

## **Focus on Chester...**

***The ebb and flow of Chester's fortunes can be linked in many ways with the River Dee.***

***Meandering majestically through the city centre, its beauty is one of the factors which make modern-day Chester such a desirable place to live.***

For the Romans, the Dee was an important shipping river. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the navigable waterway had made Chester the second most important port in Britain. Evidence of those opulent days can still be seen in the magnificent half-timbered medieval buildings known as 'The Rows' which light up the city centre.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century, however, the River Dee began to silt up which effectively put a block on the water-borne trade which would have transformed Chester into a Victorian industrial city on a par with Liverpool.

With hindsight, this period of economic decline was a blessing in disguise for Chester's future residents. The city today has none of the urban blight which afflicts so many other parts of the north-west.

On the doorstep – and in every direction – is lush Cheshire countryside. And thanks to excellent road and rail connections and the city's proximity to both Liverpool and Manchester airports, work and leisure links with the region's cities and beauty spots are simply superb.

Chester's 'town-meets-country' location, together with its unrivalled social and civic amenities, create a quality of life that is reflected in the buoyant housing market, particularly within the city's Roman walls where properties sell at premium prices.

For this is where the aura of 'affluent market town' is at its strongest. It is where upmarket shops sit happily alongside familiar high street names within the bustling Grosvenor Centre. Or where a different shopping experience can be had along the galleried walkways of 'The Rows' with its antiques emporia and exclusive fashion boutiques.

Without a doubt, Chester has something for everyone! Golfers are well catered-for with several local courses including the world-beating Carden Park Hotel Golf Resort. Race-goers have a superb facility on their doorstep (created on the old harbour site!), whilst Europe's leading conservation zoo provides a great family day out.

These are just some of the many attractions of life in Chester. For employment opportunities, the thriving local economy has been recognised by major employers who have moved into nearby business parks. Educational facilities, meanwhile, are excellent at every level with the city's two major secondary schools figuring prominently in national performance league tables.

This, in a nutshell, is Chester – one of Europe's great heritage cities that is at once vibrant, changing and timeless.

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