

## NORTHGATE UPDATE

The opening of the 6 screen Picturehouse Cinema alongside the Market and next door to Storyhouse is a very welcome addition to Chester's cultural offer. Since the closure of the Odeon Cinema in 2007, the city has been without a multi screen city centre cinema. Picturehouse has a cafe and bar and will show a wide variety of new and classic films, including programmes for children.



Northgate development including Goldsmith and Hamilton House and the site of the former market. It is likely that the next phase will centre around a mixed-use residential scheme involving the conversion of some of the existing buildings and the removal of others. The Trust will continue to monitor closely and comment on future proposals.

**Christine Russell**



The new Chester Market has welcomed over 2 million visitors since it opened a year ago. Over 2,500 pairs of glasses have been dispensed by Pop Specs, the Market's optician, 20,000 plants have been sold by Purely Pots, 60,000 pizzas have been served by the Mercato Pizza Company and Geoff Hughes Family Butchers estimate that over 1,000 sausages have been made in the Market every week! The National Association of British Market Authorities has recently presented its highest accolade for the 'Best New Market' to Chester Market.

The Council is currently undertaking an 'Options Appraisal' for future phases of the

## THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY CHESTER CIVIC TRUST AWARDS 2024

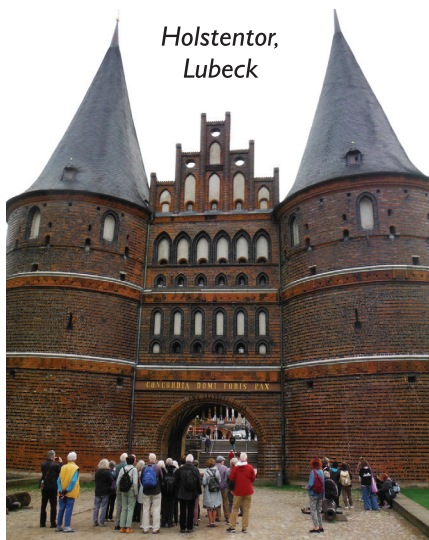
We are again inviting Civic Trust members to submit their nominations for The Good, the Bad and the Ugly for our 2024 Awards. Last year we had a fantastic response with over 90 nominations, let's try and make it over 100 this year. As always, we aim to recognise the Good projects and initiatives during 2023 whilst drawing attention to the Bad and Ugly in the hope that these can be remedied or avoided in the future. The closing date for nominations is Friday 26 January 2024; we look forward to receiving your nominations.

**Peter Hadfield**  
Chair of Judging Panel

*There is a nomination form included with this newsletter.  
You can also make nominations on the Trust's website.*

# HANSA PORTS: STUDY TOUR TO GERMANY, THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM

This year's tour was to Hanseatic ports in north-west Europe, starting from Ghent in Belgium, then Lübeck, Bremen and Oldenburg in north Germany, Nijmegen in the Netherlands, and finally back to Antwerp in Belgium. On a trip to the Fens in 2021 we visited the last remaining Hansa structure in Britain, the Hansa House in King's Lynn. This year we saw much more extensive buildings associated with the Hanseatic League - warehouses, trading areas and buildings for the administration and government of the League, which from the 13th to 15th centuries was a dominating force governing trade across the North Sea and the Baltic, from Britain to Russia. It was also an opportunity to study how the fascinating story of the Hansa is being used to provide a context to the history of these port towns and attract heritage tourists.



This was particularly the case in Lübeck where the old town is tightly constrained on an island surrounded by rivers running into the Baltic. Here there is a new museum - the European Hansa Museum, opened in 2015 and incorporating a 13th century monastery and

other historic buildings, linked by modernistic structures referencing the gothic brick architecture of old Lübeck. It clearly caters for people of all ages, using IT to provide information in English, German, Swedish and Russian, and allowing visitors to select a Hansa port of interest, London for example, to receive information specific to the history of that port. Wouldn't it be wonderful if Chester had a museum to rival this!

Bremen is the smallest state (Land) in the German Federal Republic and carries the official title of Free Hanseatic State of Bremen. It also makes much of its connection with the Grimm fairy tale The Town Musicians of Bremen, commemorated in a sculpture adjacent to the Town Hall. As well as many fine renaissance-style civic buildings, there is the Schnoor Quarter, a labyrinth of 15th-16th century small houses used as workshops, studios, galleries and cafés.

An overnight stop in nearby Oldenburg was followed by a quick walking tour of the town, and then on to the Dutch city of Nijmegen, on the river Waal close to



the border with Germany. It was a Hanseatic port from the start of the 15th century. First impressions are that Nijmegen is promoting itself as "old city, young vibe", focusing as much on shopping and café culture as on the city's heritage and historic buildings.

The final stop was Antwerp, where we spent two nights, allowing a whole day to explore the city. We started in the historic docks on the Scheldt river to see areas to be developed and some housing projects fitting in well with the adjacent 16th century brick Guildhall; then moving on to the Town Hall and the fine Baroque church of Saint Charles Borromeus with its connections to Rubens. The afternoon was free to explore Antwerp, for example its famous art galleries, the diamond centre, or the fascinating and well-preserved collection of Art Nouveau properties and other styles of the same period in the Zurenburg district south of the centre. An early start the following day to catch the ferry from Calais.

Inevitably this tour involved long hours in a coach. We were fortunate to have Val from Alpine Travel as our driver - a Latvian from Riga, he now lives in Llandudno. It was a safe, smooth drive with plenty of well-timed breaks. Gerard from Travel Editions accompanied us all the way from Chester and back. We had excellent local guides in Lübeck, Bremen and Antwerp, and Gerard filled in for Oldenburg and Nijmegen. He also provided useful commentary on the countries and Länder as we drove through them, quite complicated histories in some cases, as well as information on their current systems of government. It was interesting to drive through the Teutoburg Forest and across Lüneburg Heath in Germany. Elsewhere, we noted the absence of litter along the autobahns (but significant amounts of graffiti in urban areas), and onshore wind turbines were much more common than in Britain.

Thanks to Christine Russell and Karen McKay for organising an informative and enjoyable tour.

**Edward Phillips**

# LOST AND FOUND REVISITED

There are still no sightings of the statue of Queen Ann. However, we had much more luck with the Dalle de verre glass from the Grosvenor Precinct. No-one seems to know where it is, but we do have photographs of it. One was found by Peter Elliot, the other is from a number held by the Photographic Survey.

Volunteers at Chester Photographic Survey have been collecting images of Chester's streets and buildings from the 1960's up to the present day. 25,000 of these images are on slides, in colour and black and white. They believe that this valuable historical collection should be available to the public. The Photographic Survey is applying for funding to purchase image scanning equipment to digitise the collection. Once scanned, images will be made available to the public on the internet for exhibitions, presentations etc. The original images on film are safely held at Cheshire Archives but are currently not visible due to their format.

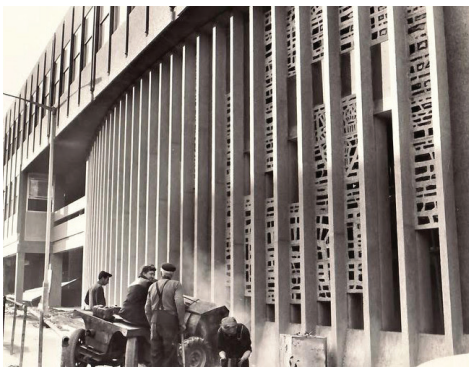
Making these historic images visible offers Chester residents an opportunity to look back at its recent history and reflect on the changes made and the way forward for this beautiful historical city. Schools can access image sets for presentations and display as an educational tool to support community understanding, building an awareness of how our urban environment changes within a lifetime. Public engagement is key to the success of making this collection into an active digital resource and CPS are actively seeking new volunteers to help

in this process. They also need more photographers to record our changing city. Its value is seen in its having photographs of the Dalle de verre glass when we felt no evidence was left.

The stained-glass windows from the children's ward of the Chester Royal Infirmary are now on permanent display on the first floor of Chester University's Wheeler Building, opposite to the river. They were previously in storage. Their unveiling formed part of the celebrations to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the NHS. They consist of Morning, Noon and Night. A window from the chapel is also on display This was dedicated to Frances Wilbraham of Rode Hall. Yet another forgotten woman, she was actively involved in the nursing of Chester cholera victims in the 1860s. It is possible to see the stained glass windows by signing in at the front desk of the building.

If you wish to help Chester Photographic Survey, whether it be with the scanning process or in the taking of new photographs, please contact Sue Denly on 07833927342 or email her on [chesterphotosurvey@gmail.com](mailto:chesterphotosurvey@gmail.com). Our current collection from 2010 onwards can be viewed on [www.chesterphotosurvey.smugmug.com](http://www.chesterphotosurvey.smugmug.com). Pledges towards fundraising for the scanner will be gratefully received on <https://www.spacehive.com/digitising-history-of-chester>

**Karen McKay and Sue Denly**



*Thanks to Peter Elliot. Outside the Precinct*



*An image of the dalle de verre glass from the Precinct on Pepper Street, recorded for posterity by the Chester Photographic Survey in 1999*



*Night from the children's ward Chester Royal Infirmary, now in the Wheeler Building*

## HERITAGE EVENTS

The Trust again supported the Heritage Festival and Heritage Open Days in 2023.

Bishop Lloyd's Palace featured in a talk presented by Karen McKay and was the venue for 'Tea at the Palace' when we had well over 100 visitors. Several members of the Trust led walks including John Herson who also presented 'Chester's Waterways, Wharf and Weir' as a virtual walk. The film can still be viewed on the YouTube channel, [@chesterherifest](https://www.youtube.com/@chesterherifest).

Also, there are other films produced for this year's festival including Chester Archaeology Society's film

'Galleries they Call the Rows', which provides a comprehensive look at the Rows and five shorter films, 'Revealing the Rows' financed by Chester's Heritage Action Zone project.

The films all make fascinating watching on a cold winter's evening before the return of the Festival at the end of June and Open Days in September next year. Preparations for these have begun and volunteers to assist are being sought.

**Liz Preedy**



# Chester Civic Trust

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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### **JANUARY 5th**

TWELFTH NIGHT QUIZ at BLP.  
Flyer and Booking Form enclosed.

### **JANUARY 17th**

'CHESHIRE'S ARCHIVES: A STORY SHARED' Talk by Paul Newman, Archives and Local Studies Manager, CW&C Council. Grosvenor Museum. 7.30pm. Members free, Guests £5.

### **FEBRUARY 9th**

ELIHU & HIS WICKED WIFE. BLP event. Flyer enclosed.

### **FEBRUARY 21st**

Lecture: Speaker to be advised.

### **FEBRUARY 29th**

VISIT TO ORDSALL HALL & MANCHESTER MUSEUM. Flyer and Booking Form enclosed.

### **MARCH 14th**

Visit to two university museums and a crypt. Flyer enclosed.

### **MARCH 20th**

Lecture: Speaker to be advised.

### **APRIL 8th-11th**

Visit to CARDIFF.  
Flyer and Booking Form enclosed.

### **APRIL 17th**

Nicola Briggs, Director, London and SE National Trust. Grosvenor Museum. 7.30pm.

### **JUNE 22nd**

There will be a rare opportunity to visit Crewe Hill Gardens, one of Cheshire's hidden gems for a tour and afternoon tea. Details and booking form with the April newsletter.

### **SEPTEMBER**

A visit to Poland is being planned for dates between 8th and 18th September (actual dates will be confirmed later). This will include staying in Gdansk, Warsaw and Krakow. There will be a Flyer and Booking Form in the April newsletter. Expressions of interest before then, please, to Christine Russell (email at top of page) or Karen McKay ([mckaykaren68@gmail.com](mailto:mckaykaren68@gmail.com))

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