

PORT SUNLIGHT GAZETTE

ISSUE NO. 45 – AUTUMN 2026



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SUNLIGHT**
VILLAGE TRUST

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A WELCOME FROM MIKE WARD CEO OF PORT SUNLIGHT VILLAGE TRUST

Hello and welcome to the autumn 2026 issue of the Port Sunlight Gazette – your seasonal magazine filled with the latest news, updates and events you should know about.

It's been a packed summer in Port Sunlight with lots going on, most notably at the Boating Pond, where work has been happening to complete the renewal and restoration of this important monument. I've been so proud to see the plans and work our team have been developing over many months come to fruition, and it's been a great experience working with our partners on the project – Grosvenor Construction and Rupert Harris Conservation. As quickly as Sea Piece left us as the season began, it was heartening to see it return. Watching it being carefully positioned back into its rightful place was a heart-stopping moment! Its restored original green patina looks fabulous and I can't wait to see it unveiled on Saturday 17 October.

We hope you'll take part in the creative community workshops (see below) with Emma Rodgers and the School of Create, and join the light parade later this autumn to celebrate this special moment as a community.

The weather might finally be cooling down, but the amount that's going on around the village this autumn is giving us plenty of reasons to get out of the house and enjoy what's on offer in Port Sunlight. From the ever-popular Sugar & Spice Festival and spook-tacular half term events to a really exciting new exhibition at Bridge Cottage exploring the Liverpool-born 1950s model June Duncan. Port Sunlight Museum's new programme of Heritage Highlights lunchtime talks (included in museum admission, free entry for residents) has been very popular and I'm glad to say these are continuing – check portsunlightvillage.com to see what's on.

The development of Port Sunlight's business community is encouraging to see, with the Wine Bar opening at the Leverhulme Hotel, the wonderful Cobble & Hay opening at full capacity, and the School of Create now fully settled into their colourful home in the old Boys' Brigade Building.

Port Sunlight's commercial businesses have always been an important part of village life, which is why I'm excited to share that Port Sunlight Village Trust have recently completed the purchase of the Bridge Inn. This is a big but purpose-led investment to protect the building's special heritage and I'm looking forward to working with the leaseholders Greene King to shape its future.

This autumn sees the completion of a very important project for the Trust, our £1.5 million scheme to upgrade the energy efficiency of our tenants' properties. This has included installing secondary glazing in every property, which we've been told is one of the largest commercial secondary glazing projects of this kind in the country. Our partners on this project Arctic Glaze have done a sterling job, and it's been encouraging to hear such good feedback from residents about the difference it's made to their homes' comfort and warmth. It's all part of our ongoing work to not only protect the Grade II listed buildings in our care, but also make them great places to live.

Make sure to read the accompanying Residents' Update for some very insightful articles from our colleagues at Wirral Council regarding trees and planning policy updates.

Thank you for reading this issue of the Gazette and I wish everyone who lives, works and visits this special village a happy autumn season.

Mike Ward,
CEO, Port Sunlight Village Trust

BE PART OF OUR COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS AND JOIN THE LIGHT PARADE

This autumn, the Boating Pond and Sea Piece fountain will be unveiled as part of a special event specially for Port Sunlight residents and the community; a parade will fill the village's streets with magical lights that will find their way to light up the pond.

There are two opportunities to take part:

Join special workshops with artist Emma Rodgers at the Old Fire Station on Friday 2, Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 October to create your own light holder. Drop in between 10am–3pm and bring your own plastic bottles from home – larger and flatter bottomed bottles are best. A limited number of plastic bottles will be available to use if you don't have any.

Visit the School of Create, based at the back of the Lyceum on Bath Street, on Saturday 17 October to get creative

and make decorated lanterns and jars using shapes, patterns and motifs based on the fountain. All materials are provided.

All light holders and lanterns will then be carried by their makers through the village as part of a special event to mark the switching on of the fountain later this autumn – keep an eye on our social media for the date to be announced soon. All residents and community members are welcome to take part.

SEA PIECE SAILS HOME

Conservation work to the bronze fountain, Sea Piece, which sits at the heart of the Boating Pond has now been completed, and the fountain has been returned to the pond. This marks an important milestone in the care of this significant work of public art, and the Boating Pond project as a whole.

Some of you may recall the exciting day earlier this year when Sea Piece was carefully removed from the Boating Pond and transported to Rupert Harris Conservation, a specialist conservation studio in London. At the studio, the conservators undertook a detailed inspection of the bronze to identify any areas that needed treatment, documented its condition and completed the treatment of the bronze. The work to the sculpture is now finished, and the wider project at the pond is continuing.

Before the work to Sea Piece began, extensive research was undertaken to inform the conservation work to the bronze. Archive material from the Henry Moore Institute, Lady Lever Art Gallery and Wirral Archives provided compelling evidence that when Sea Piece was originally created by sculptor Charles Wheeler, it had a light green finish. Contemporary newspaper reports, descriptions and an engineering drawing further support that a deliberately green patina was present when the sculpture was first installed in 1950. 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.

Over time, the bronze continued to change naturally through exposure to the elements, as well as potentially through other maintenance treatments applied to darken the bronze in the 1970s. The most recent bronze/brown colour dated from 2001, when the green patina of Sea Piece was removed as part of conservation work, and a brown patina was applied. The current project to restore the Boating Pond offered an opportunity to bring the sculpture closer to Wheeler's original artistic intention while following conservation principles.



EARLY TESTING ON SEA PIECE AT RUPERT HARRIS CONSERVATION'S STUDIO IN LONDON TO FINALISE ITS RESTORED PATINA



At the conservation studio, Sea Piece was carefully inspected. The conservators found that the existing brown patina was even, stable and protective. Rather than remove it and expose the metal through a more invasive process, they retained this sound layer as a base. A new green patina was then carefully developed over it, preserving the bronze while renewing its historic character.

To obtain the most appropriate green finish, research into other green sculptures produced by Wheeler was undertaken. The conservators then produced a series of samples using a stable copper nitrate-based system. These trials allowed the team to select a soft, muted green that reflects the documentary evidence, the sculpture's age and allows the detail of Sea Piece to be viewed read clearly. Like the War Memorial bronzes and the Gladstone plaque, which have recently undergone conservation treatment, Sea Piece has now been coated in layers of conservation grade wax which will help towards protecting the bronze from the elements and water from the fountain.

Completing the conservation of the bronze is a significant step forward in the project to restore the Boating Pond. The work has combined careful research, skilled work by the conservators, and a commitment to ensuring that the sculpture reflects Wheeler's original vision so that it is well preserved for the future. While work at the Boating Pond continues, Sea Piece has been returned to the pond, and is will be protected by the team while the remaining structural works take place.

We can't wait to welcome the community to witness the fountain flowing again on 17 October. Keep an eye on our social media for more information about the unveiling event.

PORT SUNLIGHT COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

The Port Sunlight Community Allotment meets every Monday from 10am to 12pm and is managed by a group of volunteers, providing a welcoming space for seasonal growing, wellbeing activities and community get-togethers.

Over the past year, generous funding from National Lottery Awards for All and the Rotary Club has helped make the allotment more accessible. Improvements include a wider path and new paving, a new shed, tools and a hot-bin composter, as well as funding for community engagement and activities for members and non-members.

It has been a busy growing season too. In May, the group's plant stall at the Wheels Through Time event raised a considerable sum for its funds. June brought a watercolour-painting evening, followed later in the month by a talk from medical herbalist Lyndsay Murphy, who demonstrated different ways to use herbs grown at the allotment and how to make a salve.

Most recently, the group held an open morning to mark National Allotments Week, when the new shed was officially opened by Nicky, Port Sunlight's own 'sunlight rose'.

Interested in getting involved? Pop down to see the group on any Monday morning or follow the Port Sunlight Community Allotment Facebook page.



PORT SUNLIGHT COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

WHAT'S NEW AT COBBLE & HAY?

Chat, connect and make someone's day brighter

Every Wednesday, 1-3pm

Looking for a friendly place to chat over a cup of tea or coffee? The Chatty Café Chatter & Natter Table at Cobble & Hay offers a welcoming space where people of all ages can connect, talk and enjoy a friendly conversation.

Hosted by a volunteer, the table is open to anyone who may be feeling a little lonely, is new to the area, or is simply in the mood for a chat. Whether you stay for five minutes or longer, a simple conversation can make someone's day a little brighter.

The Chatty Café Scheme helps bring communities together by encouraging conversation and reducing loneliness. Find out more at thechattycafescheme.co.uk.

The Carriage Shed is open for bookings

The Carriage Shed at Cobble & Hay is now available for private group bookings, with a selection of food and drink packages available. To arrange a viewing or ask for menus and further details, email info@cobbleandhay.co.uk.



COBBLE & HAY

DISCOVER THE WINE BAR IN PORT SUNLIGHT

Tucked away inside the Leverhulme Hotel, The Wine Bar is Port Sunlight's relaxed new spot for a great glass of wine, a catch-up with friends or simply somewhere to unwind.

A carefully selected range of wines by the glass and bottle is available alongside beers, spirits and other drinks, all served in a welcoming, informal setting. Regular wine tastings and events are also being introduced, with more planned.

Port Sunlight residents can enjoy 10% off throughout September and October – simply show proof of address when ordering. Whether you live in the village, are visiting for the day or just fancy discovering somewhere new, pop in and say hello.

Instagram: [@thewinebar_psv](https://www.instagram.com/thewinebar_psv) | Facebook: The Wine Bar



THE WINE BAR



GINGERBREAD HOUSE COMPETITION

After last Christmas's community gingerbread house competition was such a roaring success, we're excited to be bringing it back for 2026.

Once again, all residents, businesses and groups based in Port Sunlight are invited to register to receive a gingerbread house kit and unleash your festive creativity to make the best gingerbread house in the village. This year's competition has been sponsored by Cobble & Hay and O'Neill's Accountants.

All entries will be on display at Cobble & Hay on 4 & 5 December where the public will be able to vote for their favourite.

To take part, please email community@portsunlightvillage.com by 31 October.

WHAT'S ON AT SCHOOL OF CREATE

From 12 October

Daytime

Mondays: Beginner Sewing – 10am–1pm

Tuesdays: CraftOlogy & Arty Farty – 10am–3pm

Wednesdays: Furniture Painting – 10am–4pm

Fridays: Confident Sewing – 10am–3pm

Saturday–Sunday:

Check schoolofcreate.com and socials for weekend workshops.

Weekenders include Kimono Making, Funky Footstools, Beginner Upholstery, Upcycling & Furniture Artistry, Blanket Coats, Funky Bag Making and more.

Evenings

Mondays: Beginner Sewing – 6–8:45pm

Mondays: Crafty Makers Club (Youth) – 5–8pm

Tuesdays: Confident Sewing – 6–8:45pm

Tuesdays: Handy Woman DIY

Wednesdays: SewSewSocial – 5:45–8:45pm (soup 'n' wine)

Thursdays: Youth Sewing – 5–7:45pm

Christmas is coming! Keep an eye on School of Create's socials and website for their festive events. From November, new classes will be Christmas themed.

Booking is essential via schoolofcreate.com. Have a question? Please text **07754 011983**.

Find School of Create at the back of the Lyceum, just off Bath Street by the bowling green hut.



KATIE TYSON OPENS HER PORT SUNLIGHT STUDIO

Village artist and illustrator Katie Tyson is opening her own studio in the heart of Port Sunlight at Bridge Cottage, creating a new dedicated venue for her art workshops and courses alongside Port Sunlight Village Trust's regular programmes of visual arts exhibitions on the ground floor (read more about that on page 6!).

Katie's relaxed and friendly classes include demonstrations and individual guidance, with sessions exploring watercolour, inks, gouache, mixed media and drawing techniques. Her autumn programme includes:

- Autumn Term six-week Painting and Drawing Course – Mondays from 14 September, 10am–12.30pm, or Wednesdays from 16 September, 6.30–9pm | £132
- Art Club: "Moody Florals" in Gouache – Thursday 24 September, 6.30–9pm | £25
- Weekend Workshop: "Painting Port Sunlight" – Saturday 17 October, 10am–2pm | £55
- Art Club: "Fashion Illustration" – Thursday 22 October, 6.30–9pm | £25

All workshops and courses can be booked at katietyson.co.uk.



WHAT'S ON THIS SUMMER IN PORT SUNLIGHT

Book tickets at
[portsunlightvillage.com](https://portsunlightvillage.com/whats-on)
/whats-on



JUNE DUNCAN: MODEL IMAGE

26 September 2026 – March 2027 | Wednesday–Saturday, 11am–3pm | The Gallery at Bridge Cottage | Free, donations welcome
Through stunning photographs and clothes, explore the glamorous life of Liverpool-born June Duncan, who became one of the top British models of the 1950s, in the latest exhibition at Bridge Cottage.

SUGAR & SPICE FESTIVAL: AUTUMN EDITION

3 October, 11am–4pm | Windy Bank & King George's Drive | Free
This autumn, wrap up warm and discover over 40 stalls filled with locally-made food, drink and little luxuries in a special edition of this popular festival for Port Sunlight and Wirral. Soak up the beautiful autumn colours of the village and browse stalls filled with chocolate, cakes, ice cream, coffee, beer and a range of hot & savoury treats from around the world. Enjoy free performances by Sing the Musicals Choir at 1.30pm.

PORT SUNLIGHT AUTUMN TRAIL

3 October | 10.30am, 11.15am, 12pm & 12.45pm | £6 per person
Witch and wizard apprentices, hear our call! Port Sunlight is under threat, and we need your help to protect it. Set off on a whimsical, spellbinding trail through the village to uncover mythical creatures, discover enchanted treasures and learn about the magical powers that keep Port Sunlight safe day and night. Each ticket includes a trail map, pencil, witch or wizard hat, and a bubble "Toil & Trouble" bottle as a reward for completing your quest. Kindly sponsored by Questival.

QUESTIVAL

3 October | Various venues | £8 per person, under 16s free
Questival is your journey to loot, lore, and legends; a one day festival for the whole family celebrating the infinite worlds of fantasy fiction, comic books, and roleplaying games. Centred at Hulme Hall with events taking place in Christ Church, the Lyceum Club, Nettle, and beyond, Port Sunlight is the backdrop to a day of limitless imagination. This unique event is a collaboration between Kraken Comics, Paper + Word, and Bulwark Games. Expect to meet authors and artists, discover new games and adventures, and get creative with crafts and activities.

Go to questival.uk to book tickets and for more information.

WIRRAL POETRY FESTIVAL

3–4 October | Church Hall, Lady Lever Art Gallery and The Green
Wirral Poetry Festival returns to Port Sunlight for the fifth consecutive year. The Church Hall will become a poetry hub for the weekend, hosting readings, workshops and the ever-popular Port Slam Night poetry slam. Other events will take place at the Lady Lever Art Gallery, with free readings outside on The Green. Run entirely by volunteers, the festival is family-friendly; most events are free and drop-in, while tickets for other events are £6. Visit wirralpoetryfestival.org.uk.

ROOTS, RITUALS & SOAP:

FOLKLORE-LED SOAP-MAKING WORKSHOP

12 October, 6pm–8pm | £20 per person | Port Sunlight Museum
Step into a world where craft, nature and old stories intertwine. Explore the traditional folklore surrounding herbs, flowers and natural ingredients before creating your own unique soap using a simple melt-and-pour method. Inspired by tales of healing plants, protective charms and seasonal rituals, this hands-on workshop is perfect for beginners and anyone curious about the connection between craft and folklore.

Enjoy a relaxing and imaginative evening of heritage-inspired creativity in the enchanting setting of Port Sunlight.

SILLY SPOOKS IN SUNLIGHT

29 October | 10am & 11.30am | £8 per child

Professor Suds is back for a spooktacular half-term special! Discover the silly side of spooky science with a series of ghostly experiments, followed by a ghoulish-themed craft to create and take home. Expect curious science, creepy creations and plenty of Halloween fun in Port Sunlight.

LITTLE WEREWOLVES OF SUNLIGHT

30 October | 10.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm & 3.30pm | £6 per child

Shapeshift into Sunlight this half term with our folklore-inspired craft day! Children can design and create their very own shape-shifting creature mask, taking inspiration from wolves, fox spirits, owls, selkies and other mysterious creatures said to transform beneath the moon. A playful introduction to folklore, creativity and the creatures that come alive after dark.

SUNLIGHT'S SPOOK-TACULAR TOUR

31 October | 6.30pm–8pm | Adults £15, Concessions £10, Children £6 | Port Sunlight Museum

Experience the haunted side of Port Sunlight on our special Halloween walking tour. Led by our frightfully fantastic guide, explore the village after dark while hearing tales of ghostly sightings and eerie goings-on, all inspired by true accounts from Port Sunlight. Discover the stories lurking behind familiar streets and buildings on this atmospheric 90-minute tour. Join us if you dare!

SAVE THE DATE: CHRISTMAS

Storytelling and Crafts with Father Christmas

5 December | £10 per child, two free adults per booking

Approx. 1 hour 15 minutes

Father Christmas is back in Port Sunlight for more storytelling and crafts, with a small gift included. The story and further details are still to be confirmed.



WHAT'S ON AT THE GLADSTONE THEATRE

Luke & Lainey Live • 2 October, 7.30pm

A country double bill celebrating Luke Combs and Lainey Wilson.

Johnny Cash Roadshow • 3 October, 7.30pm

An award-winning Johnny Cash tribute recreating Cash's prison-era concerts.

Brigadoon – Gladstone Cinema Club • 6 October, 2pm

The classic musical film; ticket includes a free hot drink and biscuit.

Sexbomb: Celebrating the Music of Sir Tom Jones 9 October, 7.30pm

Andy Wood and a live band celebrate Sir Tom Jones.

The Wind in the Willows • 22–24 October

A family musical comedy. Performances: 22 and 23 October at 7.30pm; 24 October at 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

Phantom Panto • 25 October, 6pm

A spooky Halloween pantomime with magical illusions and pop songs.

Choose George – Celebrating George Michael 31 October, 7.30pm

Steve Mitchell recreates George Michael's music, joined by former Wham! bassist Dave West.

Sing The Musicals in Concert • 7–8 November, 7pm

The local choir returns with songs from stage, Disney and film favourites.

An Evening With Donna Ashworth • 9 November

An evening with the bestselling poet celebrating The Art of Being Easily Pleased. Show time TBC - please check.

Desperate Scousewives: Nessa's Story 11–12 November, 7.30pm

A fast, funny and distinctly Scouse Christmas Eve tale. 18+.

Book your tickets at gladstonetheatre.org.uk
or call the Box Office on 0151 643 8757

WHAT'S ON AT COBBLE & HAY

Quiz Night: 23 October

A family-friendly themed quiz with supper and a drink included. Places are limited and individuals are welcome to book, with solo guests able to join a team. A further quiz night is planned for 11 December. Book via info@cobbleandhay.co.uk, Cobble & Hay's social pages, or in person.

Fried Green Tomatoes at the Cobble & Hay Café

28 November | Drinks & canapés 5.30pm, dinner 6.30pm | £65
Homotopia's Cookery Book Club at the Met Goes to the Movies comes to the converted stables at Cobble & Hay, with a five-course menu inspired by the movie Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe.

WHAT'S ON AT CHRIST CHURCH

Christ Church and Manna Foods Bistro will remain open beyond the end of September, but continued support is important. Every visit makes a difference and helps keep this special place open and welcoming to the community and visitors. If you haven't visited yet, now is a great time. Explore the beautiful church, relax in the Bistro, meet friends, enjoy some food and drink, and experience the unique atmosphere.

Christ Church Open for Questival

Christ Church will be open as a satellite location for Questival on Saturday 3 October.

Brought to you by Paper and Word Bookshop, Bulwark Games and Kraken Comics, Questival has plenty to discover for book lovers, gamers, comic fans and curious visitors alike. Come and explore this beautiful and historic space, meet fellow enthusiasts and enjoy something a little different. Please note that the Bistro will be closed during Questival.

Upcoming services:

Harvest Service

Sunday 11 October, 10.30am

Food donations will be given to Wirral Foodbank.

Remembrance Service

Sunday 8 November, 10.45am

At the War Memorial.

Armistice Day

Wednesday 11 November, 10.55am

A short reflection and service at the War Memorial.

WHAT'S ON AT HULME HALL

Hulme Hall's popular programme of markets and fairs continues this autumn...

Craft and gift fair:

25 October

Flea markets:

4 October and 1 November

Antique & vintage fair:

18 October

All events are open between 9.30am–2pm.

Also don't miss an art stamp

& paper craft show on 10 October (10am–4pm), Port Sunlight Lyceum Brass Band concert on 7 November at 7.30pm, and special Christmas craft fairs on 22 November and 13 December.

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



WRITER'S CORNER

Discover the village through the pens of two village wordsmiths.

PORT MOONLIGHT: A PERSPECTIVE OF THE VILLAGE BY NIGHT

By Emily Wilcox

Ours is the village scrubbed spotless by sunlight; a rose-tinted, lavender-scented postcard of a place. Those who tread their adventures into our cobbles (much like the seagull footprints on the slab, several strides from the Tudor Rose Tea Rooms) will know this to be true. With the daylight cast upon it, this sunlit port is a portrait worthy of being framed and hung from the tips of the stars (or the very least, in Lady Lever's artistic midst).

But what about a village draped in shadows? When there are no visitors to claim its beauty, none to bear witness to the Auslofty blooms or the curiosity of the squirrels? When golden hour turns moon silver and nighttime settles overhead, what happens then, when we're tucked up in bed?

As a full-time writer and fledgling Sunlighter – not to mention an avid night owl, proverbially perched in the treetops of the Dell – I've tasked myself with discovering the dark's stories to tell.

To moonlight as narrator of the night.

As the days shorten, the night begins to elongate like the sharp, crisp edge of a crescent moon. Autumn is leaf-littering the path, and it's not just us crunching along it. While we're frolicking through the dream realm, the village belongs to the creatures.

Sometimes you can hear them. Other times, there are only subtle hints of their presence – a knocked-over bin, trampled flowerbeds, a footprint sealed in cement.

A sleepy village feels safer to a stray cat curled up in the bushes, blinking sore eyes into the blackness and awaiting a new home (much like the sweet fellow in our garden, who we've dubbed Ray of Sunlight).

It provides privacy to the several foxes, screeching their sensual song exclusively after watershed. And for my one-eyed black cat (who, by day, rusts in a sunbeam, and by night, is the mascot for our favourite frightful festivity), it allows him to stalk the shadows, knowing that tucked just behind them Halloween awaits, perched on the horizon.

After all, the shadows make the sundial – we couldn't measure the day without them. Port Sunlight is our storybook setting. Port Moonlight, however, is the myth, the folklore, the echo of rustling pages when the book is shut, sealed, and out of sight.

It's the place for tales that belong only to the dead of the night.

THE FOUNDER'S TOMB

By Fliss Bardwell

Forever they sleep together on the church's sunset side

Creators of our wondrous village, bathed in enormous pride

Traditional childhood sweethearts, a true love traced back to school –

As I reflect on their resting forms, my thoughts –
and thanks – unspool.

For Lord and Lady Lever, Sunlight's founders, father, mother,

Neither could ever remember a world without the other.

He made our community from land unprepossessing, harsh.

Who can believe where we live and thrive once was just a marsh?!

A visionary philanthropist who lavished so much care

On his workforce and their families, Lord Lever's dream was rare.

Green spaces, proper homes with heart, a fine quality of life

Among the great boons bequeathed to us by William and his wife.

Her inspiration and tireless support never went unsung

In the church on her untimely death sorrowing heads were hung.

Her effigy in bronze was cast, the place already chosen

By Lord Lever – their bond of love to be eternal, frozen.

His words and deeds, our gallery, prove what he thought about her –

In fact he said there would have been no Port Sunlight without her!

And when it was his turn to join his angel in death's slumber

They filed past as he lay in state, two thousand, more, in number.

Now, gazing at their silent tomb as dusk is softly falling

I almost think I see them breathe, I feel they may be calling

To all of us who live here now, our toing and our froing:

"We cherish how you tend our dream –
please keep the good work going!"

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PLEASE GET IN TOUCH TO LET US KNOW.**