

# THE ROMAN CITY OF CHESTER

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*'Antiqui Colant Antiquum Dierum'*  
*'Let the Ancients worship the Ancient of Days'*

Located within the County of Cheshire and in close proximity of the North Wales border, the City of Chester owes much of its status as a prominent and favoured tourist destination to its long and enthralling history.



Deva, one of three Roman legionary fortresses in Britain, was established in the late 70s AD. The strategic military position and importance of the site was to become the foundation of Chester's future heritage, providing an almost 2000 year chronological diary of life as a Cestrian. The city's autobiography transcends Roman, Saxon, Norman, Medieval, Tudor, Stuart, Georgian and Victorian eras to the present day.

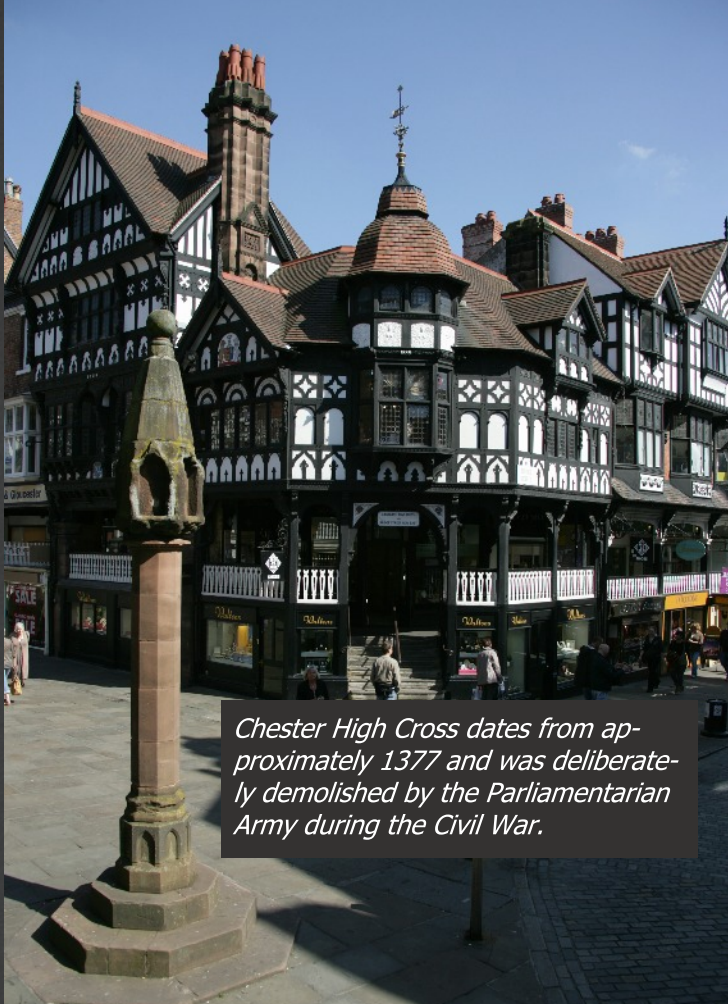


**Main Image Page 1:** Eastgate Clock at dusk.  
**Bottom Image Page 1:** Roman Tours  
**Image Below:** Chester Cathedral Memorial Garden.



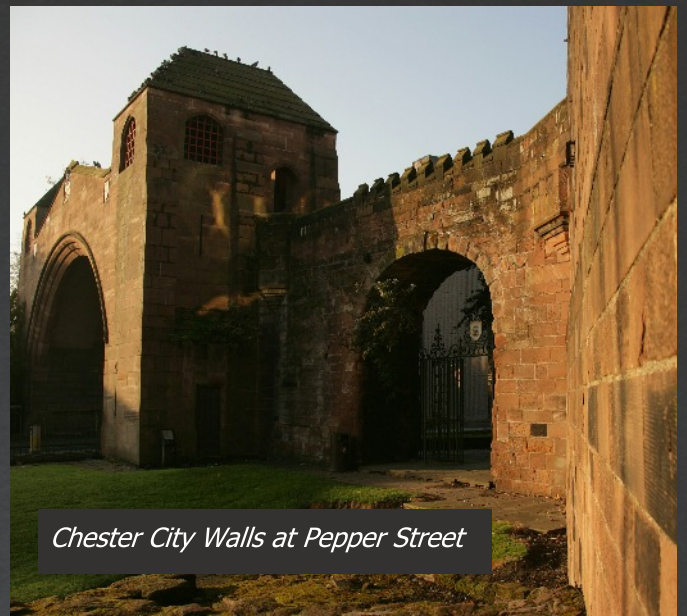


Often referred to as the “Walled City” at almost 3km (approximately 2 miles) in length, Chester City Wall is the longest surviving stretch of city walls in the UK. Exploring the walls helps to unfold the city’s history as a former major seaport, military garrison and city under siege. Most of the city’s major tourist attractions and places of interest are adjacent to, or visible from, the wall.



*Chester High Cross dates from approximately 1377 and was deliberately demolished by the Parliamentary Army during the Civil War.*

Partially restored (some of the pieces are still missing) Chester’s High Cross city centre location hosts a variety of street entertainers, including the ancient tradition of reading Noon Proclamations by the Chester Town Crier, Mr David Mitchell. This highly entertaining and colourful ritual can be witnessed at noon on a Tuesday to Saturday from May to August. Bridge Street leads from the High Cross to the Bridgegate at the Old Dee Bridge, via Lower Bridge Street. The galleried walkways of the Bridgegate Rows continues the retail theme synonymous with the other three streets. Extending the whole length on both sides of the street, both rows connect with their neighbouring galleried rows on south Eastgate



*Chester City Walls at Pepper Street*



*Noon Proclamations by the Chester Town Crier*

and south Watergate. Almost the entire length of Bridge Street has limited traffic access, allowing shoppers and workers relatively unrestricted freedom of movement across nearly the whole length and breadth of the street. The black and white timbered Tudor style reconstructed buildings at 1 Bridge Street are believed to be the most photographed scene (after the Eastgate Clock) in the city.



*Contrasting architecture of Eastgate Street*

Designed by John Douglas, the Eastgate Clock is arguably Chester's, most famous landmark. Erected in 1899 to commemorate Queen Victoria's 1897 Diamond Jubilee, the aesthetic open wrought-iron structure makes it difficult to resist the temptation of a quick photograph, helping to confirm its reputation as the most photographed clock, after Big Ben, in the world.





Watergate Street leads from the High Cross to the Watergate and Chester Racecourse, via New Crane Street. Retail artisan outlets along the street and rows are very diverse with goods and services ranging from vintners, silverware, antiques, art galleries, jewellers and furniture to excellent public houses, restaurants, cafes and bistros. Watergate Street has some magnificent period architectural buildings of particular note.

Eastgate Street is a mixture of contrasting architectural building styles, which are now home to many popular retail outlets, banks and building societies. The street has been compared with London's Regent Street and its largest department store, Browns of Chester, is nicknamed the 'Harrods of the North'. The area is partially pedestrianised with restricted vehicle access, allowing the easy ebb and flow of workers and shoppers. There are normally a few talented buskers to keep visitors and locals entertained.

Northgate Street leads from the centre of the city to the Northgate and Fountains Roundabout. Whilst very little of the original galleried rows remain, the street does contain a diverse mixture of retail outlets, cafes, restaurants and pubs, and its route offers access to the Cathedral via St Werburgh Street, Forum Shopping Centre and Town Hall. Frequent continental and local markets are held in the Market Square.

*Chester Rows at the High Cross*



Tudor style architecture on Watergate Street

From Saxon Minster to the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Werburgh, worship has taken place on the site of Chester Cathedral for over 1000 years. Chester Cathedral was transformed from the Benedictine Abbey of St Werburgh to the foundation of Chester Cathedral by Henry VIII in 1541. The building and site has undergone many transformations but is said to 'contain materials from every Christian century since the tenth'. Major restoration during the late 1800's and again in 1900's have changed the appearance of the Cathedral and also caused some architectural controversy. Chester Cathedral is officially known as the Cathedral of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Located at the junction of Northgate Street and St Werburgh Street, this magnificent tourist attraction and important place of worship has been open to tourists for almost a hundred years.





Even on non-race days Chester Racecourse merits the short stroll from the city centre and its position below the city walls, allow an elevated unobstructed view (even on race days) of the entire course. Dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Chester Racecourse on the Roodee is reputed to be the oldest racecourse in England. Its circular layout ensures that race-goers have the unique visual advantage of being able to see the whole course without the aid of binoculars – the oval shaped course also earned it the nickname of 'Soup-Plate'. Situated on the former Roman port, the course aptly illustrates how the River Dee has changed course over the centuries.

*Morning view of rowers on the River Dee*



At over 70 miles long, the River Dee's journey from source to sea begins in North Wales. It's relatively short but impressive passage through Chester is via the Meadows, under the Queen's Park Suspension Bridge, flowing parallel to the Groves, surging over the Weir, passing below the Dee Bridge, meandering around the Racecourse and sweeping far beneath the Grosvenor Bridge, before finally returning back into North Wales.

Regardless if you are in search of aesthetic city street scenes, ancient architecture, urban culture, history or just lots of shopping, the city of Chester is hard to beat. But if you want to see all the city has to offer then be sure to either arrive early, stay a few days or plan to return again, and again.



*Chester Racecourse*