

The PORT SUNLIGHT Gazette

ISSUE NO. 43
SPRING
2026



IN THIS ISSUE

Farewell Paul Harris

Renewing the Boating Pond

Spring events

Cobble and Hay update

The Old Fire Station goes to Venice

A new three-year plan for heritage



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

Hello and welcome to this spring 2026 issue of the Port Sunlight Gazette, your quarterly magazine filled with the latest news, updates and events in the village.

This issue of the Port Sunlight Gazette is a special one to me as it marks my very last update – at the end of March, I'll be leaving my role as CEO of this fantastic organisation to begin my retirement. I've written introductions to dozens of Gazettes over the past decade, where I've had the privilege of engaging with the residents, visitors and everyone who makes Port Sunlight so extraordinary. See page 3 for my reflections on my journey at Port Sunlight Village Trust coming to an end.

As you will read about, one of the most exciting things happening this spring is the monumental news that our project to bring the Boating Pond (or Lake!) back to life is now commencing, with our aim to have water flowing again by autumn. I'm proud we've not only been able to secure most of the funds necessary to now begin this work, but have also developed a comprehensive and sustainable plan which will protect the Boating Pond for future generations.

I can also share an update on another important project we've been working on to develop the Lyceum into an exciting new space for the community and visitors. We've been notified by National Lottery Heritage Fund that unfortunately, on this occasion, we have not been successful in our funding bid to develop our plans for the Lyceum. However, we have a strong bid and have been encouraged to re-submit following feedback. Over the coming months we will review and reflect on the feedback and will re-submit later in the year.

I hope you enjoy this latest issue of the Port Sunlight Gazette, and – as always – I'd like to wish everyone living, working and visiting in Port Sunlight a happy spring, and all my best wishes for the future of this special village. Thank you.

Paul Harris,
Chief Executive,
Port Sunlight Village Trust

Turn your treasured Port Sunlight memories into gifts of support

From first dates to first homes, proposals or goodbyes, Port Sunlight has been there for countless special memories.

The village's picturesque environment, from formal tree-lined avenues to natural sunken gardens, is the perfect setting for your very own commemoration. Sometimes people like to buy a physical memorial to remember a loved one or cherished memory. Port Sunlight Village Trust has recently refreshed the opportunities we can offer you, working with you to choose something which meets everyone's wishes and to make sure we work together to care for our historic village for generations to come.

Our commemorative giving opportunities

£15 could buy a bug house in a chosen location for one year so insects have somewhere to call home. For **£30** you would also receive a bug house to take home to "twin" with the one in Port Sunlight.

£25 could buy a bird box in a chosen location for one year so birds have somewhere to nest. For **£40** you would also receive a bird box to take home to "twin" with the one in Port Sunlight.

£250 could buy a dedicated plaque on an existing Port Sunlight bench for 5 years. Longer time periods are available for commemorative plaques at additional costs.

£1,000 could sponsor a flowerbed or chosen area of the village for one year. Flowerbeds and areas dependent on availability and in agreement with our Landscape team.

£2,000/£2,500 could provide a dedicated bench in a chosen location in Port Sunlight for 10 years. Commemorative bench price is location dependent.

What will you receive?

You will receive a named certificate of thanks in accordance with agreed upon wording and your name recorded in a thank you book in our museum shop.

Where possible, you will be invited to visit your commemoration with a member of the Port Sunlight Village Trust team and learn how you are helping support the village. These are not only wonderful symbols of celebration, recognition or remembrance, but also contribute positively to the contemporary character and biodiversity of our historic village.

Get in touch today

If you would like to discuss one of our commemorative giving opportunities for yourself or for loved ones, please contact us by email to admin@portsunlightvillage.com, call **0151 644 4800** or visit portsunlightvillage.com/commemorative-giving



A role that felt "just right"

When Paul first saw the CEO role advertised, he immediately felt it was the perfect fit.

"It had a bit of everything," he recalls. "Landlord responsibilities, heritage, managing people, commercial activity, working with residents... I felt I could genuinely make a difference."

Coming from a background in health and social care charity work, alongside experience in the commercial and social housing sectors, the diversity of Port Sunlight Village Trust's work appealed to him. After what he describes as a robust interview process, Paul was delighted to be offered the role.

First impressions

Paul's first day remains vivid in his memory.

"I remember how beautiful the village was," he says. "I went for a walk around and just took it all in."

He was struck not only by the architecture and green spaces, but also by the dedication of staff and the warm welcome he received from residents. His early days included meeting key stakeholders and receiving a thorough handover from former CEO Lionel Bolland, alongside strong support from then Chair of the Board of Trustees, Maggie Sparks.

A decade of progress

When Paul arrived, he says, there was "a huge amount to do." Over the years, he has worked to transform Port Sunlight Village Trust to become more professional and commercially minded, while also building a stronger sense of togetherness.

With the backing of successive Chairs, including Maggie Sparks, Rob Young and Andrew Bowden, Paul feels the organisation has achieved a positive and progressive cultural shift. A "one team" approach has been central to that.

"We're much closer to residents now," he explains. "We have a clearer vision and a better understanding of the way forward."

Celebrating Paul Harris

After more than a decade of leading Port Sunlight Village Trust, Paul Harris is retiring as our CEO. It's safe to say that the last decade has been an eventful one in Port Sunlight and to celebrate his impact, we spoke with Paul to gather his reflections on our organisation, achievements and this special village.



Things Paul is most proud of achieving during his time as CEO are:

- ◆ A clearer strategic direction, beginning with our first five-year strategic plan, developed through resident consultation and partnership working.
- ◆ A new three-year strategic plan launched last year, providing even greater focus and clarity.
- ◆ A more strategic and structured approach to resident engagement, which was one of Paul's priorities.
- ◆ Stronger partnerships within and beyond the village.
- ◆ Continued and improved investment in housing, monuments and the landscape.
- ◆ A better understanding of long-term liabilities and a more robust plan to address them.
- ◆ Bringing new life to commercial properties, including the successful letting of buildings such as Nettle Café, the old fire station and the Stables.

He is also particularly proud of the development of Port Sunlight Village Trust's team, saying, "We've built a culture of high-quality people who care deeply about the village and are very good at what they do," he says.

Leading through Covid

Among the most challenging periods of Paul's leadership was the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As a leader, I thought I'd seen everything – but I hadn't seen that," he reflects.

Guiding the organisation and village through such unprecedented times required resilience, flexibility and unity. Paul focused on bringing people together so that the village could emerge stronger. He also recalls how the village's beautiful

open spaces became especially valued during lockdowns, offering residents space and comfort during uncertainty. "It was very challenging," he admits, "but I believe we came out stronger."

Looking ahead

As he steps down, Paul's hopes for Port Sunlight Village Trust and the village are clear.

He wants to see the village continue to develop in line with residents' expectations, with our resident engagement strategy remaining central to decision-making. He hopes residents will continue to have a strong and cohesive voice.

He wants the village's buildings, landscapes and other assets to be well cared for, and for people to remain actively involved in making Port Sunlight a fantastic place to live, work and visit.

Paul expresses full confidence in Port Sunlight Village Trust's incoming CEO, Mike Ward, to take forward the current strategic plan and build on the foundations that have been laid.

A fond farewell

Retirement, Paul says, is not a decision he has taken lightly.

"It's difficult to leave a job you love and people you love working with," he shares.

His immediate plans? "Have a good lie down!" he laughs. But more seriously, Paul is looking forward to spending more quality time with family.

While he may be stepping away from the office, he will not be far from the village in spirit. "I've got fond memories of this place," he says, "so I'll be keeping an eye on the village."

On behalf of all residents, we'd like to give thanks to Paul for his leadership, commitment and care for Port Sunlight over the past decade. His work and legacy will continue to be felt for many years to come.



Sea Piece sets sail on a conservation journey

Catherine Downey, our Collections Care Manager, dives into the first phase of our project to renew the Boating Pond and why the colour of Sir Charles Wheeler's sculpture is so important

Image: © Ian Fairbrother

The bronze fountain, Sea Piece, created by sculptor Charles Wheeler and installed in 1952, sits at the heart of the Boating Pond. As part of the first phase of the works to restore water to the Boating Pond, Sea Piece has been temporarily removed to allow the works to the pond to take place.

Port Sunlight Village Trust has appointed a team of specialist conservators and an art-handling team to carefully release Sea Piece from the pond. The conservators have a wealth of experience working with large sculptural bronzes and will be transporting Sea Piece to their conservation studio in London,

where it will be thoroughly inspected and photographed before treatment takes place.

Sea Piece will be kept safely at the conservation studio while the works to the pond basin are underway over the coming months, and then returned and reinstalled towards the end of the project later in the year.

Getting under the surface

In the run up to this process, we've been busy behind the scenes researching the history and original design and appearance of Sea Piece.

This has included research at archives such as the Henry Moore Institute which holds

fascinating photographs of sketch models for Wheeler's original design for Sea Piece, which included designs for two additional bronzes which were not commissioned in the end. The archives at the Lady Lever Art Gallery and Wirral Archives have also been a great help.

As noted on a recent condition report by a bronze specialist, Sea Piece is currently not the colour Charles Wheeler intended. Archival evidence, in the form of written descriptions, film and photographs clearly show that Wheeler created Sea Piece to be green, not the current bronze-brown colour. This is consistent with Wheeler's use of colour in other

fountain bronzes he created, such as those in the fountains at Trafalgar Square in London.

The original green patina was created through the use of special chemicals when Sea Piece was at the bronze foundry. Over time, Sea Piece aged, further developing a natural green patina which occurs as bronzes are exposed to the elements, and potentially other maintenance treatments were applied to darken Sea Piece in the 1970s.

Many residents and visitors may recall the green colour of Sea Piece up until 2001 which was a mix of the original green chemical patina, and the natural green patina that builds up over time.

The current bronze/brown colour is much more recent development, and dates from 2001, when the green patina of Sea Piece was removed as part of the conservation work, and a brown patina was applied.

Bringing back the green

As Sea Piece is being removed from the pond so that the works to the basin can be completed, this presents a unique opportunity for us to address its colour. Sea Piece will be restored to its historically accurate appearance, removing the modern brown patina and reinstating its original light green finish as closely as possible so that it reflects Wheeler's original design and vision for Sea Piece.

As the Boating Pond project progresses this year, we will share what we have found in our archival research with you all via Port Sunlight Village Trust's website, social media and the Gazette.

How can you get involved?

We would love to hear from anyone who has photographs of the Boating Pond, especially if they are in colour and from 1950 and before 2001. This will help us to build on our archival research to ensure that the colour is as accurate as possible. Please do raid your attics for any family photos where Sea Piece is in the background. We'd also love you to share your memories, mementos and photographs relating to the Boating Pond and Sea Piece Fountain.

This is to strengthen PSVT's historical knowledge as well as to potentially be part of future interpretation panels, online content and exhibitions. From an anecdote to a family snap, anyone with something to share is invited to get in touch by email to info@portsunlightvillage.com, call 0151 644 4800 or visit portsunlightvillage.com/share-your-story

RENEWING THE BOATING POND

Jennifer Chambers from Chambers Conservation gives an insight into what to expect over the coming months, as our major project to reconstruct the Grade II listed monument begins



After many years of investigations and preparations, the work to repair the Boating Pond and restore the operation of the fountain to its former magnificence is set to go ahead this summer. The project has been tendered to experienced contractors, and the work will start in spring. Ahead of the main work, as explained on page 4, the bronze Sea Piece fountain will be carefully removed and taken to a conservation studio, where it will be conserved, reversing small patches of deterioration, and the originally intended green patina reinstated.

Soon after, hoardings will go up around the Boating Pond. As it is necessary to completely replace the concrete basin of the Boating Pond, most of the stonework which acts as a facing to its sides, will need to be skillfully dismantled and temporarily stored. Due to the complexity of the works, the area around the boating pond will need to be secured, together with a small section of the car parking area facing onto the Lady Lever Art Gallery. This is important to ensure the safety of both the contractors, village residents and visitors alike. The Village Trust will liaise with the neighbouring householders and businesses within close proximity of the Pond, to give as much information as possible on the works, such as the limited days where there may be slightly more noise or disruption.

Works on the bronze are currently scheduled to be complete by early June – it will be reinstated as soon as the base is ready. Upon completion, the newly installed modern pumping and filtration equipment will ensure the fountain jets will be more controllable and the water cleaner and safer.

During the rebuilding of the stone walls, the masonry will be sensitively cleaned and any repairs made. Badly cracked units will be replaced with British stone chosen to closely match in colour, texture and geological composition. The final work will be to the paving around the Pond – the problematic crazy paving will be replaced with resin bound gravel – this will be safer and more accessible for all users and will visually sit comfortably with the stonework. The areas of rectangular stone flags will be re-laid and repaired.

It is currently anticipated that works should be complete by early autumn.

BE IN WITH A CHANCE TO WIN £10,000 IN MARCH'S SUPERDRAW AND SUPPORT PORT SUNLIGHT'S PRECIOUS MONUMENTS



Are you a Port Sunlight Lottery player? If not and you're passionate about this special village, then now is the time to join. The Port Sunlight Lottery is an easy and fun way to directly support our work to care for the village's important monuments, including our important project to repair the Boating Pond.

For just £2 per week you could be entered into the weekly draw, with a chance to win weekly cash prizes, monthly gift hampers, and entry into quarterly superdraws where you can win £5,000 or £10,000. Sign up now to make sure you're in with a chance of winning March's superdraw of £10,000.

Sign up online at giantcashbonanza.online/portsunlight or pick up a leaflet at Port Sunlight Museum to sign up by post.

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 to PSVT to support our monuments conservation work. Have a question? Email admin@portsunlightvillage.com

BRINGING COBBLE AND HAY TO LIFE

Opening this spring, the Stables are being transformed into an exciting new space for the community and visitors

As we announced in the previous Gazette, the keys of the Stables were handed to Cobble and Hay following a competitive bidding process. Work is now well underway on reawakening the Stables as an exciting new space which will include a micro-bakery, village shop, event space, dining room and atelier space.

Cobble and Hay are a CIC (Community Interest Company) whose purpose is to challenge loneliness, empower and engage with young people and bring the community together, and these aims will feed into every aspect of their business.

So, what's been happening over the past few months? Helen and Bala, the directors of Cobble and Hay, have been incredibly busy doing everything from stripping floors to sandblasting walls to improving their sourdough-making skills and even giving their first radio interview as a duo on BBC Radio Merseyside. People from the community have been lending a helping hand, totalling well over 400 volunteer hours given so far. Students from Wirral Met College have also been involved through supported internships, learning important skills along the way, so Cobble and Hay are already living and breathing their ethos.

Cobble and Hay is expecting to open for business later this spring. To be the first in the know, follow them on social media @cobbleandhay or sign up to their mailing list at cobbleandhay.co.uk or scan the QR code.

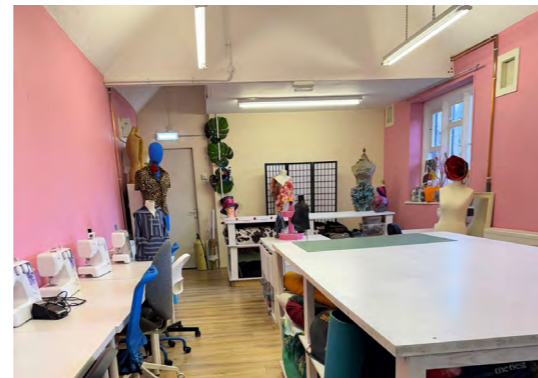


Be the first to receive updates from Cobble and Hay.



School of Create is open!

Since taking on the old Boys' Brigade Building behind the Lyceum, School of Create have been hard at work and they are finally ready to open their doors from 13th April:



School of Create Class Schedule:

Daytime: 10-1pm

Monday: Crafts (various)

Wednesday: Beginner sewing

Friday: NCFE accredited sewing

Evening: 6-9pm

Monday Confident sewing

Wednesday: Sewing styles (various)

Friday: Crafts – mindful making

£29 per session

It's set to be a creative 2026 with sessions in sewing, quilting, embroidery, art, beginner upholstery, crafts, furniture artistry, and "making for wellness" to help you unwind. If you'd like to learn power tools, paint techniques, or the basics of DIY, their popular Handy Woman programme is the perfect course

This year also sees the launch of UpcycleLola, turning items that might otherwise be thrown away into useful, beautiful pieces – helping reduce landfill while creating something special. Discover their dedicated sewing room, an art space (Makers HQ), and the main hall which will soon be ready for yoga, gong baths, and monthly weekend events such as Sip 'n' Paint, Sip 'n' Sew, and Sip 'n' Craft. Once fully set up, the hall will also be available for public hire. School of Create are also planning Kids Sewing School on Saturdays or early evenings. Details will be shared on their social media channels, so make sure to follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

Ready to get creative? To book a session or simply have a chat about what's on offer, message the School of Create team on [07754011983](tel:07754011983).

YOUR Port Sunlight

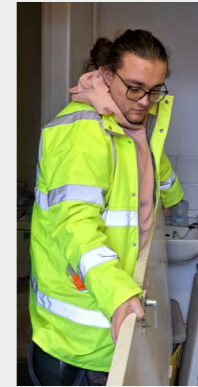
It's time to celebrate those individuals who are making a positive impact on Port Sunlight's community.

ALEX...

on being part of Cobble and Hay's transformation

My grandad worked in Unilever for 10 years as a part of the detergent production line making detergent pods for washing machines. I became involved in Cobble and Hay through my college supported internship, where I have studied carpentry and joinery and achieved my level 3 last year. I have been working at Cobble and Hay for over a month learning a variety of skills including hands on carpentry and joinery on a working level rather than teaching. I have also helped with installing insulation, bricklaying, and putting up scaffolding. While being a part of the team I have been given the opportunity to give my opinion on lighting options and some design choices for the finishing touches in the building which I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of.

I am very excited to be able to bring my family along to see the finished product, show them how I have been involved, and to enjoy some sweet treats while we are there. The opportunity to work with Cobble and Hay will be a big part of my future search for work and I'd love to be able to be a part of Cobble and Hay again or another friendly working team.



MAX EUGENI AND SOPHIE GREEN...

on being part of the Old Fire Station Collective

We're Max and Sophie, two artist printmakers who have recently graduated from the Royal College of Art and moved into The Old Fire Station alongside Emma Rodgers. Emma is a generous and incredibly talented artist, and whilst we have only been settled in the studio for a few months now, we've learnt so much from her already, not only her but the collective as a whole: Peter Hayes, Lonn Landis, Simone Schofield, and of course Johnny Vegas. The artists she has brought together are so varied and talented, we are really excited for what's to come.

Being based in Port Sunlight has provided an incredibly supportive community in an inspiring village with a growing arts scene and rich cultural history. In our hopes to contribute to this, we plan to introduce the wonderful and historic form of art that is printmaking. This will not only be through our individual practices and the open gallery space — keep your eyes peeled for upcoming exhibitions — but also through our program of workshops, where we aim to foster creativity and support self-expression for people of all skill levels.

We are always happy to chat so feel free to drop by and find out more, or check out our Instagram @theoldfirestation...portsunlight.

Would you or someone you know like to feature in our next Your Port Sunlight column? Get in touch with your story.



Port Sunlight's Old Fire Station is going to Venice

A Port Sunlight-based artist collective have been formally invited by the European Culture Centre to exhibit at the Venice Biennale 2026, one of the most prestigious and competitive platforms in global contemporary art.

The collective will present 'Guardians Across Two Shores', a major new sculptural project consisting of two large-scale ceramic lion sculptures. Drawing on the shared symbolism of the lion as both the historic emblem of Venice and the heraldic symbol of Wirral, the works form a cultural and conceptual bridge

between the two places. The sculptures will be publicly exhibited as part of the Venice Biennale in Palazzo Bembo, beautifully situated on the banks of the Grand Canal, before returning to the UK following the event. The event runs from May through to the end of November 2026.

Led by internationally recognised sculptor Emma Rodgers, The Old Fire Station Collective is known for its collaborative, process-driven approach to making, and is based in and named after the special building sculptor Emma Rodgers took over in late 2024.

Emma Rodgers said: "Being selected for the Venice Biennale is a huge honour for all of us. Guardians Across Two Shores is fundamentally a collective work, every artist has shaped both sculptures. The lions represent connection across geography and time, and the way shared making can create

something stronger than any single voice."

Mike Ward, CEO Designate of Port Sunlight Village Trust, said: "We're so excited for the Old Fire Station Collective to be exhibiting at the Venice Biennale. It is an extraordinary achievement and a moment of real pride for Port Sunlight and Wirral as a whole."

Andrew Bowden, Chair of Port Sunlight Village Trust, said: "This project represents the very best of what can happen when creativity is rooted in place but confident enough to speak internationally. To think this all began in Port Sunlight's old fire station is so inspiring."

Following the conclusion of the Venice Biennale 2026, the two sculptures that make up Guardians Across Two Shores will be gifted to the project's two principal sponsors, becoming permanent legacy artworks with full provenance as internationally exhibited pieces.

For more information about the collective and sponsorship opportunities, email oldfirestationcollective@gmail.com



PUT A SPRING IN YOUR STEP WITH PORT SUNLIGHT MUSEUM'S GIFT SHOP'S NEW PRODUCTS

Our shop at Port Sunlight Museum is open daily, 10am–4.30pm, and is filled with gifts, homeware, books, cards, soaps and so much more. Every purchase supports Port Sunlight Village Trust's work and don't forget to bring your residents card or Wirral Spend Independent card to enjoy 10% off.

This spring, discover our new range of silk scarves (£19.95). The days are getting warmer but it's still perfect weather for a fashionable, light scarf and these pretty designs capture all the colours and fresh scents of the season. We've also added a super range of bamboo socks (£7.75), in two foot sizes 4-7 and 8-11, which make an ideal gift with lots of different themes for gardeners, dog lovers, musicians and much more.

Entertain the young folk in your life with a fun range of pocket money-priced toys (£2.99-6.99), including our favourite Wind-Up Hoppity Bunnies. Try your hands at classic games such as marbles and dominoes, or magic spinners, flutterby butterflies or have a go at sunshine print paper, an ideal gift for the arty ones in your life.

Investigate new hobbies this spring with a range of fascinating books (£8.99-14.99) on subjects ranging from nature therapy and rewinding your garden, or perhaps try talking for mind body and soul. We have a lovely range to choose from as well as lots of books about Port Sunlight and its history if you're keen to find out more about the origins of the village.

Small gifts are sometimes tricky to find, but we have the perfect solution with our range of handy gift soap (£3.25). Whether it's to say happy birthday, thank you or simply I love you, these new additions complement our best-selling English Soap and Hand Cream ranges which continue to be a favourite.



SHINING A LIGHT ON PORT SUNLIGHT'S LEARNING VOLUNTEERS

Engaging people of all ages with the story and significance of this special village is a big part of Port Sunlight Village Trust's work.

We're lucky to have a band of incredible volunteers who support our Learning and Audience Development team to help to bring our learning workshops and experiences to life for the thousands of schoolchildren who visit us every year. Here's your chance to learn a bit more about some of them and what they do.

Mike Wynne

I have been a learning volunteer since June 2025. I am passionate about our local history, and I believe it is important to inspire the upcoming generations, who may well become the future custodians and conservators of our village.

I have really enjoyed the variety of the role, which has included assisting with school visits, tours, and special events. I have particularly enjoyed participating in the new family-friendly costumed tours, where visitors can interact with characters, based on real historic village residents, to gain an insight into what life was like in the first half of the twentieth century.

John Spilletts

In addition to my other volunteer roles, mainly as a tour guide at Port Sunlight Museum, I like to help as often as I can with the school visits, which have increased so much the last couple of years. I help with the soap making activities and role playing at the Victorian schoolroom

experience, but my favourite is being at the Worker's Cottage. It's a real pleasure seeing the children practising the wash day procedure using a dolly tub and mangle. The interaction is great fun and I like to think our learning team are introducing future generations of Port Sunlight visitors to the joys of the village.

Marilyn Allen

Throughout the school terms, some Port Sunlight Village Trust volunteers are called upon to be scientists for the day! We assist the Learning team at the Church Hall who teach the children the history of soap making in Port Sunlight and how to make their own.

It's great fun for all concerned. The children love it as do their teachers who normally get involved making their own soap too. You will notice Sue has yellow hands... these are rubber gloves, as we also help clear up the aftermath which includes an awful lot of washing up!

Could you be a learning volunteer?

From rolling up your sleeves in our soap making workshops and sharing stories at the Worker's Cottage to bringing history to life by getting dressed up, we'd love to hear from anyone who would like to get involved with our learning programme. Please send an email to volunteering@portsunlightvillage.com or call 0151 644 4800 for more information.



Mike Wynne (far right)



John Spilletts



Marilyn Allen (right)



WHAT'S ON AT CHRIST CHURCH

Whether you're just having a look or are searching out for a place to worship, everyone is welcome at Christ Church.

Visit ccpsurc.info for more information.

Holy Week & Easter 2026

Palm Sunday 29 March, 10.30am
Maundy Thursday 2 April, 7pm
Good Friday 3 April, 10.30am
Easter Sunday 5 April, 10.30am

Cornish Cream Tea

Bank Holiday Cream Teas at Christ Church are back, starting with Easter Monday 6 April, 1pm–4pm. Enjoy freshly made scones in the relaxed surroundings of Christ Church. Next dates are Monday 4 May and 25 May, 1pm–4pm.

Regular activities at Christ Church

If you would like to know more about the activities below, then please speak to the named person in the information. Groups are happy to welcome new members.

Messy Church

Messy Church is a different style of church for children and their parents, on the first Saturdays of every month at 10am. Speak to Sue Frowe for more info.

Christ Church Crafters

The Christ Church Crafters meet on Monday afternoons, from 2pm to 4pm. Speak to Judith Burgess for more info.

Bellringers

The Bellringers meet on Wednesdays from 7.30pm to 9pm in the Bell Tower. Speak to George Phillips for more info.

Choir

The Choir meet on Thursdays from 6.30pm to 7.30pm. Speak to organist, Jonathan Bowden, for more info.

WHAT'S ON AT HULME HALL

Hulme Hall's popular programme of markets and fairs continues this spring with a craft and gift fair on 19th April; flea markets on 12th April and 3rd May; and antique & vintage fairs on 22nd March and 24th May. All events are open between 9.30am-2pm.

You can also visit Hulme Hall's café for lunches or a coffee and cake, open daily.

For more information about what's on, go to hulmehall.com



Poet's Corner

In this issue's Poet's Corner, we're treated to Katie Beech's wonderful poem exploring the amazing story and legacy of Sunlight Soap, and Fliss Bardwell's lyrical take on everything this spring has to offer in Port Sunlight.

In Victorian England, Warrington, in 1884,

I was dreamt up by two brothers,
And sold in their father's grocery store.

Made from copra or pine kernel oil,
I was different from the rest.

They were made from animal fat,
I lathered up the best.

But I was known as Honey Soap,
Before they changed my name.

It was later when called Sunlight Soap,
that I found my fame.

They used me for the laundry,
For the body, face and hands.

Then they built me my own factory,
In Port Sunlight Village, where you stand.

I've had over a hundred years of life,
And who knows how many more.

But I've come a long way and seen many a face,
Since my days in the grocery store.

I've been sold all around the world,
From Australia to Bahrain

And when my last bar is all washed up,
My village will remain.

Katie Beech

As frosts recede, the sun shows powers
And birdsong builds, young squirrels cavort,

Hearts and spirits lighten, our main thought
Is at one with nature – change and grow,

Forget darker doubts, let wonders flow!
So much in Sunlight's echoing this,

We're coming alive with springtime's kiss!

Tenacious, tender snowdrops have bloomed,
Crocus carpets pronounced winter doomed.

Flourishing now are human concerns-
In the old fire house artistry burns,

The Stables buzz with much enterprise
While our proud Horse anticipates highs

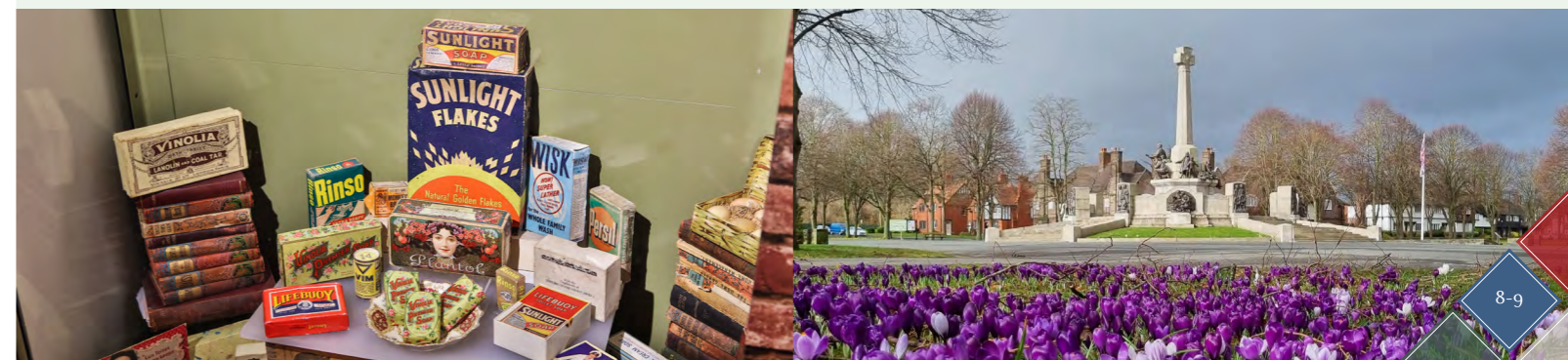
The Boating Lake's Sea Piece we'll soon feast
Restored to glory, a gleaming beast

Fountainating water in arcing sprays
Just as it did in historic days

When tiny toy ships were set to sail,
The source of many a fond old tale.

So let's be glad, our village of soap's
Spring-loaded with many joys and hopes!

Fliss Bardwell



Spring Events

IN PORT SUNLIGHT



BEHIND THE EYE: A SELECTION OF WORKS BY ANTHONY BROWN

11 April – 29 August
The Gallery at Bridge Cottage

Bridge Cottage's latest exhibition will feature a range of mixed media portraits by Liverpool based artist Anthony Brown, celebrating individuals who have had an impact on the Wirral Peninsula. The exhibition will be open Wednesday–Saturday, 11am–3pm.

Entry is free, with donations to support Bridge Cottage welcome.



'WHEELS THROUGH TIME' COMMUNITY DAY WITH THE WIRRAL CLASSIC CAR CLUB

10 May, 11am–4pm
Free, donations welcome

Port Sunlight Village Trust have joined forces with the Wirral Classic Car Club to bring a host of wonderful vintage cars to the village this year. This May, the Village Green will come to life with cars that span the eras of Port Sunlight's history alongside era-inspired activity stalls. Come and meet a Lever Brothers salesman from the 1920s, venture back to the Edwardian era with a day of household chores, take a glimpse into the life of the working women in the 1940s, and have a go at a 1960s inspired craft.

SUGAR & SPICE FESTIVAL: SPRING EDITION

3 & 4 April, 11am–4pm
Free entry

The Sugar & Spice Festival returns this Easter weekend for the first of two 2026 editions. Explore over 40 stalls filled with tasty locally made food, drink and little luxuries created by local makers. Explore sweet and savoury flavours from around the world, with stalls spread across the Village Green, King George's Drive and Windy Bank.

EASTER TRAIL

3 & 4 April, 10am–3pm
Tickets: £8 per child

Disaster in the village! Billy Bunny has pulled off a daring garden heist, pinching Mr Wallace's precious vegetables and belongings. Follow our family-friendly Easter trail to discover the items he has left scattered around the village. Hop to it! Eggsplorers will be treated to a chocolate reward for all their hard work (vegan and non-food alternatives available on request). Pre-booking essential at portsunlightvillage.com

LOST BUILDINGS TOUR

11 May, 6pm
Tickets: Adults £12, Concessions £10, Children £6

Discover the lost buildings of Port Sunlight this spring. From the village's very own replica of Shakespeare's Birthplace and an underground bridge to outdoor recreational spaces including an auditorium and swimming pool, join us on this hour-long tour to hear their fascinating stories and find out why they're no longer here.

Tour lasts approx. 1 hour, starting at Port Sunlight Museum. Pre-booking essential at portsunlightvillage.com

FAMILY-FRIENDLY COSTUMED TOUR

23 May, 10.30am
Tickets: Adults £12, Children £6

Journey back in time to the early 1900s to meet a host of characters on our interactive time travelling tour as you join Miss Slater on a whirlwind adventure of Edwardian times in Port Sunlight.

Pre-booking essential at portsunlightvillage.com



MARK YOUR CALENDARS! INTERNATIONAL BEATLE WEEK RETURNS TO PORT SUNLIGHT ON 29 AUGUST

International Beatleweek, organised by the Cavern Club, brings fans and artists from all over the world to Merseyside to enjoy live music celebrating the Fab Four. As the place where Ringo Starr first performed as part of the band on 18th August 1962, this spectacular festival is set to return to Port Sunlight on 29 August with live music across the village.

Find out more at internationalbeatleweek.com

WHAT'S ON AT THE GLADSTONE THEATRE



Shakespeare in Love

Wed 4 – Sat 7 March, 7.30pm
Struggling playwright William Shakespeare battles writer's block, debt, and a looming deadline. Inspiration arrives when Viola de Lesseps, disguised as a man, auditions for his play. Their forbidden romance transforms a flawed comedy into Romeo & Juliet, risking scandal and royal wrath.

A Night to Remember: Motown

Fri 13 – Sat 14 March, 7.30pm
Step back to 1960s Detroit with the greatest Motown hits. Starring The Voice UK finalist Bizzi Dixon and The Motown Divas, this high-energy show will have you singing along and dancing in the aisles.

Fleetwood Unchained

Fri 27 March, 7.30pm
The ultimate Fleetwood Mac tribute! From early blues to pop-rock anthems, hits like Rhiannon, Go Your Own Way, Dreams and The Chain are performed live with precision, heart, and energy.

Adele by Candlelight

Sat 28 March, 7.30pm
An intimate, candlelit evening featuring Adele's iconic ballads. Experience hits like Someone Like You, Set Fire to the Rain, and I Drink Wine, delivered by a soulful vocalist in a warm, atmospheric setting.

Joseph & The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat

Thu 2 – Sat 4 April, 7.30pm
Stage One 2000 bring Andrew Lloyd-Webber & Tim Rice's classic musical to life with talent, creativity, and energy. A colourful, family-friendly show about love, forgiveness, and the journey of Joseph.

West End Tenors

Sun 5 April, 7.30pm
Leading men from London's West End perform musical theatre & film hits, from Les Misérables to Phantom of the Opera. Their powerhouse vocals and stunning harmonies are not to be missed.

Jack & The Beanstalk (Pantomime)

Thu 9 – Sun 12 April, Various Times
Dreamworld Entertainments return with this giant Easter panto. Join Jack on a magical adventure battling a giant, meeting Flesh Creep, and rescuing Princess Jill. Expect laughs, magic beans, a beanstalk, and plenty of audience fun!

Peter Cox (Go West): We Close Our Eyes

Wed 15 April | 7.30pm
Peter Cox revisits Go West's greatest hits, including We Close Our Eyes, Call Me, and King of Wishful Thinking. An intimate show reflecting on a stellar career spanning four decades.

Sweeney Todd

Thu 23 – Sat 25 April, 7.30pm
Port Sunlight Players present Stephen Sondheim's dark, thrilling musical. Follow the vengeful barber Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett as they carve a bloody path through Victorian London, with iconic songs like Johanna and A Little Priest.

Sister Act

Thu 30 April – Sat 2 May, Various Times
A feel-good musical comedy about a woman hiding in a convent, helping the sisters find their voices while rediscovering her own. Packed with gospel music, dancing, and heart, this Tony-nominated show will leave audiences uplifted.

The Jersey Beats – Oh What A Nite

Fri 8 May, 7.30pm
A lively tribute to Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons. Comedy, vocal harmonies, and crowd-pleasing hits make this show a night to remember.

The Wagatha Christie Trial

Sat 9 May, 7.30pm
A gripping courtroom drama based on the infamous social media feud that captured the nation. Witty, fast-paced, and full of shocking twists.

Annie Jr

Fri 15 – Sat 16 May, Various Times
The award-winning theatre group presents the classic story of a plucky orphan in 1930s New York. Full of iconic songs, high-energy dance, and heartwarming optimism.

The Upbeat Beatles

Fri 22 May, 7.30pm
A two-hour spectacular covering The Beatles' entire career. Authentic instruments, costume changes, and a talented ensemble make this a must-see for fans of all ages.

Here We Go Again – Starring Kerry Katona

Sat 23 May, 7.30pm
The ultimate Mamma Mia! tribute featuring Kerry Katona. Sing along, dance in your seats, and join the non-stop West End-style party!

Book your tickets via **The Gladstone Theatre Box Office on 0151 643 8757** or gladstonetheatre.org.uk

How to dress like a 1901 Port Sunlight woman

For Women's History Month, let's go back to a 1901 edition of *Woman's World*, a women's periodical by the Lever Brothers company in Port Sunlight. Its content was aimed at British women, covering topics such as home & family advice, soap advertisements, recipes, fashion, and general discussions on the gender discourse of the time.

In this edition, an article called 'Taste in Dress' offered some helpful guidance for how women should dress. No doubt the women employees of the Lever Brothers factory living in Port Sunlight would have received this information – though how much they followed its advice is uncertain!



Your clothing matters

While clothing was of interest to both men and women at the turn of the 20th century, the art of fashion was distinct to the female experience. It could also offer insight into 'the feminine world' and the social reputations of women, with fashion choices seemingly indicative of their taste, character, habits, and disposition.

'Dress is not a subject to be taken lightly,' writes *Woman's World*, 'it probably means far more to most of us than we are aware.'

What type of woman are you?

According to *Woman's World*, it was fashion styling that categorised women into reputational classes. Regardless of their socio-economic status, clothing choices separated women into one of the following categories: 'smart women', 'untidy women', 'neat women', 'dainty women', 'careless women', 'slattern women', 'prim women', 'severe women', 'tailor-made women', and 'artistic women'. At the same time, it was also essential that specific styles of dress were only worn in accordance to the wearer's body type, height, and occupation.

Practicality vs. Fashion

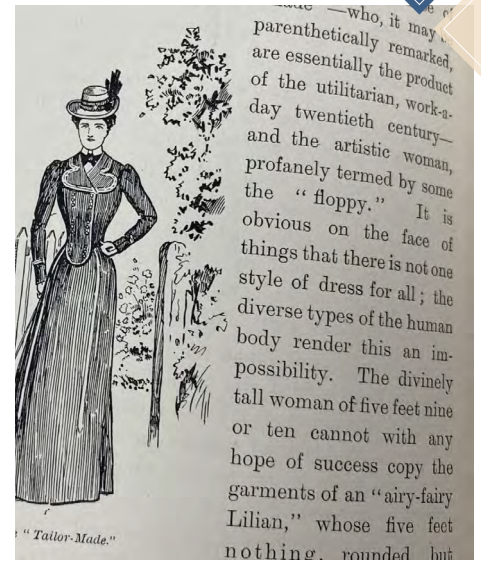
Clothing that was comfortable, reliable, and practical was important for women who were in employment but not restricted to a uniform. Clearly not exempt from judgement, however, these women's clothing choices had to be simultaneously practical and understated, and could be neither in nor out of fashion, as both instances would encourage negative attention, particularly from men. 'The woman who cannot combine the two is, must be, and will ever remain a failure,' *Woman's World* said.

Choose your colours carefully

'A celebrated dictum of successful dressing is to attire yourself according to your eyes,' advised *Woman's World*. All women were best suited to colours that matched their eyes, and if they struggled to style their own colours, they would have needed to seek the help of a dressmaker. Apparently, navy blues, pinks, and reds were 'universally becoming'; black and white was the best colour combination; and most women could find at least one shade of green that would suit their complexion. Conversely, grey should be worn with care, and is better suited when paired with other colours. Purple and brown should largely be avoided.

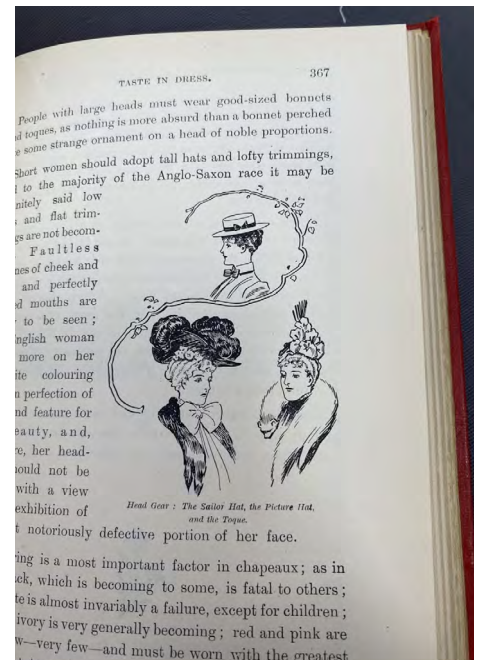
"Obliterate" your imperfections

Balance was key to a woman's silhouette. While *Woman's World* does acknowledge that all figures have an element of 'imperfection', it still presents it as an issue to be solved. It recommends that women should closely study themselves in a mirror to locate their 'defects'. This could be anything from one larger hip, to one higher shoulder, to generally round or



high shoulders, or a short neck. After locating an issue, women 'must do all in their power to nullify and obliterate their existence', using balancing garments – for example, a tailored skirt or bodice, a collar, sleeves, or bows.

Discover more snippets of Port Sunlight's history at portsunlightvillage.com/stories or search #PortSunlightStories on social media for more fascinating snippets of history.



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

Port Sunlight Village Trust 23 King George's Drive, Port Sunlight, Wirral CH62 5DX
T 0151 644 4800 E admin@portsunlightvillage.com portsunlightvillage.com

Port Sunlight Village Trust is a registered charity (no. 1074713) and a registered company in England and Wales (no. 3719976)

Need the Gazette
in a large print or
alternative format?
Please get in touch
to let us know.

