

# Global Legacies

## A roadmap for the sustainable management of Port Sunlight's heritage

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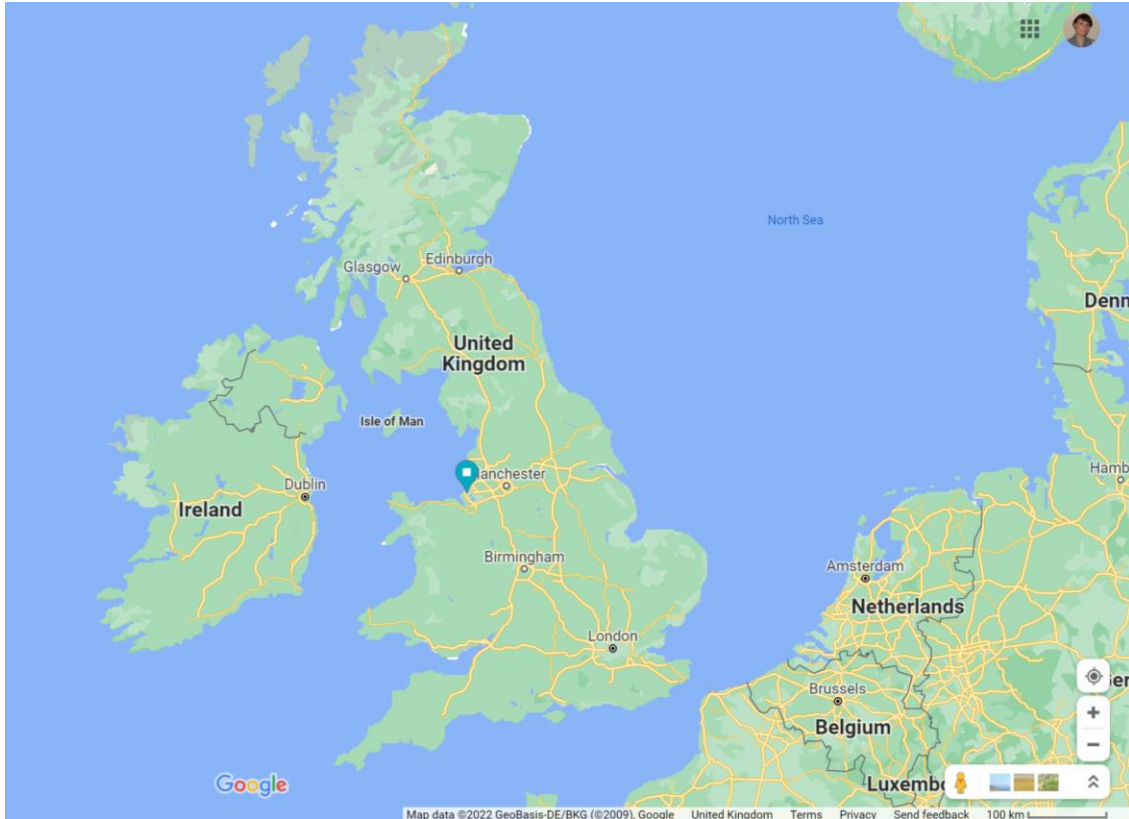
Project Officer, PSVT



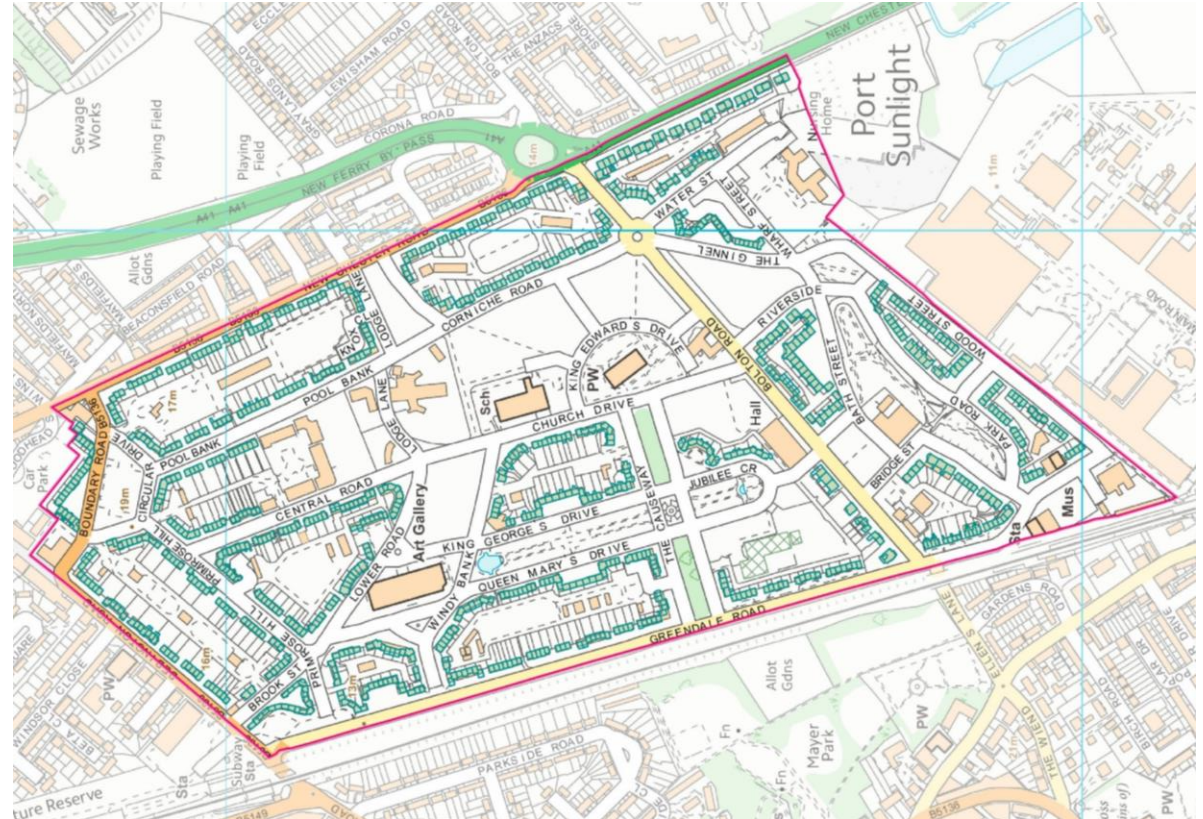
European Route  
of Industrial Heritage



# Port Sunlight, Merseyside, England



Map showing the location of Port Sunlight village, Map data © 2022 GeoBasis-DE/BKG (© 2009), Google.

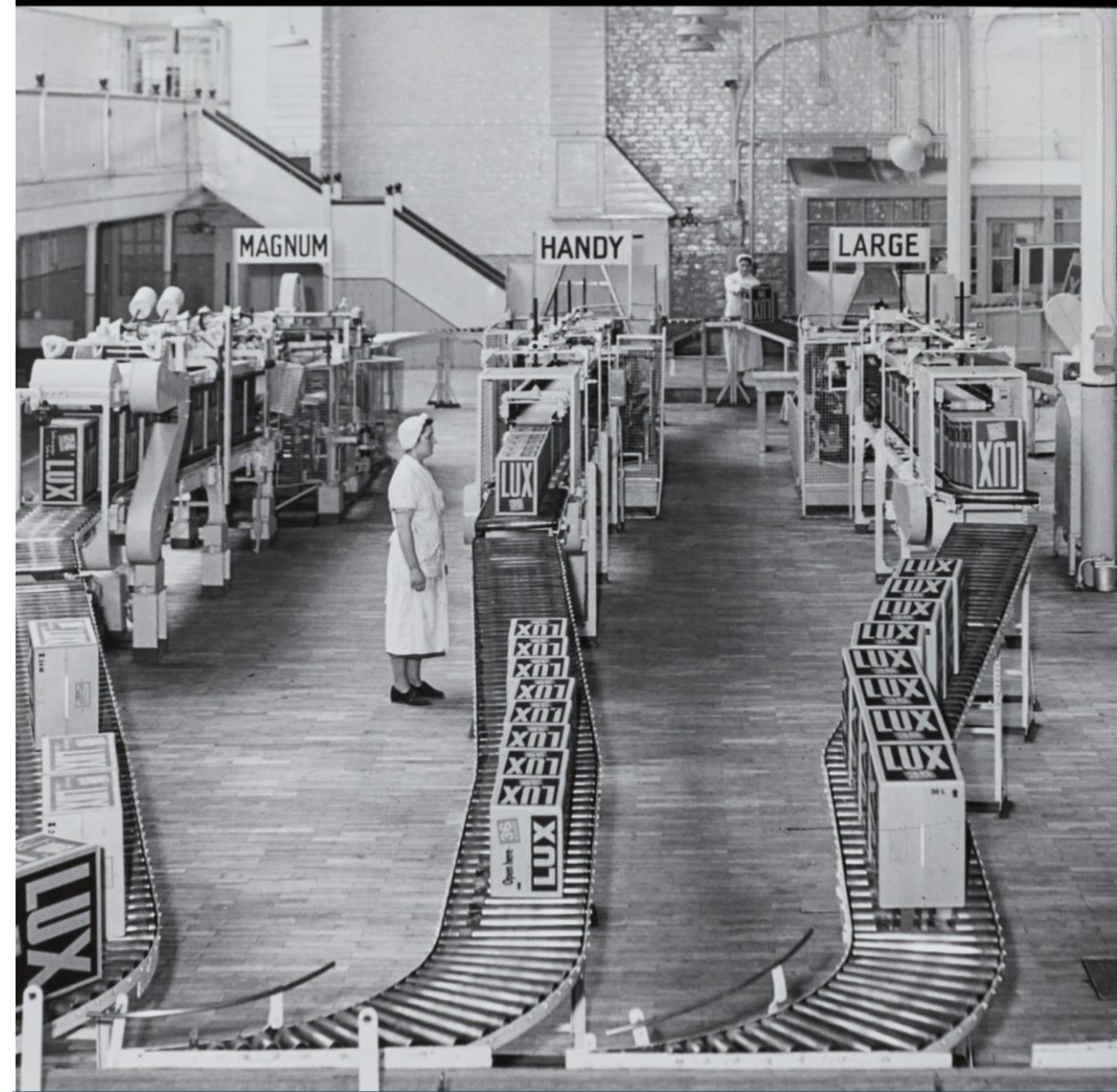


Map showing boundaries of Port Sunlight conservation area, used with permission from Wirral Council and contains OS Data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2020.





Soap pans at the Port Sunlight works, c. 1955. UARM reference: GB1752.UNI-GF-CR-5-5-178-001. Reproduced with kind permission from Unilever plc and group companies.



Lux boxing, c 1925. UARM reference: GB1752.UNI-GF-CR-5-5-288-002. Reproduced with kind permission from Unilever plc and group companies.





Port Sunlight docks, wharf and warehouses, 1953. From *The Story of Port Sunlight*, (Port Sunlight: Lever Brothers), 36.



Printing department, Port Sunlight works UARM  
Reference: GB1752.UNI-GF-CR-5-5-250-003.  
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“It will be seen that in this village, which helps the whole world to wash and be clean, it is remembered that example is better than precept. Cleanliness and tidiness are business principles. The workers’ dwellings, the recreation halls, the church, the schools, show that business need not be divorced from beauty, but rather flourishes by close alliance with educational, social and religious work.”

*Port Sunlight and Prosperity  
Sharing, A Lantern Slide  
Lecture, 1913-14, P24.*

Windy Bank houses, Port Sunlight.  
CC-BY-ND Heather Alcock, 2022





# Five-Year Strategic Plan

2019 – 2024

Strategic aim: Realise the potential of Port Sunlight as a leading visitor attraction

Supporting objectives:

- Promote Port Sunlight as a 'destination' for domestic and international markets
- Tell the complete story of Port Sunlight's significance and relevance to the modern world
- Generate new sources of income from the visitor experience
- Develop Port Sunlight's infrastructure to mitigate visitor impact on the community and heritage
- Support Port Sunlight residents to play a key role in the visitor destination

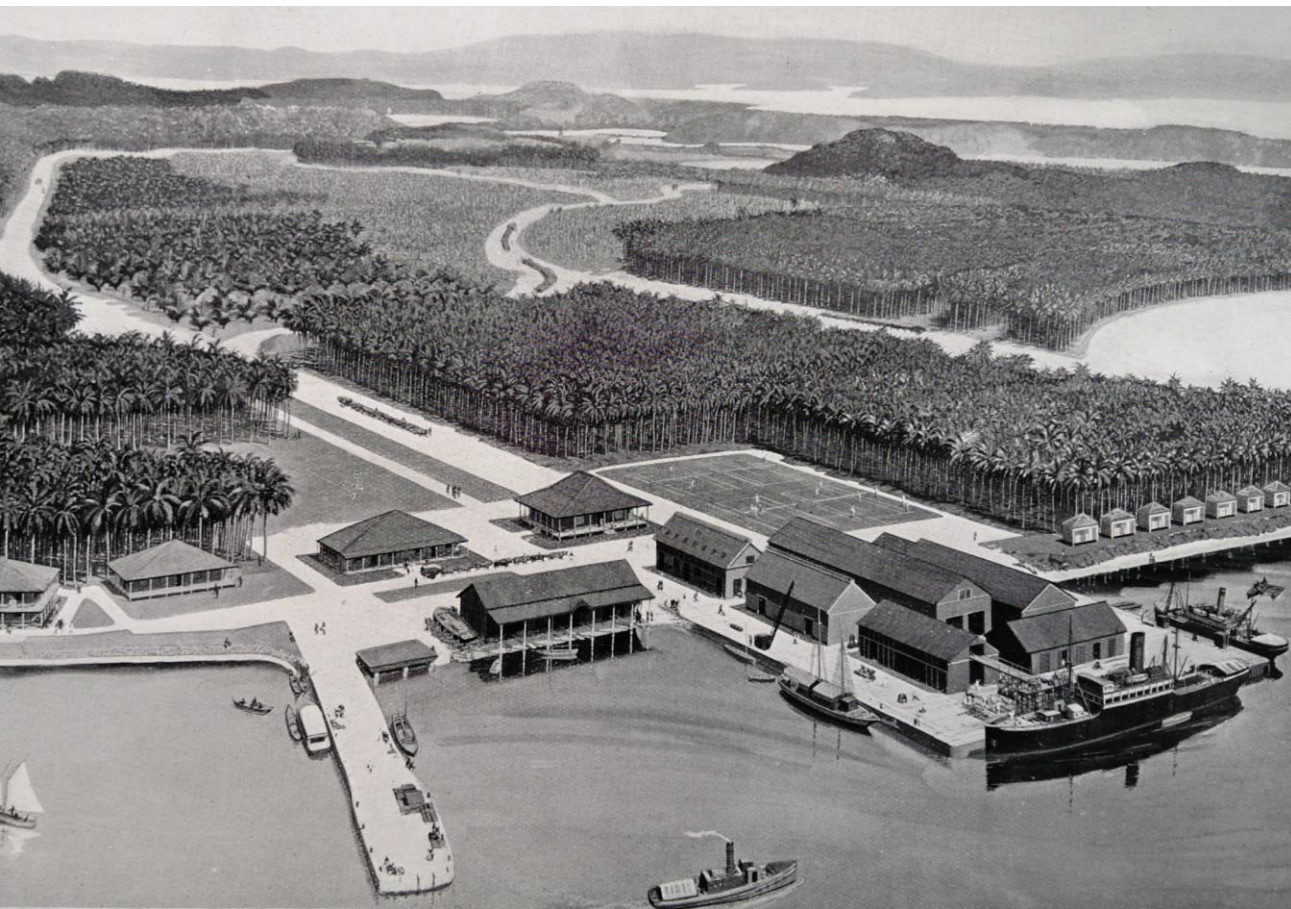




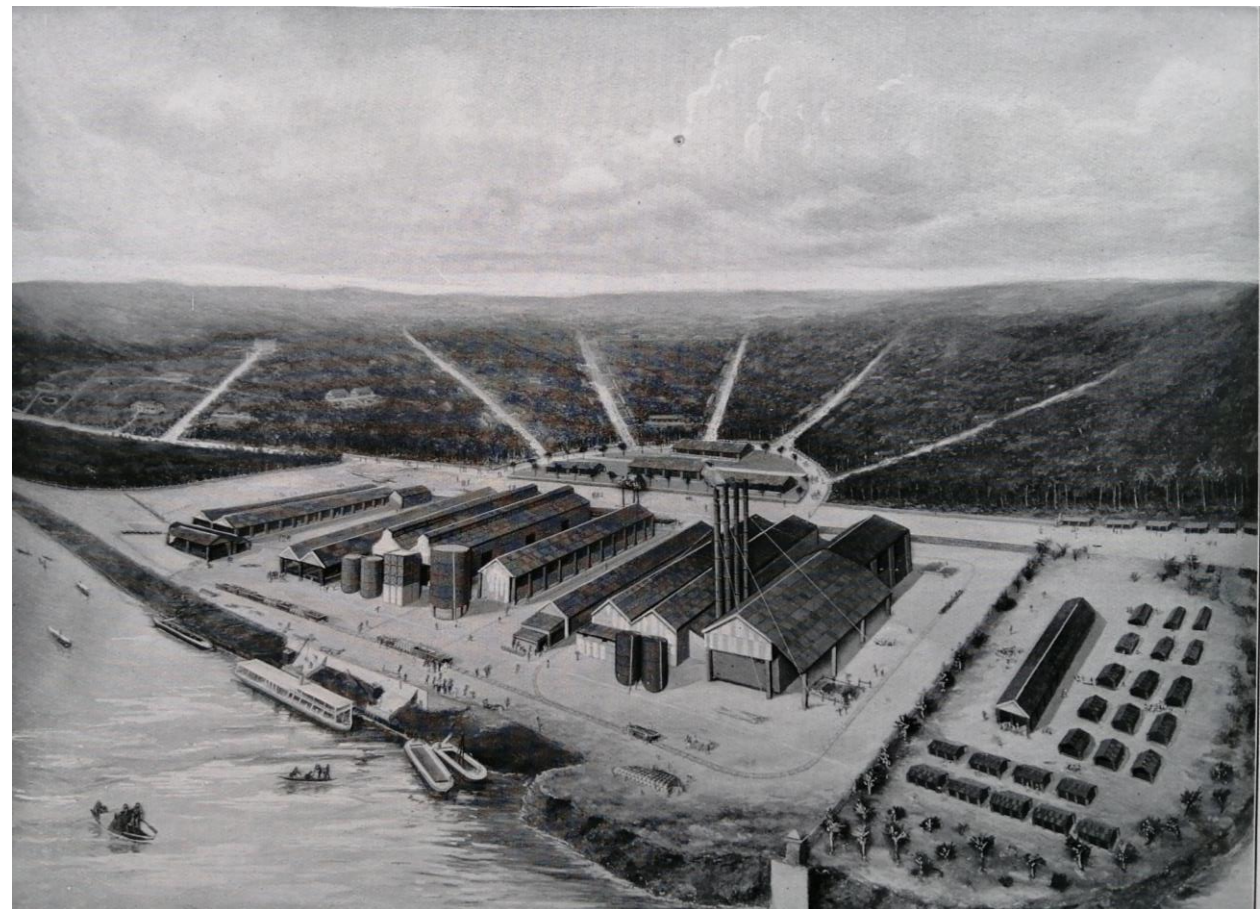
Photograph courtesy of Stratus Imagery Ltd., © Stratus Imagery Ltd., 2021.



# Imperial and colonial associations



Gavutu: Lever's Pacific Plantations, Limited, Solomon Islands. From Lever Brother's Shareholder Brochure, (Lever Brothers: Port Sunlight), 1923



Leverville: Huileries Du Congo Belge (Associated Company). From Lever Brother's Shareholder Brochure, (Lever Brothers: Port Sunlight), 1923



# Racism, the Belgian Congo, and William Lever



The *Huileries du Congo Belge* train bringing palm fruit from the plantation areas to the mill station. Image: kind permission from Unilever Plc.

## Free writing workshop series: Creative Connections

10th, 17th, 24th, 31st October & 7th November 2023



Join acclaimed poet, performance artist, and community activist, Amina Atiq, for a free creative workshop experience.

This unique, five-part workshop for adults offers creative writing, community mapping, story sharing, and reflective discussion.

Amina's workshop experience is an exciting opportunity to develop your creative voice and build new friendships.

Whether you're new to writing or are passionate about the written word, all levels of experience are welcome.

See overleaf for more details.



# Exhibition panels



John Douglas

b. 1830 d. 1911

**Occupation**  
Architect

#### Family

Born in Cheshire, Douglas was the son of a builder. Douglas worked as an architect from 1846 until the end of his life.

**Port Sunlight is best known for its association with soap and industrialist William Lever.**

**But did you know that the quality and diversity of its built environment makes it one of the most innovative working-class settlements in the world?**

Port Sunlight Village Trust (PSVT) has embarked on a research programme to discover more about the designers of Port Sunlight's houses, buildings, monuments, and landscape features.

This is a live research project and we have created these 'Pen Portraits' to begin sharing our findings with visitors. You will discover the work of individual architects both in Port Sunlight and elsewhere, their patrons, and problematic links to slavery, racism and colonialism. We'd love to get your feedback. You can contact us by emailing [feedback@portsunlightvillage.com](mailto:feedback@portsunlightvillage.com) or post your comments on this panel.

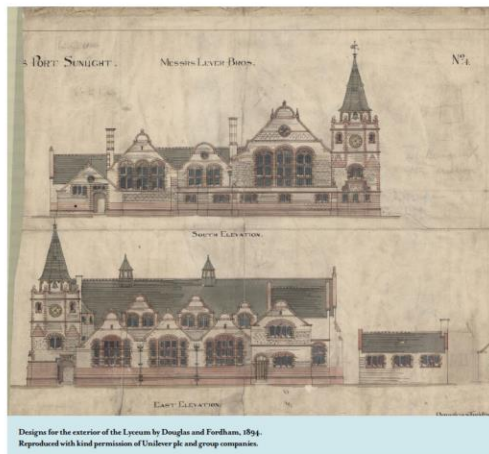
Scan here to...



View beautiful architectural plans in our online exhibition "Drawn Together"



Discover more of John Douglas's architecture in the village

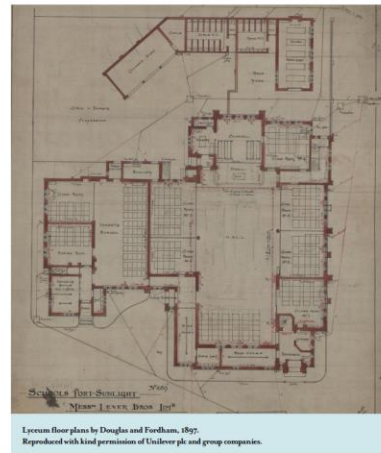


#### The building you are in

##### The Lyceum Building, completed 1896

This room forms part of a complex of buildings called The Lyceum. The buildings were designed to serve three important functions in the early days of the village. They were used as a school, a Sunday school and a church. This is reflected in the architecture and design of the buildings. William Lever said;

*"The buildings of which we are most proud at Port Sunlight...are the school buildings... All the social work of the village centres round those."*



#### Other work in Port Sunlight

Douglas and his business partner Daniel Porter Fordham were responsible for at least 48 houses in the village.

They designed key structures such as Bridge Cottage and the Dell Bridge which are located just outside this building.

When Fordham became too ill to work, Charles Howard Minshall replaced him in 1898 as Douglas's business partner until 1909.

#### Beyond Port Sunlight

Douglas was inspired by many different architectural styles including the traditional timber framed architecture in Cheshire.

Many of the buildings you see today in Chester are a result of his influence or works.

As well as works for the local landowners and industrialists Douglas also worked on commissions for Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone.



#### Problematic associations

Gladstone has other links to Port Sunlight:

William Lever was an admirer of Gladstone. Both were members of the same political party, the Liberal Party and Lever credited Gladstone with helping his business develop by removing a tax on soap and paper. Lever named Gladstone Hall, now the Gladstone Theatre, in his honour.

Born in Liverpool, Gladstone campaigned for the owners of enslaved people to be compensated if the slave trade was abolished. Gladstone's father owned many enslaved people and received more than £90,000 in compensation for their release. In later life, Gladstone went on to call the slave trade 'the foulest crime that taints the history of mankind'.

**To find out more about racism, the Belgian Congo and William Lever, visit SoapWorks or help yourself to one of our booklets.**

**Does Douglas's association with patrons like Lever and Gladstone who had clear links to slavery and racism affect how you view his work and legacy?**

**Leave your views here...**



Excellent work, I think it's about presenting the facts, bad and good, and acknowledging the impact. Just cannot ignore it!

No, not at all from the information here, it seems he was an architect - not a slave owner or racist. To deem a Prime Minister like Gladstone as a 'problematic' figure seems reductionist, but I do fully agree with places like this examining Britain's troubling past from all angles, to help us come to terms with their legacy.

I came to the Museum to learn about the history of the wonderful institution that is Port Sunlight, and to your art gallery to delight in the pre-Raphaelites. I did not pay my entrance fee to be hectored by the Trust on matters entirely unrelated. If I wish to know your views on racism, I can look this up on your EDI policy.





Park Road and Bridge Street, Port Sunlight, CC-BY-NC Heather Alcock, 2022.





Predecessors

Map

Successors

<https://www.portsunlightvillage.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Port-Sunlights-Built-Heritage-in-a-Global-Context-2022.pdf>

This gazetteer lists significant planned settlements and related English policies, acts or texts related to housing from 1750 – 1940. Key attributes comprising Port Sunlight’s built heritage values were assessed for the comparative sites. The information was compiled using accessible primary (site plans, drawings) and secondary source materials (published research findings) over the past eighteen months and served as an interim report for a wider three-year study into the global legacies of Port Sunlight.





# Globally unique?

Lever invested in bespoke architectural beauty for working-class people. Port Sunlight is the only surviving example in the world of a working-class settlement that has unique designs for each block of housing. Other working-class settlements developed between 1760 and 1938 were developed with repetitive housing 'types' or blocks.

Lower Road houses, Port Sunlight.  
CC-BY-ND Heather Alcock, 2022



# Port Sunlight World Heritage Site Tentative List Bid - Stakeholder engagement

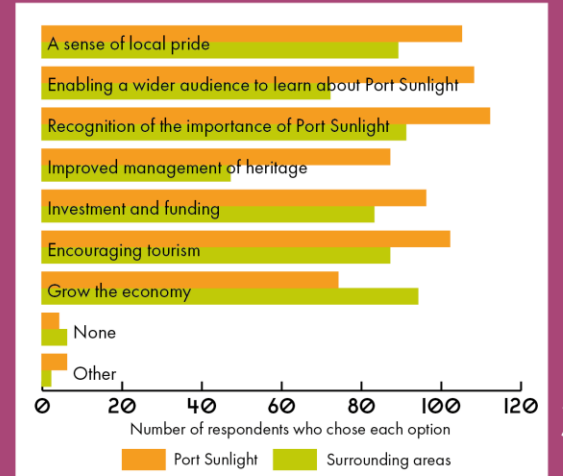
In preparing our bid for Port Sunlight to be recognised on the Tentative List for World Heritage Site inscription, we have engaged with our key stakeholders to share information and understand what they think of the opportunity.

- We have:
- Issued a media release making our stakeholders aware of our ambitions.
  - Created an information booklet and hand delivered it to every household in Port Sunlight, provided hard copies in our public venues, and disseminated e-copies through social media and digital networks.
  - Hosted pop-up exhibitions in Port Sunlight and neighbouring communities.
  - Held face-to-face and online meetings.
  - Promoted an online survey.

What benefits do you think World Heritage Site status would bring for Port Sunlight and surrounding areas?

The most popular potential benefit identified for Port Sunlight was 'recognition of the importance of Port Sunlight'.

The most popular potential benefit identified for the surrounding areas was 'grow the economy'.



**30k** people reached through Facebook and Instagram

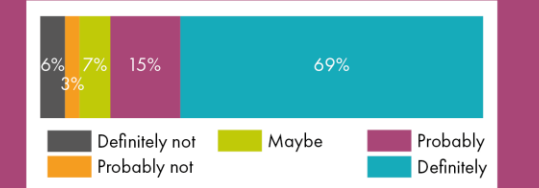
**250** people visited a pop-up event or completed the online survey

We asked online participants to describe Port Sunlight in 3 words, these are the 3 most popular words given.

**Beautiful**  
**Historic**   **Unique**

Overall, do you think World Heritage Site status would be good for Port Sunlight and the surrounding areas?

**84%** of people who responded online or in person felt World Heritage Site status would be good for Port Sunlight



"As someone who owned his very first home in Port Sunlight Village, I think that this is long overdue. It's a fabulous area with such rich history and diverse architecture."

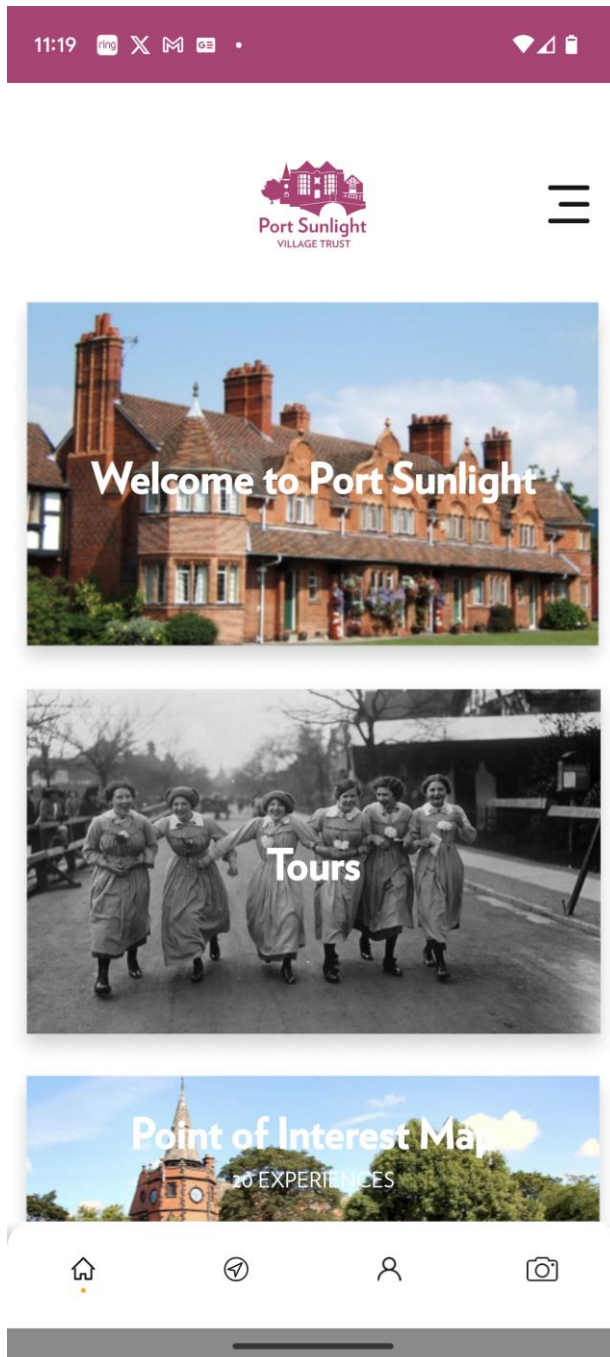
LinkedIn comment

"An exciting opportunity to cherish and develop an exceptional early 20th century social concept and to make it known to a wider audience."

Local resident at pop-up event







<https://tour.portsunlightvillage.com/>



## Port Sunlight Tour

About this app



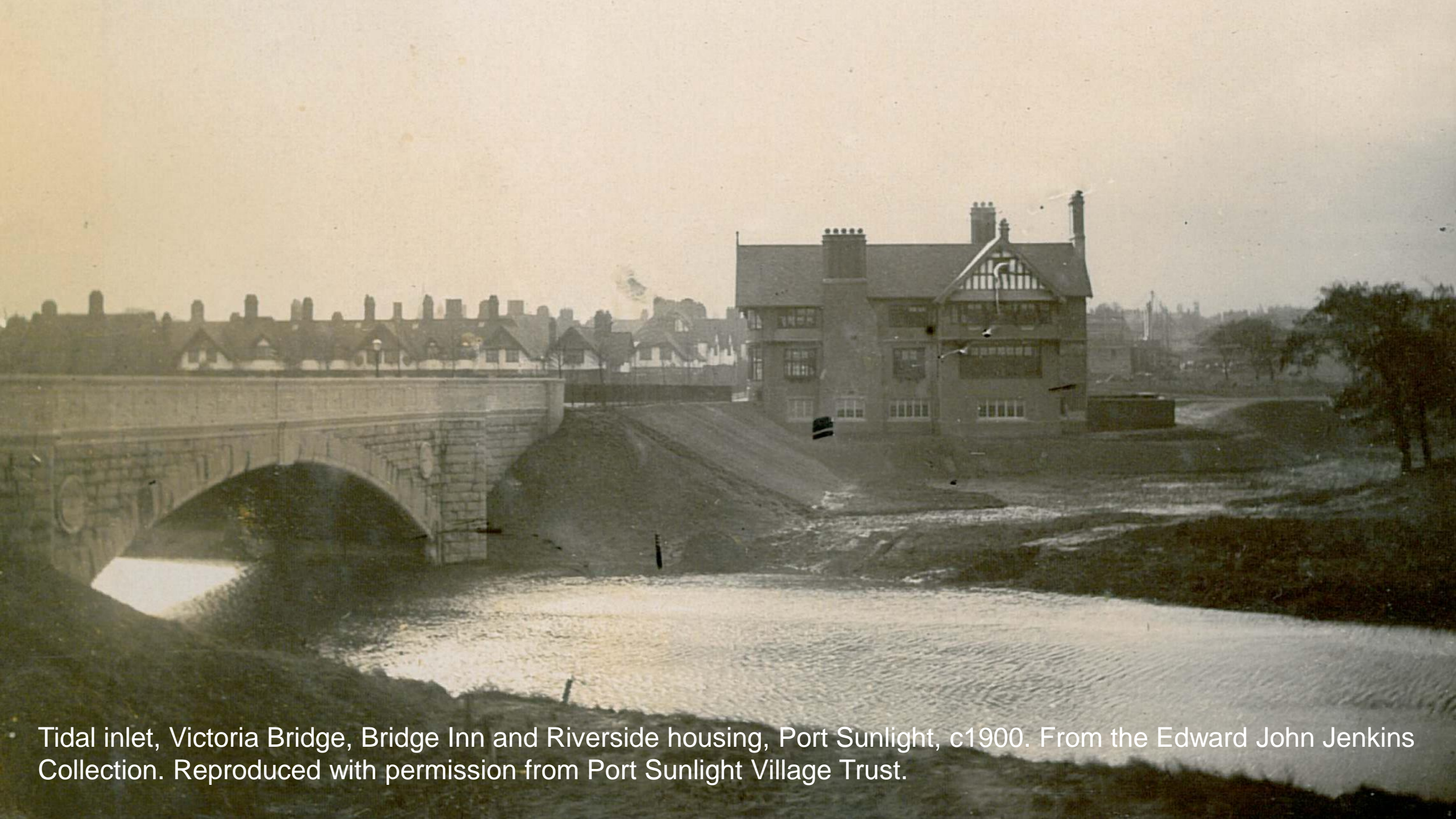
With never before seen videos, historic footage, audio tours, and augmented reality you can discover how Port Sunlight was created, what life was like in the factory and so much more.

There are three exciting tours to choose from:

- Making it Happen: Discover what it took to make Lever Brothers' Soap Works a rip-roaring success, from innovative advertising globally to strong well-conceived transport links, a cared-for workforce and a thriving village community. Hear William Lever talk about his remarkable vision for his business and village and take a look inside the famous factory to see what working life was really like.
- Life at Port Sunlight: Join Nellie, the first child to be born at Port Sunlight, as she takes you on a journey around her home. Hear about her school days, join her for a splash in the swimming pool or dance the night away at Hulme Hall. There's so much to uncover about life at Port Sunlight.
- Port Sunlight at War: Over 4,000 patriotic men and boys enlisted to join the Great War here at Port Sunlight. Follow young Eric, as he shares his memories of his brave brothers going off to war and the startling changes he saw at home and in the factory. Witness the poignant return and care of injured soldiers and the moving unveiling of the impressive war memorial.

The project has been made possible through funding from the Recovery and Valorisation of Maritime, Military and Industrial Heritage in the Atlantic Area Coast Project (MMIAH) Interreg Programme.





Tidal inlet, Victoria Bridge, Bridge Inn and Riverside housing, Port Sunlight, c1900. From the Edward John Jenkins Collection. Reproduced with permission from Port Sunlight Village Trust.



# What's next?



Adaptive use and enhancements, Lyceum,  
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