

**Seventy one PORT SUNLIGHT – GARDEN VILLAGE &
LADY LEVER ART GALLERY.**

A fine example of Victorian philanthropy, Port Sunlight was built from 1888 onwards to house and provide for workers at the adjacent Lever Soap Works. A pleasant stroll through this attractive, well laid out village takes you to an art gallery with an opulent collection of nationally important pieces.

Catch a train from Eccles to Liverpool Lime Street.
Alight there and descend lift, escalator or stairs to the Liverpool Underground.
Go to the Wirral Line platform and board a train to Port Sunlight. (*They go to Chester, Hooton or Ellesmere Port*).

Alight at Port Sunlight Station. Descend the steps and turn right into the street.
Notice the tea shop and the lovely row of cottages behind it on Park Road.
Turn right and walk along Greendale Road. *On the left is the bank in a half timbered building. On the right is a bowling green and the Gladstone Hall.. The garden village was planned with aesthetics, recreation and culture in mind. Notice the plaque above the entrance to the hall.*

Turn left onto Wood Street and on your right is the soap works & Lever House – *the ornate offices. William Hesketh Lever, the son of a Bolton Grocer, made his fortune from soap, and spent some of it to create this village for the workforce.*

Turn left down Bridge Street and cross the Dell Bridge. *This is over what was a tidal inlet – now turned into a park. To your left is Bridge Cottage and on the right the Lyceum housing the village social club.*

Turn right by the side of the social club then left onto Cross Street *-alongside two more bowling greens!*
Cross Bolton Road and go down the left side of Hulme Hall *(originally a dining hall for 1500 women).*

This brings you out onto an open public space. *It is grandly laid out with formal gardens in the centre between Queen Mary's Drive and King George's Drive. There is a central war memorial and at the far end is the art gallery.*
Walk ahead to the left of the gardens *(there is a Garden Centre with cafe on your left).*
Go right to the central war memorial. *This is a suitably touching and powerful monument to the fallen. It was designed by Sir W. Goscombe John R.A. (MCMXXI is 1921).*

Continue past the other side of the war memorial towards the large church. As you come onto Church Street, to the right is the Bridge Inn (an attractive pub, it was once a temperance hall and is next to a bridge that's now underground!

Cross to look around Christ Church and its grounds.-built 1902 by architects William and Segar Owen as a memorial to W.H. Lever's parents. There is an outside 'lean to' chapel to the second Viscount Leverhulme.

Come out of the church gate and walk right along Church Street *On the right is Church Drive School.*

Turn left along Windy Bank *On the left side is a cottage with a turret! (Architects: Grayson & Ould 1905).*

At the end of Windy Bank is the Port Sunlight Museum (*admission charge*). It opened as a girls club in 1913 –architect J.J. Simpson. From the reception here you can get a good trail leaflet with more detail in it.

Cross the road into the central gardens to have a relaxing look at them. From the gardens, head towards The Lady Lever Art Gallery. Opened 1922 – architect Geoffrey Owen.

Go along the right side of the gallery and look to the right *at the interesting curved row of cottages on Lower Road. Architect C.H. Reilly 1905. The variety of cottages and building styles in the village was achieved by deliberately employing a lot of different architects' practices.*

Continue round the gallery to the other side to enter the art gallery. *Admission is free. This is a sumptuous collection of art brought intimately close to the viewer in this gallery.*

The gallery and its collection are Viscount Lever's memorial to his wife who died in 1913. By this stage W.H Lever had become Viscount Leverhulme, a plutocrat with a penchant for collecting objets d'art to fill his many houses. There are five period rooms around the central gallery.

In the cellar of the gallery is a tea room (*attractively done, selling light refreshments and even gourmet meals. There is table service*).

Leave the art gallery and go ahead to see the Lever Memorial (*a striking edifice – 1930 by Sir William Reid Dick to commemorate Viscount Leverhulme who died in 1925*).

As you face the art gallery go left along the continuation of Windy Bank and a little bit of Lower Road.

Cross Primrose Hill and go along Brook Street. On the right is the Railway Inn (*real ales*).

Cross the main road with Aldi on the other side.

Go left under the railway bridge and turn right. *This is Bebington Village (shops etc.)*

Go up the slope on your right to board a train back to Liverpool Lime Street.

Leave the underground station and turn left along the tunnel.

Ascend to the mainline station to catch the return train to Eccles.

CLASSIFICATION: SHORT EASY

ARCHITECTURE, HISTORY, MUSEUM, ART
GALLERY, CAFES, PUB, GARDEN CENTRE,
SHOPS.

RAIL FARE: category four

Maps: OS 1:50 000 sheet 108 Liverpool A-Z
Philip's Street Atlas Merseyside.