

# The PORT SUNLIGHT Gazette

ISSUE NO. 36  
SUMMER  
2024

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Port Sunlight  
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*An update from Paul Harris,  
Chief Executive of Port Sunlight Village Trust*

**Hello and welcome** to this summer 2024 edition of the Port Sunlight Gazette, your quarterly magazine filled with the latest news, updates and events Port Sunlight's community should know about.

Firstly, I'd like to look back at spring and how wonderful it was to witness the village bloom once again. The spring colours, helped along by our fantastic team of gardeners, seemed brighter than ever. The combination of our Easter trail and the first ever Sugar & Spice Festival saw thousands of people enjoying the village, proving that people really do make Port Sunlight. We also marked the 35th anniversary of the Hillsborough tragedy, when PSVT's Chair Andrew Bowden was joined by the choir at Church Drive Primary School, who performed a touching rendition of You'll Never Walk Alone in the Hillsborough Memorial Garden.

Another recent highlight has been the launch of our new resident engagement strategy, the Village Voice. This is an exciting moment for Port Sunlight and we really want everyone in the village to get involved, whether it's simply by signing up to the Village Voice Portal or by being an active part of one of the advisory groups. All the information you need to know about the Village Voice is on the opposite page – please do have a read.

A reminder that the Have Your Say 2024 survey will be delivered to all households during the week of 10th June. PSVT is seeking your views on key areas of Village life as well as new facilities, services, events and initiatives for all Port Sunlight residents. The survey is being led by Catherine Simmons and Paul Kelly, independent consultants who have worked on the Village over the past year. Your views will be treated in full confidence, so we want you to be honest in your responses. See enclosed flyer for more information

We've had a few staff changes recently too. Martine Gibson has sadly left her role as PA to focus on her business as a therapeutic coach, and we wish her the very best success. Matthew Bridson has moved on after completing his 18-month Knowledge Transfer Partnership programme with the University of Manchester, however his work will help us continue to explore more deeply the village's founder William Lever, and the exploitation of Lever Brothers' Congolese employees in the 20th century.

I am also excited to welcome a new staff member, Mike Ward, who has joined us as Chief Commercial Officer & Deputy CEO. With previous roles spanning Manchester Airports Group, Transport for London and Network Rail, and his current roles as trustee at both the Silk Heritage Trust in Macclesfield and Tatton Park Charitable Trust, he will be driving forward the development of our visitor, retail and food & beverage offer across the village.

This summer, we've got plenty of events to look forward to. The Road Race, presented by BTR Liverpool and sponsored by Unilever, returns on Sunday 9th June. The British Press Photographers' Association are bringing their annual, free 'Assignments' exhibition to Port Sunlight, taking over Bridge Cottage with one hundred of the best press photographs over the past year. We've got everything from a fabulous day of summer family fun on the village green on 15th June to an open-air theatre performance of Shakespeare in the Dell on 14th August

However you're spending it, I'd like to wish a wonderful summer to everyone living, visiting and working in Port Sunlight.

*Paul Harris, Chief Executive, Port Sunlight Village Trust*

## Fancy winning £1,000?

The Port Sunlight Lottery is a great way to have a flutter while directly supporting our village. For just £2 per week you could be entered into the weekly draw, with a chance to win one of 30 cash prizes, plus entry into quarterly superdraws where you can win £5,000 or £10,000. Sign up now and you can be part of our spring superdraw in March.

You can play up to six lines per week. Sign up here: [giantcashbonanza.online/portsunlight/](https://giantcashbonanza.online/portsunlight/) or complete a Lottery leaflet which can be found in the Port Sunlight Museum.

The Port Sunlight Lottery is administered by Giant Cash Bonanza. All money raised will, after the deduction of prize money and reasonable administration expenses, be donated solely for the benefit of PSVT - in 2023, we raised over £7,000 through the lottery! Sign up now and you could be part of the upcoming quarterly superdraws in June (£5,000) and September (£10,000)

Have a question? Email [admin@portsunlightvillage.com](mailto:admin@portsunlightvillage.com)



## LEAVE A LEGACY... FOR FREE!

Port Sunlight was an inspirational legacy left by William Lever for us all to enjoy.

By leaving us a legacy in your Will, you can help to inspire future generations, and ensure that they are able to enjoy this special place as much as you do today.

To make it even easier, PSVT has now partnered with [FreeWills.co.uk](https://FreeWills.co.uk) to give you the opportunity to make your own fully comprehensive Will for free.

You can make your personalised Will online in three simple steps, from the comfort of your own home and with live support from their Will specialists.

Go to [portsunlightvillage.com](https://portsunlightvillage.com) or search 'support Port Sunlight' to find out more.



## HAVE YOU JOINED THE VILLAGE VOICE YET?

As Port Sunlight Village Trust, we want residents to be actively engaged in the work we do. We want to listen to you, involve you and use your feedback to help shape and improve our services. That's where the Village Voice comes in.

### What is the Village Voice?

The Village Voice is the result of our resident engagement strategy, launched in spring 2024. The strategy was created in consultation with a range of residents, both owners/occupiers and PSVT tenants, as well as the Port Sunlight Village Residents Association.

This was in response to concerns from some residents that they weren't engaged enough in the work we do or incorporated into decision making processes.

### Join the Village Voice Portal

To increase the volume and diversity of residents who want to have their say, we have created the Village Voice Portal, an informal collective of residents who will be called upon each month to give their views and feedback on specific issues from the comfort of their own homes. It's your chance to feed in your views on specific issues through regular

surveys by email, WhatsApp and other ways if needed. Surveys will be shared each month, though there may be additional surveys alongside this. Go to [portsunlightvillage.com/village-voice](https://portsunlightvillage.com/village-voice) to sign up.

### Join an advisory group

You're invited to join one of our new advisory groups, giving you the opportunity to be involved in key strategic areas of our work, which residents have said they would like to be more involved in. These are:

- ◆ Tenants Advisory Group - dealing with specific issues only relevant to tenants, such as rents, repairs and service standards.
- ◆ Heritage Homes Advisory Group - covering issues related to the upkeep and maintenance of individual homes such as information on appropriate contractors and how to undertake home improvements on listed buildings.
- ◆ Heritage Advisory Group - supporting the delivery of specific heritage projects such as improvements to monuments like the Boating Pond, non-residential/community buildings and our visitor offer.

- ◆ Community Development Advisory Group - shaping a new approach to the delivery of community development activities in the village, facilitating the community to deliver and increasing external investment into activities.
- ◆ Landscape Advisory Group - overseeing the grounds maintenance activity in the village and supporting volunteer activity in this area.

### What will each advisory group do?

Each advisory group will have a nominated PSVT Board member to champion and a lead member of PSVT staff to oversee it. There will be terms of reference and 'job descriptions', and an expectation that each group will undertake two village walkabouts per year as well as explore funding and inward investment opportunities.

### How to join

Email [paulk.caths@gmail.com](mailto:paulk.caths@gmail.com) to ask any questions or to put yourself forward to join an advisory group.

# Runners, assemble!

The Road Race is back! Returning to the village's leafy streets on Sunday 9th June is one of the country's most picturesque running events. Runners will be invited to follow 5k and 10k routes or try the 15k 'dual race' challenge.

All spaces for the 5k, 10k and 15k races have now been allocated - you can find out more at [btrliverpool.com/port-sunlight-event](http://btrliverpool.com/port-sunlight-event)

Registration for the 1k Fun Run is on the day at BTR's tent on Museum Green. And if you are not running, please cheer on those who are - it really does make a difference and creates a great atmosphere. There will be food and drink concessions to keep both supporters and runners fuelled up.

### Car parking and access requirements

As in previous years, road closures will be in effect from 7:30am to 2pm on race day. See the map and accompanying information on page 5 for details. We encourage all those attending the event to travel via public transport although there will be some car parks open around the edge of the village on the day.

If you are a village resident or business and have

questions about road closures, please email [b.pilkington@portsunlightvillage.com](mailto:b.pilkington@portsunlightvillage.com) or call 0151 644 4800. We are particularly anxious to hear from and assist residents with carers (or their

neighbours) who will need to gain access to their homes on the day.



Photo by Paul Francis Cooper

## PARKING INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS

IF YOU USUALLY PARK HERE...	...PLEASE PARK HERE IF YOU ARE REMAINING IN PORT SUNLIGHT
<b>A</b> Lady Lever Art Gallery and perimeter area in front of gallery and toward fountain.	NO PARKING AT ANY TIME
<b>B</b> 11-48 Greendale Road. 23-50 Queen Mary's Drive. 2-18 Windy Bank. 13-22 The Causeway. 1-9 Causeway Close.	Please use rear service roads in Block B. Greendale Road is accessible from The Causeway junction (Garden Centre side) toward Wood Street with through traffic to A41.
<b>C</b> 3-10 Greendale Road (inc 6a + 6k). 1-5 Windy Bank. 10-22 Queen Mary's Drive. 47-57 Primrose Hill. Duke of York Cottages on Greendale Road, Primrose Hill and Brook Street.	Please use Bebington Road or rear service roads in Blocks C, I + J.
<b>D</b> 1-13 Lancaster Close. 11-45 Primrose Hill. 1-59 Lower Road. 2-72 Central Road.	Please use rear service roads in Blocks D, E + J.
<b>E</b> Osborne Court. Philip Leverhulme Lodge. Manor Lodge. 1-27 Central Road. 1-9 Primrose Hill. 18-26 Circular Drive. 2-34 Pool Bank. 11-59 Corniche Road.	Please use rear service roads in Blocks D, E or Car Park 1 (Osborne Court/Central Road) and Car Park 3 (Knox Close/Lodge Lane)
<b>F</b> 1-22 King Georges Drive. 5-12 The Causeway. 1-16 Church Drive. 19-27 Windy Bank.	Please use rear service roads in Block F or Car Park 1 (Osborne Court/Central Road) and Car Park 2 (Riverside/Bolton Road)
<b>G</b> 1-15 Jubilee Crescent.	Please use rear service road in Block G or Car Park 2 (Riverside/Bolton Road)
<b>H</b> 49-70 Greendale Road. 1-4 The Causeway. 1-21 Bolton Road.	Please use rear service road in Block H or Gladstone Theatre car park. Greendale Road is accessible from The Causeway junction (Garden Centre side) toward Wood Street with through traffic to A41.
<b>I</b> 3-10 Brook Street. 81-109 Bebington Road. Railway Inn. 30-56 Primrose Hill.	Please use rear service road in Blocks I + J or Bebington Road. Access available at all times.
<b>J</b> 2-16 Circular Drive. 2-8 Boundary Road. 2-30 Primrose Hill. 45-79 Bebington Road.	Please use rear service road + Block J or Bebington Road. Access available at all times.
<b>K</b> 8-16 Bolton Road. 71-88 Greendale Road. 1-23 Park Road. 8-14 Bridge Street.	Please use rear service road and car park in Block K or Gladstone Theatre car park. Greendale Road is accessible from The Causeway junction (Garden Centre side) toward Wood Street with through traffic to A41 from service road.
<b>L</b> 89-100 Greendale Road.	Greendale Road is accessible from The Causeway junction (Garden Centre side) toward Wood Street with through traffic to A41 from service road.
<b>M</b> 1-25 Wood Street. 19-22 Bridge Street. 2-22 Park Road	Please use service road in Block M. Greendale Road is accessible from The Causeway junction (Garden Centre side) toward Wood Street with through traffic to A41 from service road.
<b>N</b> 1-5 Bridge Street. 26-52 Park Road. 2-8 Poets Corner. 27-55 Wood Street.	Please use rear service road in Block N. Access at all times to A41 from service road.

PLEASE REMOVE YOUR VEHICLE FROM THE EVENT AREA PRIOR TO 7.30AM ON 9th JUNE.

Should you require access in and out of the village during the event, please park in areas outside of the course or use car parks 2 or 3 (labelled on the map).

## Village map showing extent of Port Sunlight Road Race 2024

We're proud Unilever Port Sunlight is once again sponsoring the Road Race. Thank you!

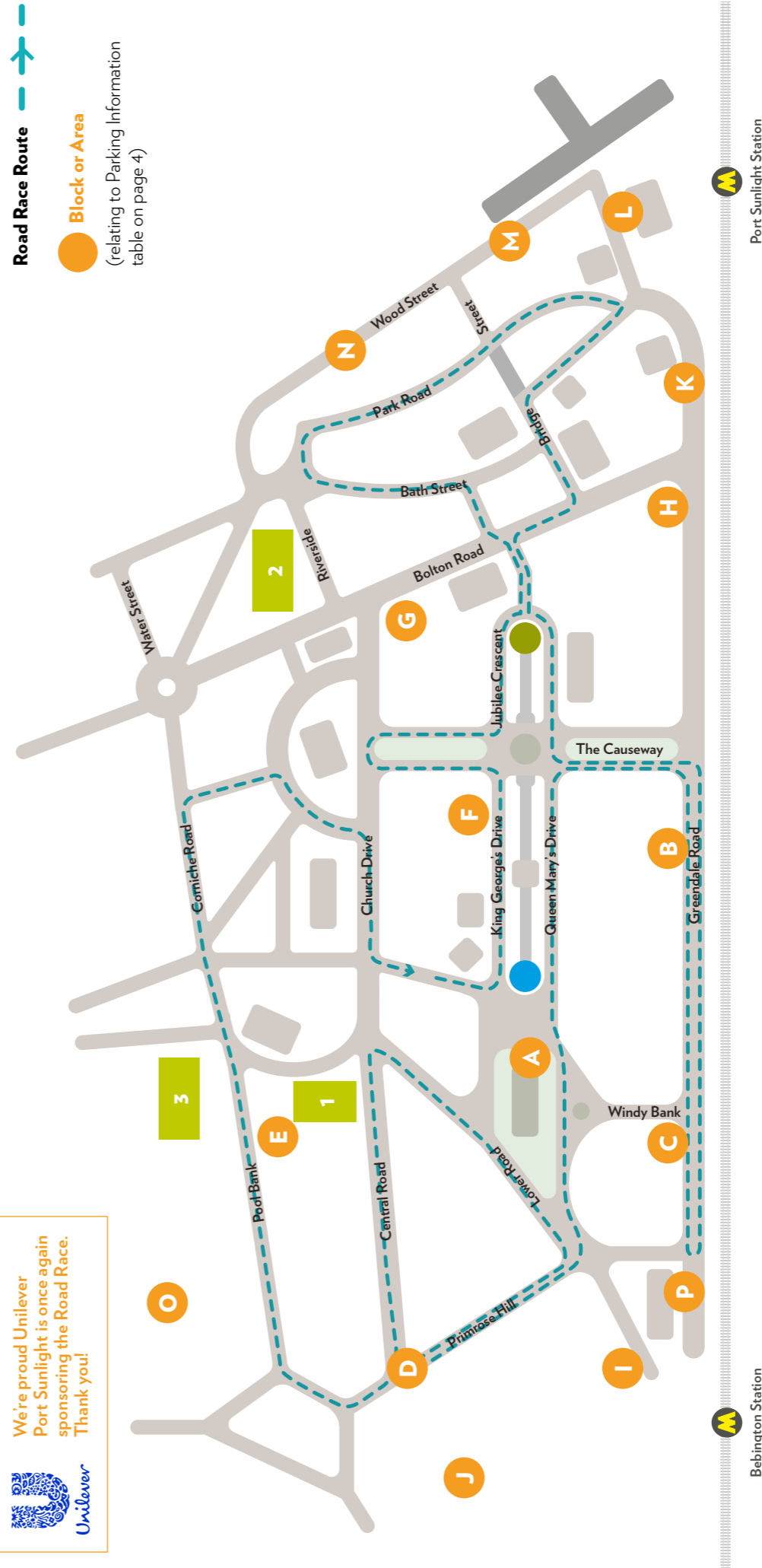


Additional resident car parking

Road Race Route

Block or Area

(relating to Parking Information table on page 4)



Bebington Station

Port Sunlight Station

### RESIDENT INFORMATION

There will be an extensive traffic management plan in place on race day to ensure minimum disruption for residents and maximum safety for runners. Be advised that all runners have been directed to park outside of the village and we would request that all residents familiarise themselves with and adhere to the following arrangements within the village.

Significant road closures will be in effect across the village from 7:30am-2pm which have been authorised by Wirral Council and local services. There can be no movement of vehicles on the road race route (marked in yellow on the map) during these times, except in the case of an emergency.

PLEASE REMOVE YOUR VEHICLE FROM THE EVENT AREA PRIOR TO 7.30AM ON 9th JUNE.

Should you require access in and out of the village during the event, please park in areas outside of the course or use car parks 2 or 3 (labelled on the map).

If you do not wish to move your vehicle during the event, please use the table to identify suitable parking areas. Please note, you may still use rear service roads.

ALL ROADS AFFECTED WILL REOPEN AT APPROXIMATELY 2PM

## Conservation Corner

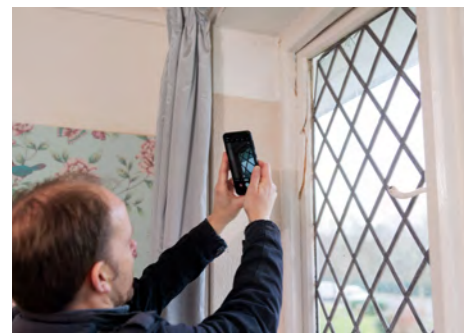
by Gareth Dean, Conservation and Maintenance Manager

The warmer, and hopefully drier, weather of the summer months is the perfect time to think about carrying out repairs and routine maintenance to your home. Port Sunlight Village Trust carry out a rolling programme on the properties we own each summer called cyclical maintenance.

This programme of preventative maintenance is a set of simple but effective tasks which are carried out to help prevent the big expensive problems from creeping up. The maintenance work we do each year focusses on roofs, gutters and downpipes, joinery, masonry and external painting.

In 2024, we are carrying out work on 32 properties owned by Port Sunlight Village Trust in Queen Mary's Drive, Duke of York Cottages, Jubilee Crescent and part of New Chester Road.

As the work we do is routine maintenance, it does not require Listed Building Consent from Wirral Council. However, if we find any significant issues that require replacement or significant repair, we will make the appropriate application either for Listed Building Consent



Gareth inspecting properties for repairs

Where	What to look out for?
Roofs	Is there any loss or damage to the roof coverings? Is the lead work (flashings) damaged or lifting?
Rainwater goods	Are any of the gutters blocked or staining around them to suggest they are blocked and overflowing? Are paint finishes peeling or flaking or signs of corrosion? Is there excessive moss or plant growth at the base of the wall or to the joints of ground gutters?
External Walls	Is there any plant growth on the walls that may cause damage? Are any air bricks or vent grilles obstructed by vegetation or raised ground levels? Are there any open mortar joints in the brick work?
Windows and doors	Are there any signs of rot in the wood or extensive rust on metal windows? Are any of the hinges or stays stiff or hard to open? Are there any broken or cracked panes of glass?
Painting	Is the paint work flaking on wood or metal work? Is the paint work flaking on render or dashing?
Renderers & roughcast	Are there any signs of cracking or are loose?

or using the Local Listed Building Consent Order (LLBCO). All our external painting follows the paint colours approved by Historic England, and any external masonry work is done using lime mortars.

If you own a property in the village, summer is the perfect time to carry out an inspection of your own property to identify any areas of maintenance that can catch potential problems early and help manage the cost of repairs.

The table above shows a few suggestions for things you might want to look out for:

In many of the cases set out above, the solutions are as simple as ensuring all vegetation or debris is removed from gutters and gullies to allow water to run away properly and not damage the property.

Flaking or damaged paint can be scraped off and the wood undercoated and glossed with the correct paint. Some repairs may need craftspeople or tradespeople to help with the repair.

For example, if there is extensive rot to wood work you will need a joiner, or if there are



GARDENING GLOVES AT THE READY...

The 2024 Garden Competition is here!

It's that time of year again when we celebrate the incredible floral displays residents of Port Sunlight create outside their homes. Every year this village institution gives us the opportunity to applaud the dedicated members of our community who help make Port Sunlight so beautiful. It's particularly nice to see so many new faces winning prizes over the last few years, and we strongly encourage everyone to take part.

### How to take part

All residents are automatically entered into the competition. This year the judging will take place at the end of June/start of July and our judge will be Vicki Smith, who is a member of the Port Sunlight Village Trust's Landscape team and is responsible for the many stunning bedding plant displays you see across the village.

### This year's categories

First, second and highly commended places are selected for each category, which are:

- ◆ Best front border/container
- ◆ Best hanging basket
- ◆ Best allotment
- ◆ Best overall display
- ◆ Best community garden (includes groups of neighbours)
- ◆ Best bee-friendly garden

All winners will be contacted during September and will be invited to a special ceremony here in Port Sunlight to collect their award.

Good luck!

missing roof tiles or damage to lead flashing you would need a roofer.

As custodians of these Grade II listed buildings, it is our responsibility to keep the buildings in the village in good repair. Failure to maintain a building or inappropriate change can lead to enforcement by Wirral Council.

As part of PSVT's routine maintenance and repairs, we carry out we follow the same rules and regulations as anybody else who cares for a listed building. Caring for these buildings can often be challenging, and solutions are often

not straightforward. For specific conservation or maintenance questions, you can contact us on [conservation@portsunlightvillage.com](mailto:conservation@portsunlightvillage.com).

PSVT is here to provide support for residents on the maintenance, restoration and enhancement of their listed homes that are part of a unique heritage site where we are all stewards and caretakers for these historically important houses.

## NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Did you know Monday 3 June – Sunday 9 June marks Volunteers' Week? Not only should we all take this opportunity to say a big thank you to everyone who gives their time to volunteer in Port Sunlight, but PSVT also has some fantastic new volunteering opportunities you might be interested in.

### Total Stranger Exhibition Steward

You'll support PSVT's visitor services team to ensure that all visitors to the 'Total Stranger' exhibition in Bridge Cottage, opening from 21st September, have an enjoyable experience. The role will last for four months – the duration of the exhibition – and you'll be expected to do at least 8 hours per month. If you have an interest in the arts and music, are a people person and enthusiastic, you would be great for this role.

### Edwardian Worker's Cottage Steward Volunteer

The Edwardian Worker's Cottage provides visitors with the opportunity to step inside a typical Port Sunlight cottage and experience everyday life during the early 20th century. You will be the sole PSVT representative at this venue and as such will be responsible for ensuring that visitors have an enjoyable and safe experience. Shifts available are 10am-1pm and/or 1pm-4pm. Each shift is 3 hours long and volunteers can do either the morning or afternoon shift.

### Find out more and apply

Go to [portsunlightvillage.com](http://portsunlightvillage.com) to find out more about these volunteer opportunities, download role descriptions and to apply. If you have any questions, email [volunteering@portsunlightvillage.com](mailto:volunteering@portsunlightvillage.com)



YOUR Port Sunlight

Your Port Sunlight is a chance to celebrate the varied and wonderful things Port Sunlight's community do to make the village an inspiring place to live, work and visit.

If you would like to be featured in the next issue or know someone who might, we'd love to hear from you. Please email [admin@portsunlightvillage.com](mailto:admin@portsunlightvillage.com)



Sunlight Bees in action!

**HELEN AND ANGIE...**  
*on being inspired by Port Sunlight's bees*

We are Helen & Angie, AKA Sunlight Bees! We're award-winning local beekeepers who took it up as a hobby in 2017. Since then, our hobby has become our passion. In 2022, Helen took early retirement as a Clinical Lead at Wirral St John's Hospice and now fully focuses on Sunlight Bees, which has collected many accolades and 'best in show' awards. Angie has just retired early from working in education in Liverpool.

Between us, we manage our many hives, make our products and run education sessions and bee experiences. We're well known in and around Port Sunlight's local community for spreading knowledge about honeybees and the amazing work they do for the planet. We're also very proud to sell our award-winning products in Port Sunlight Museum's shop.

We have lived in the village for over twenty years. We love the architecture and the green spaces here, as well as the local community. Our village is full of wonderful flowers, shrubs and trees, all of which help our bees thrive.

To find out more about Sunlight Bees and their honey-based products, go to [sunlightbees.co.uk](http://sunlightbees.co.uk)



**THE ENCHANTED BOOK CORNER'S NEW ARRIVAL**

The Port Sunlight Icebreakers recently kindly donated funds to install a new bench at The Enchanted Book Corner outside Church Drive Primary School. It's been christened The Enchanted Book Corner Friendship Bench and an engraved plaque has even been installed on it.

Keary, who looks after the delightful space, hopes to see lots of little ones and grown-ups using the bench and maybe sharing a story together underneath the cherry blossom.

A big well done to everyone involved.

Image: The Icebreakers visiting the bench made possible thanks to their fundraising efforts

**LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN PORT SUNLIGHT**



Did you know Port Sunlight Village Trust has a dedicated learning team that provides curriculum linked education workshops, guided tours, guided museum visits and a handling collection loans box service throughout the year?

Whether you're a school, college, university or even community group, you can join us on a personalised full day, half day and outreach engagement experiences covering an expansive array of topics from history, science, geography, art, maths, business studies and drama to wellbeing and team building engagement opportunities.

Whether you're looking to explore the history of Port Sunlight to current day or wanting to venture into the world behind the science of soap, we have offers suitable for all ages from early years to university and later life, all engagement offers are accessible and tailored to your group's needs.

Go to [portsunlightvillage.com/learning](http://portsunlightvillage.com/learning) to find out more or contact [learning@portsunlightvillage.com](mailto:learning@portsunlightvillage.com) / 0151 644 4800 with any questions you may have.

Image: There's plenty to learn about in the Edwardian Worker's Cottage!

**YOUR BOATING POND MEMORIES...**

In last summer's issue of the Gazette, we asked you for your memories of the Boating Pond to celebrate this special and much-loved feature of the village, which we're working on plans to repair.

In the meantime, here's what a few of you shared with us.

Jo Birch sent us this lovely paper advertisement from her Victorian scrapbook collection. She said, "The Victorians were avid collectors and the most popular way of collecting was the creation of scrapbooks.

There are all sorts of Victorian scraps advertising Port Sunlight and/or Sunlight Soap and, indeed,



Pears soap - 'national costumes and flags' from around the world, children on sledges, children in carts, farm animals - all sorts. Lever Brothers certainly did their fair share of advertising on Victorian scraps.

This one always reminds me of the Boating Pond!"



Sharing a special memory from his younger days, Steven Barnes sent us a copy of this photograph from July 1971 when he received the NABC Angling Trophy. In the background, the Sea Piece fountain is flowing gloriously.

We love this autumnal photograph shared with us by Susan Batty. She said, "I took this on my

mobile phone on a cold Sunday November day back in 2019 I think!"



## WHAT'S ON IN PORT SUNLIGHT THIS SUMMER



### ASSIGNMENTS 2024 – THE BPPA EXHIBITION

8th June–1st September. Wednesday–Sunday  
Bridge Cottage. Free, donations welcome

Curated by five leading industry figures, the British Press Photographers' Association's exhibition covers stories from March 2023 through to the spring of 2024 and features everything from sports and entertainment through to politics and protest with royals, celebrities, and global events as seen through the eyes of the association's photographers.

Explore a changing display of one hundreds photographs throughout Bridge Cottage's ground floor.

### 14th June, 11-1pm NEEDLE FELTING STRAWBERRY BROOCH WORKSHOP

It's strawberry season, so what better way to celebrate than designing your own needle felted strawberry brooches. Email [c.bates@portsunlightvillage.com](mailto:c.bates@portsunlightvillage.com) to book.

BY DONATION

### 15th June, all day SUMMER FUN ON THE GREEN

Join us for another community day of fun on the village green this summer. Enjoy a relaxed day filled with family friendly activities, from interactive lawn games to tasty treats, performers, selfie opportunities and crafty fun.

FREE

### 7th July PICNIC IN THE DELL

The community is invited to soak up a special performance by the Lyceum Brass Band in the magical surroundings of the Dell. Bring a blanket and a picnic for this afternoon of live music and family fun.

FREE

### 3rd August CREEPY CRAWLY EXPERIENCE

Back by popular demand! Brave little ones are invited to join the Creepy Crawly experience for an hour of creatures and critters madness. Pre-booking essential via [portsunlightvillage.com](http://portsunlightvillage.com)

£6

### 7th August, 10am & 11am DELL PLAY DAY

Help us celebrate National Play Day 2024. National Play Day celebrates the importance of play in children's lives, so we're bringing a morning of outdoor games and drama fun right to you. Come join us in the Dell for a morning of play in the home of Port Sunlight's first outdoor theatre!

£3.50

### 14th August AS YOU LIKE IT (OPEN-AIR THEATRE)

This wonderful Shakespearian comedy about life, love, betrayal and faith, is filled with Folksy Theatre's touch of live music, bold characters, audience interaction and plenty of laughs. Even better, you can enjoy it in the Dell, one of Port Sunlight's most beautiful green spaces. Bring along your picnics and friends and family to enjoy this fun-filled production!

£15 adult, £12 child, £48 family of 4 (2 adults max)

### 17th August SUNLIGHT SUMMER CRAFTS

Crafts are back, and this time it's summer themed! Create your own sunlight sun catchers, paper fruit fans and windy wiggling jelly fish. Pre-booking essential via [portsunlightvillage.com](http://portsunlightvillage.com)

£3.50

### 7th September HERITAGE OPEN DAY

Enjoy free entry to Port Sunlight Museum and the Edwardian Worker's Cottage as part of the Heritage Open Days scheme.

FREE



### Total Stranger

21 September 2024 – 19 January 2025

### Bridge Cottage

The Liverpool music and club scene in the late 1970s and early 1980s comes to Port Sunlight in Total Stranger, an exciting collection of photographs by Francesco Mellina. Featuring the early days of Dead or Alive's Pete Burns who grew up in the village, this will be an exhibition you won't want to miss as we celebrate one of Port Sunlight's famous faces.

Image: Pete Burns by Francesco Mellina.

### PORT SUNLIGHT PLAYERS

Following their successful production of '9 to 5 - the Musical', audiences recently enjoyed the stage version of 'HI-de-HI!' – a comedy from the 1980s TV series. The Players regularly welcome new members to perform, help backstage and front of house, and join in with their social events.

The Players are always moving on to the next show and they have recently been holding auditions for 'ELF - The Musical'. Tickets are already on sale for performances on 28th, 29th and 30th November at the Gladstone Theatre. Why not book a Christmas treat for all the family?

### HULME HALL

There's a fair for all tastes this summer at Hulme Hall. Explore the popular flea markets on the first Sunday of each month. Pick up something special at the Vintage and Collectibles fairs on 16th June or 18th August. Treat yourself to something unique at the Craft and Antique fairs on 23rd June and 25th August. Entry is free, and all fairs are open 9am–3pm. Don't forget to try their lovely indoor and outdoor café too, open every day of the week.

### LADY LEVER ART GALLERY

This summer, explore Lady Lever Art Gallery's diverse collection from Pre-Raphaelite classics to contemporary masterpieces. Don't miss Another View: Landscape by Women Artists, celebrating British landscape evolution. Curated by Melissa Gustin, it showcases how these artists expressed their unique perspectives. The exhibition presents a chronological journey, revealing their lives and travels, from outdoor painting to studio work. Surrounded by serene gardens, a café and shop filled with gifts, books, and homewares a visit is a wonderful day for art enthusiasts of all ages. The exhibition runs until 18 August 2024.



Another View by Yasmin Thomas

### GLADSTONE THEATRE

#### The Importance of Being Earnest Tuesday 4th – Saturday 8th June 2024

Jack loves Gwendolen, Algernon loves Cecily, but both of them are engaged to the roguish Ernest. The only problem is that Ernest doesn't actually exist and when his true identity is revealed – being "earnest" takes on a whole new meaning!

#### Celebrating George Michael Friday 6th September 2024

Join our Club Tropicana this September and celebrate George's best and well-known hits as well as some Wham! Classics in this very special show for all George Michael fans.

#### Under The Boardwalk Saturday 28th September 2024

Featuring hits from The Drifters, The Temptations and Four Tops to name a few expect to be wowed by fabulous vocals in a night jam packed with a WHOLE LOTTA SOUL as you're also treated to the Queens of Soul Aretha Franklin, Tina Turner, Gladys Knight and more!

#### The History of Rock Friday 11th October 2024

From Led Zeppelin to Queen, Guns n Roses to Cream, join us for a jaw dropping night transporting you through the golden ages of rock!



### CHRIST CHURCH

Christ Church's doors are open for visitors to explore until Friday 27th September. Stewards provide a valuable service for all visitors and locals to experience and enjoy Christ Church, giving a warm and friendly welcome. If you feel you can spare a little time and enjoy meeting people, why not consider joining?

For more information please speak to the Minister Val Young or any of the Elders.

The Church's Bank Holiday Cream Teas continue on 26th August, 1pm–4pm. Take a seat to enjoy freshly made scones in the relaxed surroundings of Christ Church.

Have you ever fancied giving bell ringing a try? Hand Bell Ringers practice weekly on Tuesdays at 7.15pm in church. If you are interested in joining, speak to John Lindsay. The Tower Bell Ringers practice on Wednesdays from 7.30pm to 9pm in the Bell Tower, and are looking for new members.

If you are interested in joining, speak to Sue Frowe or George Phillips.

## Sophie Somers

### Port Sunlight's forgotten star

by Catherine Hindson, Professor of Theatre History, University of Bristol

A twenty-five-year-old Sophie Somers (1890-1950) came to Port Sunlight for the first time in 1916, following up on an advert Lever Brothers had placed for someone to run their factory's business and welfare committees.

Her career at Port Sunlight was to last for over three decades and saw her become a well-known leader at the firm, a long-standing village resident, and a popular local personality. As *The Liverpool Echo* headlined in 1965, in Sophie Somers we can find 'one of the most outstanding figures in Port Sunlight history'.

Reports of Sophie Somers's retirement and obituaries published on her death tell us that she represented Port Sunlight's ideals. It was no coincidence that when the King and Queen of Afghanistan's meticulously planned royal visit to the factory and village took place in 1928, the 'model dwelling' they toured was the home Sophie shared with her sister Ethel (longstanding Lever Brothers Senior Clerk and librarian).

A model dwelling, with model inhabitants who embodied the Port Sunlight spirit.

Being a model Port Sunlight citizen involved work and play. For Sophie, most of that play took place on- or back-stage. The village dramatic society had been based at the Gladstone Hall since 1894.

In 1921, they renamed themselves The Port Sunlight Players. She became an important member of the group, writing, performing, and organising performances and serving as the society's Chair. Reviews of her stage roles, including one in *The Stage*, record that she was a particularly strong comic performer.

Stagings of the pantomimes she co-wrote with William Hulme Lever became a 1930s Port Sunlight tradition. She was also involved in theatre in Liverpool: her one-act comedy *An Empress Intrudes* – written under the pen name of George Hewitt – was produced at the Liverpool Playhouse in 1925.

This love for the stage should – perhaps – not be a surprise. Somers's father was a variety theatre manager, her cousin the impresario Sir Walter de Frece, and she was related to the

celebrity music-hall star Vesta Tilley. Her significance to village theatre was memorialised in the Sophie Somers trophy, awarded at Unilever's drama festivals during the mid twentieth century.

By the time of her retirement in 1947, Sophie Somers was President of the Birkenhead Soroptimist Club (a professional women's association), and a broadcaster on the BBC's 'Make do and Mend' section of Women's Hour. She had served as one of four women appointed to the Board of Trade's 'Make do and Mend' panel and was the President of the 1929 Club – a group of senior women leaders at Lever Brothers that she had helped to establish to address a gap in support for high-level professional women. On her death in 1950, she was buried at Broadgreen Jewish Cemetery, some distance from the village.

Seventy-five years later, Sophie Somers's life has faded from knowledge, yet her story is one that can tell us about the importance of women, and of theatre, to understanding Port Sunlight's rich social and cultural histories.



Photograph from Sophie Somers's retirement event. *Port Sunlight News*, volume 25, February – March 1947, p.20. Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever plc and group companies.

**Have you got a story for a forthcoming issue of the *Port Sunlight Gazette*?**

Contact the PSVT office by phone on 0151 644 4800 or email [feedback@portsunlightvillage.com](mailto:feedback@portsunlightvillage.com)

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