



Model of the Roman Fortress of Chester (Deva Victrix)

CITIES IN CIVILISATION: CRUCIBLES OF CULTURE
THE ROMANS, ANGLO-SAXONS AND TUDORS
IN CHESTER

FRIDAY 21 - MONDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

Chester was one of the finest strategic outposts of the Roman Empire. At the centre of the entire province of Britannia it became the headquarters of the governor of Roman Britain; it may well have been intended as the eventual capital of the entire British Isles. The Roman army arrived in Chester sometime between AD 71 and 79. They began building a vast garrison on a mighty headland above the river Dee that was eventually connected to all parts of the Roman province by brilliantly engineered Roman roads. Establishing an important position on a pre-existent trade route, it would not have gone unnoticed that this would be an ideal position from which to invade Ireland. The complex included barracks, granaries, headquarters, military baths, an unusual elliptical building, and a huge theatre, the largest military amphitheatre in Britain. Amazingly parts of the walls, the baths, the theatre, together with the only Roman shrine in all of Western Europe still in its original position, have survived. For more than three centuries Chester was one of the most important military bases in the Roman Empire.

By 689 Chester had its first cathedral, founded by King Athelraed of Mercia. The mighty Roman city walls were further strengthened by the Anglo-Saxons to withstand Danish advance, and now Chester is one of the best-preserved walled cities in Britain. In 973, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that when King Edgar of England came to Chester, he held his court in a palace in a place now known as Edgar's Field near the old Dee bridge in Handbridge. Monastic orders - the Blackfriars, Greyfriars and Whitefriars- settled in Chester, and once the town had assumed its huge military and political significance under Edward I in the late 13c, the city walls were rebuilt and Chester became the home of the finest master masons in Europe. The walls remain the best-preserved in England, while the monastic buildings surrounding Chester Cathedral, once a Benedictine Abbey, survive as the most complete monastic enclave in the country. Medieval grade I-listed churches and houses abound, sometimes surviving as cellars beneath fine later structures. The early significance of Chester in the story of English cities cannot be overestimated. We are delighted to have been able to arrange two days with author Dr. David Mason, Principal Archaeologist of Chester who has been involved in the investigation and research of Chester's archaeology and history for more than 30 years.

FRIDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

Dr David Mason

- 10.10 Suggested train leaves London Euston
- 12.11 Train arrives Chester. Minibus to lunch
- 12.30 Opening Group Lunch at The Architect Restaurant and introduction of our guest lecturer, Dr David Mason, Principal Archaeologist of Chester
- 2.00 Dr Mason's opening lecture: Roman Chester
- 3.00 Walk to Grosvenor Museum
- 3.15 Grosvenor Museum Roman Collection for private tour led by Dr Mason
- 4.15 Tea at Forty-Six Catering Lower Bridge Street
- 4.45 Return to hotel by taxi for check in and rest
- 7.15 Opening drinks reception
- 8.00 Opening Group Dinner at the Sticky Walnut

SATURDAY 22 SEPTEMBER

Dr David Mason

- 09.30 Taxis/minibus to Roman amphitheatre, Roman baths hypocaust and columns; Minerva's Shrine; excursion to Battle of Chester site in 616 AD, excavated by Dr Mason in 2004
- 12.00 Group Lunch in La Fattoria Restaurant
- 1.30 Walk to Chester Castle
- 2.00 Arrive Chester Castle: Norman Chester guided tour with Nicholas Friend
- 3.15 Taxi to hotel for tea
- 4.00 Free time
- 8.00 Group Dinner at the Sticky Walnut

SUNDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

Rev'd David Chesters

- 10.00 Coffee and NF Lecture: Medieval Chester
- 11.00 Leave for walk on Chester walls
- 12.00 Parish church of St John with Rev'd David Chesters OBE, Rector
- 1.00 Group lunch at the Brewery Tap Restaurant
- 2.30 Chester Cathedral including specialist tour of Quire Stalls
- 4.00 Tea in Cathedral Refectory.
- 4.30 Free time or return to hotel by taxi
- 8.00 Group Dinner in Sticky Walnut

MONDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

- 10.00 NF lecture: Envisioning the Past; Artist's Responses to Chester
- 11.00 Taxis to Grosvenor Museum, Chester
- 11.15 Grosvenor Museum Art Collection
- 12.30 Closing Group Lunch in Opera Grill Restaurant
- 2.00 Leave for Stone Villa hotel for luggage then station
- 2.55 Train leaves Chester
- 5.02 Train arrives London Euston



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STONE VILLA CHESTER
No. 3 Stone Place
Chester
01244345014

Built in 1850 on a quiet street at the end of a cul-de-sac, Stone Villa is a 5-minute walk from Chester Station. Chester Cathedral and Chester's Roman Amphitheatre, to which we take taxis, are both less than one mile away. Rooms at the Stone Villa Chester are decorated in pleasing light shades with luxury furnishings, large bathrooms, individual fridges and comfortable seating areas. Each room has a flat-screen TV and free Wi-Fi. Three ground floor rooms offer easy access for those with mobility issues.

As a five star B&B, breakfast is a centre event. Each morning traditional English, vegetarian and continental breakfasts are cooked to order and served. The kitchen uses fresh local produce and can cater for specialist dietary requirements.

Cost: £1495 members, £1545 non-members, Single Room Supplement £170, Deposit £300, including three nights exclusive occupation, all breakfasts, all lunches and dinners with wine, all lectures, all private visits, entries, donations and tours, all coffees and teas, all minibuses and taxi travel during the tour, VAT and gratuities. Excludes travel to and from Chester.