

Riverside Promenade Trail

1 The New Cut

This straight section of the River Dee results from engineering works undertaken in the 1730s to improve navigation between Chester and the open sea. A channel was cut through marshes in an attempt to solve the problem of silt and shifting sandbanks in the estuary. It also led to the creation of Sealand, as land reclaimed from the sea.



2 Cop Park

The park is named after the bank, or cop, that is still clearly visible. This was raised in the early 18th century to protect low-lying areas from flooding. A warehouse used for exporting Cheshire Cheese once stood here, next to the bend in the river. In the late 18th century some 7,000 tons of cheese was exported via Chester to London each year.



3 Dee Lock

Constructed in 1801, the lock marks the river entrance to the present Shropshire Union Canal. Originally, it provided access to a wide basin. However, the basin was filled in around 1950, burying many submerged boats. The area has recently been redeveloped and part of it is now known as Earl's Port after the name of one of these boats - Earl.



4 New Crane Wharf

The wharf developed during the second half of the 18th century. It was connected to the city by a new road from the Watergate (New Crane Street) and could take sea-going vessels of up to 350 tons. Here the new walkway has been built directly above the former quay. A listed riverside warehouse remains, currently a training base for sea cadets.



Water (New) Tower 5

This massive round tower was built in 1322 as the New Tower to help protect the city from any ship-borne attack using the harbour. It then stood in the waters of the river. It is connected to the main city walls by a spur wall through which there is a former water gate. These structures have long since been left high and dry as the course of the river changed.



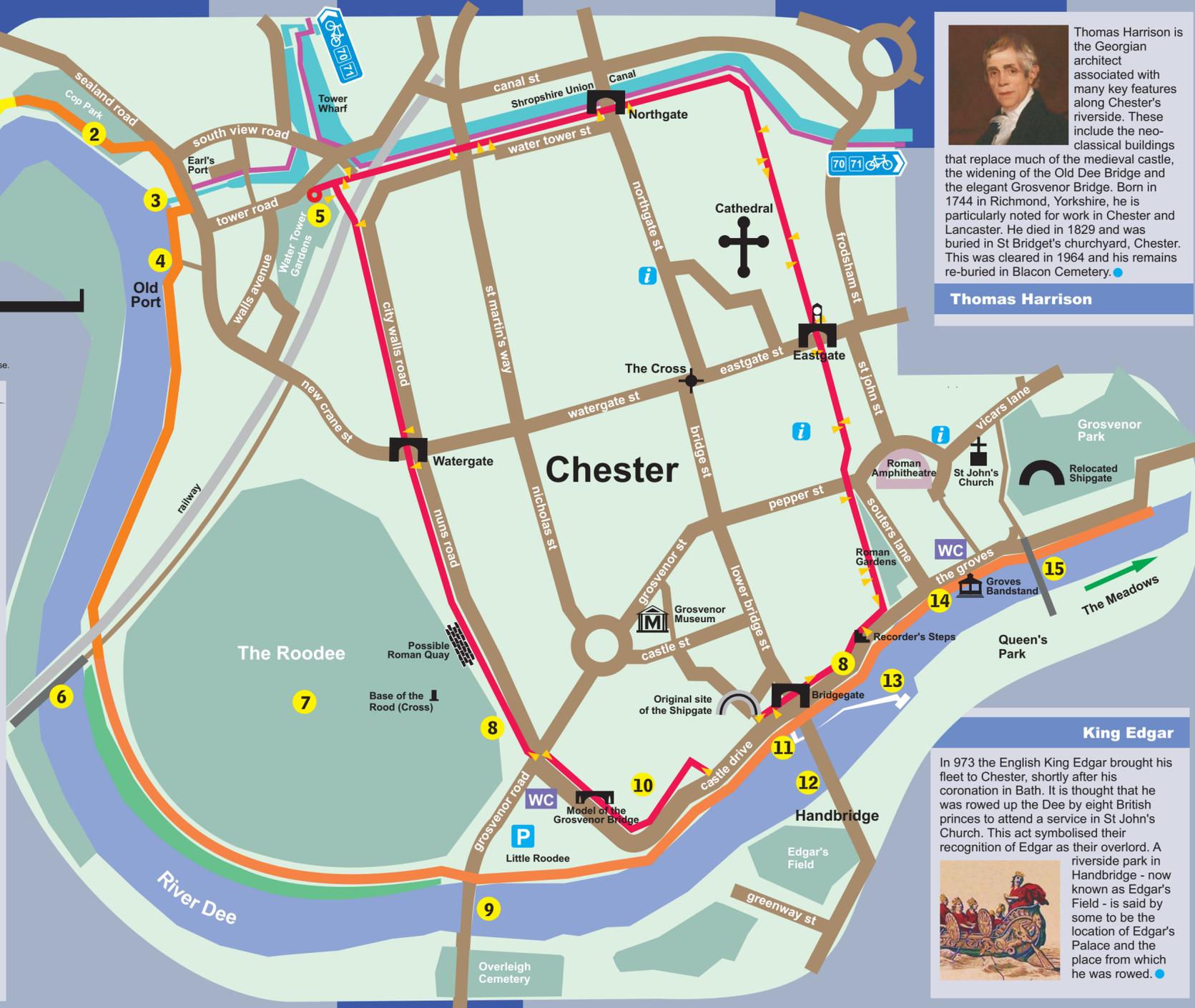
0.25 miles

250 metres

Locations and distances are indicative and not precise.

Key

- river
- promenade trail
- dee coastal path
- canal towpath
- city walls
- river footbridges
- footpaths
- roads
- tourist information
- public toilets near riverside
- little roodee car & coach park
- cycle network route
- willow woodland
- selected features
- walls access points



Thomas Harrison is the Georgian architect associated with many key features along Chester's riverside. These include the neo-classical buildings that replace much of the medieval castle, the widening of the Old Dee Bridge and the elegant Grosvenor Bridge. Born in 1744 in Richmond, Yorkshire, he is particularly noted for work in Chester and Lancaster. He died in 1829 and was buried in St Bridget's churchyard, Chester. This was cleared in 1964 and his remains re-buried in Blacon Cemetery.

Thomas Harrison

King Edgar

In 973 the English King Edgar brought his fleet to Chester, shortly after his coronation in Bath. It is thought that he was rowed up the Dee by eight British princes to attend a service in St John's Church. This act symbolised their recognition of Edgar as their overlord. A riverside park in Handbridge - now known as Edgards Field - is said by some to be the location of Edgards Palace and the place from which he was rowed.



6 Railway Bridge

The viaduct and bridge were built in the mid 1840s to carry the railway across the Roodee and Dee. In 1847 the bridge was the site of an accident in which five people died. Robert Stephenson (of the Rocket fame) had used cast iron girders. One broke as an engine ran over the bridge causing the tender and carriages to fall into the river below.



The Roodee 7

The name is derived from Rood Eye or Eg, meaning the island or meadow of the cross. A medieval cross stood to mark the boundary between two parishes and its sandstone base can still be seen. The Roodee has been used, almost continually, for horse racing since 1540 (after football was banned). It is, therefore, the oldest racecourse in the country.



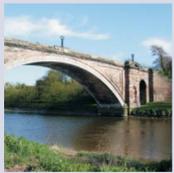
City Walls 8

Those seen from riverside follow the medieval line of defences. They extended the enclosed area of the city to the west and south, beyond that of the Roman fortress to encompass the Norman castle. The fortress was on higher ground and its western and southern walls have long disappeared. The walls that flank the Roodee run along the river cliff.



9 Grosvenor Bridge

Designed by Thomas Harrison, who died before it was completed. When opened in 1832 by Princess (later Queen) Victoria, this bridge had the widest single stone span (200ft, approx. 61m) in the world. Famous engineers including Telford and Brunel were consulted on its feasibility and cost. Harrison's stone model of the bridge can be seen nearby on Castle Drive.

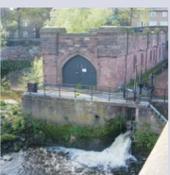


Chester Castle 10

Founded by William the Conqueror, it was the stronghold of the Earls of Chester during the Middle Ages. Originally it was built in timber and then rebuilt in stone. However, the site has since been greatly modified. Between 1788 and 1822 much of the medieval structure was replaced by neo-classical buildings designed by Thomas Harrison.



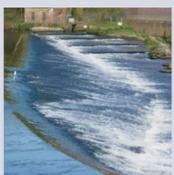
Opened in 1913, its turbines used the head of water created by the weir to generate electricity. It is claimed to be the first such power station to serve an English city. It occupies the site of the former Dee Mills. When opened it supplied 40% of the city's electricity but with rising demand only 2% by 1946. In 1951 it became a water pumping station.



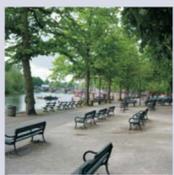
Thought to date from 1387 when it was the lowest bridging point on the River Dee. There have been bridges on, or near to this site, since Roman times. Alterations over the centuries include the removal of a gatehouse on the Handbridge end in 1781 and the widening of the upstream side by 7ft (approx. 2m) in 1826 to provide the present footpath.



This structure originates from shortly after the Norman Conquest (1092). For centuries its head of water powered mills and, in the 20th century, a hydro-electric station. A series of broad steps have been built to help migrating salmon pass this otherwise formidable barrier. Heron and cormorants can be seen here waiting for fish to pass.



The Groves were created as a tree-lined riverside walk in the early 1700s. Together with the refurbished City Walls they became fashionable places to promenade. The two features were connected by Recorder's Steps. The Groves subsequently grew into a popular riverside resort with activities including pleasure boat trips and band concerts.



Completed in 1923, this metal structure replaced an earlier suspension bridge (built in 1852) which had become unsafe. The reason for a bridge at this point was to provide a short pedestrian route between the new residential suburb of Queen's Park and Chester city centre. Visitors to The Groves can cross this bridge to reach Handbridge or the Meadows.



11 Hydro-electric Station

12 Old Dee Bridge

13 The Weir

14 The Groves

15 Suspension Bridge

Local Information

About connecting **Cycle Routes** visit: www.cheshire.gov.uk/countryside/cycling, and the **National Cycle Network** visit: www.sustrans.org.uk
 About local **Buses and Trains** contact Cheshire Traveline on: 01244 602666 or visit: www.cheshire.gov.uk/transport; and about **Car Parks and Park & Ride in Chester** visit: www.chester.gov.uk
Chester Tourist Information Centre: 01244 402111. For a **Walls Heritage Trail** visit: www.chester.gov.uk/wallstrail

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