.

Discussion and reflections that arose from discussions included:

- GLs to keep on top of group membership records
- GLs to complete risk assessments (*ongoing*)
- Take steps to future proof groups, eg identify deputies
- GLs should always respond to enquiries -even if full.
- GLs to encourage group members to share or carry emergency contact details. GLs were advised to exercise caution should paper based group records be created supporting emergency contact tracing. Review and discussions in Committee have subsequently led to support for the distribution of ICE (In Case of Emergency) cards to the membership. Uptake will be on a voluntary basis..
- Some groups were identified which would benefit from the provision of First Aid Kits – (*agreed in Committee and distribution of kits in hand*)
- Membership card amendments have been discussed but found to be not feasible unless there be a national change.

SM/DE

Answers to the Quiz on p3

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Owen Cooper | 6. The first woman leader of the Red Arrows |
| 2. Macclesfield FC | 7. Ardross Castle |
| 3. Frederik Nielsen | 8. Artemis 2 |
| 4. Maria Corina Machado | 9. Storm Goretti |
| 5. Hamnet | 10. Milan-Cortina |



Registered Charity No [1159091](#)

invites applications for the 2026 Residential Summer School 2026 Residential Summer School

Tues 11th August – Friday 14th August

At Manchester Metropolitan University, M15 6GX

The Metropolitan University is located in the centre of Manchester and less than 20 minutes' walk from Oxford Road Railway Station. The campus has modern facilities, student en-suite rooms with Wi-Fi access. There will be a quiz on the first evening and a "Gala Dinner" on the third and final evening. Speakers will also attend on the second and third evening.

Full Board Residential Delegate: £430. (+£15 car parking charge if applicable;)

We include full board for 3 nights, including dinner on 11th August, breakfast, lunch and dinner on 12th August, breakfast, lunch and Gala Dinner on 13th August, and breakfast on 14th August.

Also, tea and coffee refreshments on each day.

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £215 (+£15 car parking charge if applicable)

This includes lunches, teas and coffees, excludes breakfast daily and dinner on Tuesday and Wednesday but does include the Gala Dinner on 13th August.

Accommodation is available nearby in the Manchester city centre.

An Application Form available online at

<https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2026/>

must be completed by post or email, Payment can be either by bank transfer (North West Region of u3as, Lloyds Bank sort code 30-90-16, account 00197002 quoting name and post code) or by cheque (payable to North West Region of u3as)

**£100 DEPOSIT (£50 non residents) PAYABLE UPON APPLICATION;
BALANCE BY 11 MAY 2026**

Queries should be directed to Alan Hough or Neill Stewart at

alanhough1949@gmail.com; neillstewart.uk@icloud.com

Post to 8 Salwick Close, Wigan, Gtr Manchester. WN3 6RE

The eight courses on offer are:-

Archaeology Explorers

Making sense of everyday Mathematics

An introduction to Geology

Photography - Beyond the Snapshot

Art challenges - the history of colour

The UK and USA Political Scenes

Operatunity – opera appreciation

Intermediary Ukulele

Full course synopses available separately (and on north west site).



Taking the Train in Europe, by Michael Ross

Workshop, Tuesday 10 February at 14:30 for 14:45

Would you like to take the train in Europe? If you would like to learn how you can include train travel in your European holiday - whether you fly there or take the Eurostar - then this workshop will try to answer your questions. It's at the Handbridge Centre, behind St Mary's Church, on Overleigh Road.

There will be four short talks from people who have planned their own train trips around Europe from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean. You can ask questions of the speakers and others at the workshop. The speakers are all senior rail travellers because they have found it simple and flexible and good value. Three of them are Interrailers and the fourth will talk about how you can travel without an Interrail pass.

This is a follow-on to the October talks by Michael Ross and Stuart Murray. The other speakers are Peter Goodhew (Seven Trains to Sicily) and Connie and Steve Telford (Gällivare (S), Wuppertal (D),

Vienna and the Bernina Express). Stuart (Spain and France) and Michael (Netherlands, Norway and Austria) will give short talks, too. There will be a brief re-cap of how the Interrail pass works and how to cross the Channel.

The workshop is open to all u3a members. If there are other members with experience of rail travel in Europe who would be happy to be involved in the discussion, please feel free to come along. Or just let us know before the meeting. Your journey might be the one that other people would like to ask about!

Copies of the October handout and other notes will be available. We will have a pause halfway through for tea/coffee. (Offers of help with this would be welcome). There is parking behind the Church and on Overleigh Road.

Contact Michael Ross: interrail@chesteru3a.org.uk

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.

	Picturehouse	St Columba's
February	Tuesday 3rd Pickleball	Thursday 19th Racketball
March	Tuesday 3rd Reading 1 and 2	Thursday 19th Science

The cut-off date for the next Chester Times is Friday 20th February 2026.

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

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