

Housing bubbles

A self guided walk around Port Sunlight on the Wirral



Explore a radical garden village with over 900 listed buildings
Find out how the settlement was built upon soap and water
See how it was carefully designed to look after its residents
Discover how this workers' village left a lasting legacy

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Housing bubbles

Explore the garden village of Port Sunlight on the Wirral

In the late-nineteenth century William Lever led the world's most famous soap company. Lever was a successful businessman but unlike most other entrepreneurs he believed in sharing his profits.

Lever was determined that his workers should have a decent place to live and opportunities to better themselves. To do this he employed leading architects and craftsmen to design and build a beautiful new village.



Colourful housing and planting, Port Sunlight
© Martin Haslett

The workers paid a fair rent for their homes. They had access to education, healthcare and social facilities. When they retired they received a pension. All this was groundbreaking for its time.



View towards the Lady Lever Art Gallery
© Martin Haslett

This walk explores Lever's village, Port Sunlight. Discover how Port Sunlight developed. See over 900 Grade II listed buildings. Find how the village layout was carefully-planned but also shaped by the natural landscape.

Also discover how Port Sunlight's character has been protected and how the village remains a very desirable place to live.

Route overview



Practical information

Location	Port Sunlight, Wirral, Northwest England
Getting there	<p>Train - Port Sunlight is on the Merseyrail Wirral Line. The nearest stations are Port Sunlight (opposite Stop 5 of the walk) and Bebington (near Stop 21). Wirral Line services run from Chester, Birkenhead, Ellesmere Port and Liverpool Lime Street.</p> <p>Bus - Local buses serve Port Sunlight via Liverpool, Bebington, New Brighton and Rock Ferry. Alight at New Chester Road or Bebington Road to reach the start of the walk.</p> <p>Car - From the Wirral access is via the M53 Junction 4. From Liverpool use the Birkenhead (Queensway) Tunnel. Free parking available outside Lady Lever Art Gallery.</p>
Start point	Lever House, Wood Street, CH62 4UY
Finish point	Port Sunlight Village time capsule mosaic, CH62 5DP
Distance	2 ½ miles
Directions from railway station to start	From Port Sunlight railway station turn right onto Greendale Road. Pass the stone fountain and continue towards the large stone building ahead with the clock – this is Lever House (Stop 1).
Level	Gentle – a mostly flat route in a largely residential area
Terrain	The route is entirely on pavements and paved footpaths. Though most roads in the village are quiet do watch for traffic especially when with children.

Suitable for

Families – plenty of sights for all ages. Childrens’ activity sheet available from Port Sunlight Museum.

Pushchairs / Wheelchairs – shallow steps at Dell Bridge and the end of the route, alternative directions provided

Dogs - must be kept on a lead in the village streets; not allowed inside the Museum

Refreshments

Tudor Rose Tea Rooms opposite the railway station on Greendale Road (next to Stop 5) serves hot and cold refreshments.

The Bridge Inn (Stop 10) restaurant serves hot meals all day.

Also recommended are the café at Lady Lever Art Gallery (Stop 15), the Tea Room at Port Sunlight Museum (Stop 17) and the Sun Lounge Café at Port Sunlight Garden Centre (Stop 23).

Toilets

Toilets (including disabled and baby changing facilities) in Port Sunlight Museum, the Lady Lever Art Gallery and Port Sunlight Garden Centre. Visitors can use facilities in Bridge Inn.

Places to visit

Port Sunlight Museum - open daily 10am-5pm. Comprehensive exhibitions on village history, interactive village trails, gift shop, tea room, childrens’ activities. Nominal entrance charges.
Tel: 0151 644 6466

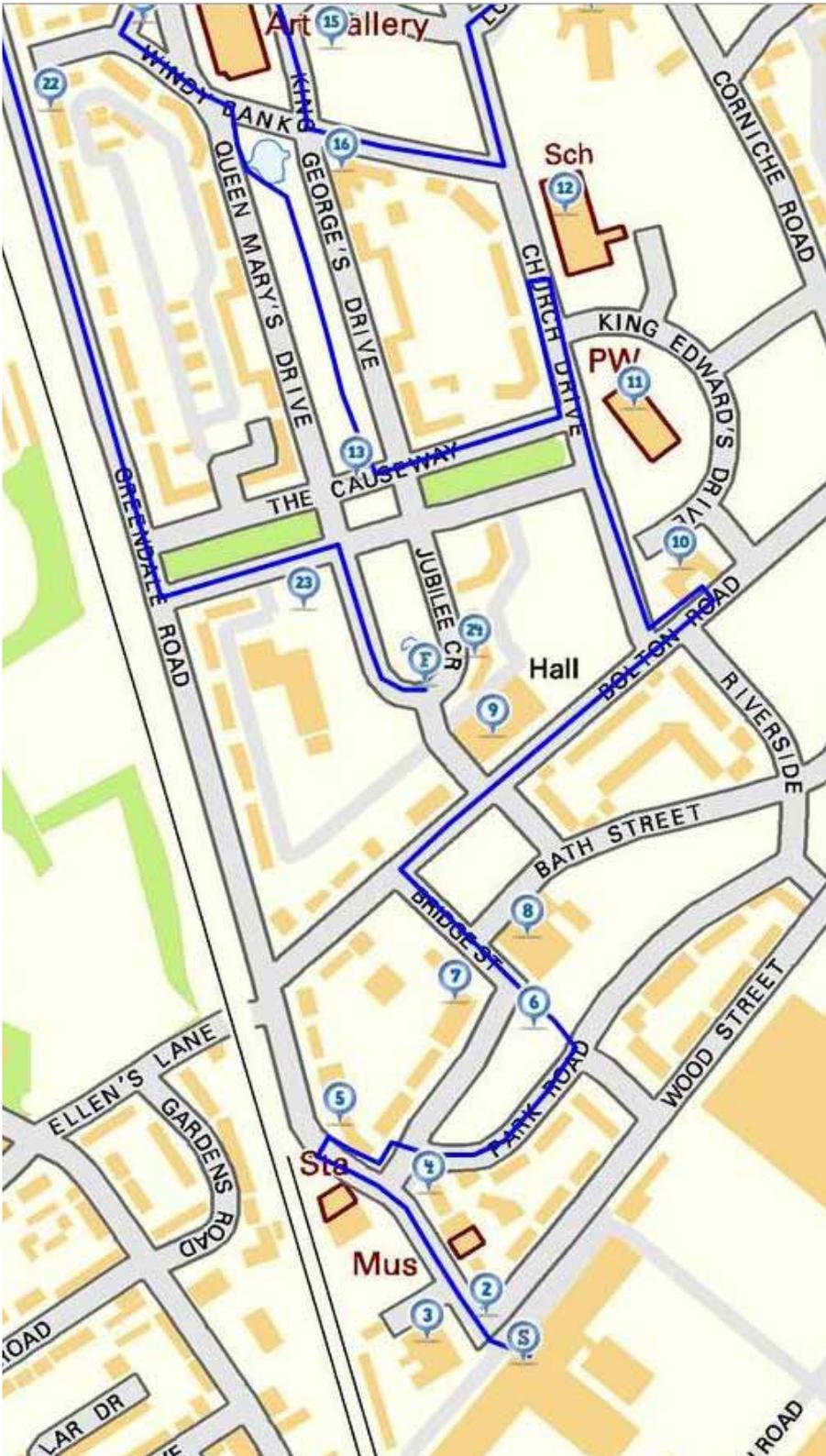
Lady Lever Art Gallery - open daily 10am-5pm, free entry. The collection includes Pre-Raphaelite painting, Chinese art, sculpture, ceramics and furniture. Tel: 0151 478 4136

Port Sunlight Garden Centre - open 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-4.30pm Sun. Tel: 0151 645 6244

Other information

Unilever have created a **free smartphone app** guide to the village called ‘Port Sunlight - walking with William Lever’. Available on iTunes and Android.

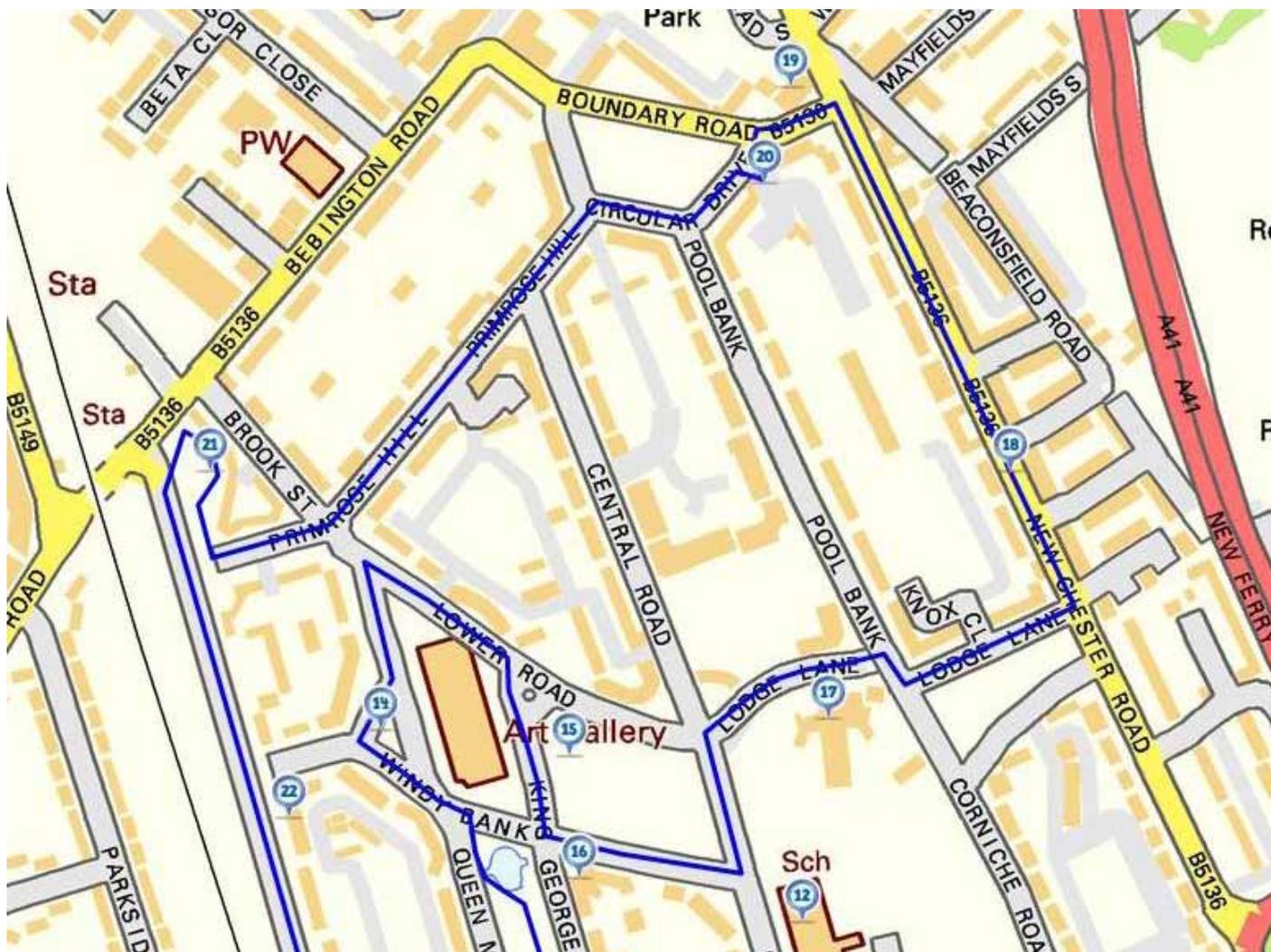
Start and end of the route



Stopping points

- 1.** Lever House
- 2.** Lever House
- 3.** Gladstone Theatre
- 4.** Former Girls' Hostel
- 5.** Houses opposite Port Sunlight railway station
- 6.** Dell Bridge
- 7.** Bridge Cottage
- 8.** The Lyceum and bowling green
- 9.** Hulme Hall
- 10.** The Bridge Inn
- 11.** Christ Church
- 12.** Church Drive School
- 13.** The Causeway
- ...
- 23.** Port Sunlight Garden Centre
- 24.** Jubilee Crescent
- F.** Port Sunlight Village time capsule mosaic

Middle of the route



Stopping points

14. Leverhulme Memorial and Lady Lever Art Gallery
15. Tree plantation opposite Lower Road
16. Port Sunlight Museum
17. Leverhulme Hotel
18. New Chester Road
19. Hesketh Hall
20. Rear of New Chester Road / Circular Drive / Pool Bank
21. Duke of York Cottages
22. Kenyon Peel Cottages

Directions

These directions are for use with the audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to Port Sunlight

Lever House, Wood Street

Directions 1

Remain outside Lever House and listen to Track 2.

2. A new enterprise

Lever House, Wood Street

Directions 2

With your back to Lever House cross over the road and bear left. Stop outside the Gladstone Theatre on the corner of Greendale Road. Listen to Track 3.

3. The Prime Minister visits

Gladstone Theatre, Greendale Road

Directions 3

Continue along Greendale Road for about 30 metres. Stop beside the stone fountain and look across the road at the black and white timber-framed bank and office building. Feel free to cross the road for a closer look. Listen to Track 4.

4. No men allowed!

Former Girls' Hostel, Greendale Road

Directions 4

Continue along the left hand side of Greendale Road. Pass Port Sunlight railway station and stop by the wooden bus shelter as the road curves to the left. Look down the road at the houses on the other side. Listen to Track 5.

5. Making an impression

Houses opposite Port Sunlight station, Greendale Road

Directions 5

Retrace your steps and cross Greendale Road at the traffic island outside the station. At the tea room turn right and use the second traffic island. Keep the park on your left and follow the road up to a stone footbridge. Stop halfway over the bridge. Listen here to Track 6.

6. Walking on water

Dell Bridge, Park Road

Directions 6

Continue across the bridge. Carefully cross the road and stop facing the cottage on the corner. Listen to Track 7.

To avoid the steps - continue along Park Road, following the path around The Dell as it curves to the left. The cottage will be on your right.

7. Building a community

Bridge Cottage, 23 Park Road

Directions 7

With Bridge Cottage behind you look across the road at the red brick building with a clock tower adjoining the bridge and the bowling green. Listen to Track 8.

8. Bowled over

The Lyceum and bowling green, Bridge Street

Directions 8

Cross the road towards the Lyceum and continue along Bridge Street. Pass the bowling green on your right and notice the site of the former shop on your left. At the end turn right into Bolton Road. Stop opposite the second building on the other side, Hulme Hall. Listen to Track 9.

9. An ostentatious building?

Hulme Hall, 23 Bolton Road

Directions 9

With the Hall on your left continue along Bolton Road for about 200 metres then stop when you reach the Bridge Inn. Listen here to Track 10.

10. A pub with no beer

The Bridge Inn, Bolton Road

Directions 10

Retrace your steps past the Bridge Inn car park then turn right into Church Drive. Continue until you reach the church. Go through the gate porch and stop in the church grounds. Listen to Track 11.

11. A personal gift

Christ Church, Church Drive

Directions 11

Continue along Church Drive and stop outside Church Drive School. Listen to Track 12.

12. An educated workforce

Church Drive School

Directions 12

Cross the road opposite the school and retrace your steps along Church Drive. Opposite Christ Church turn right into The Causeway. Continue towards the war memorial. Stop by the flag pole. Listen here to Track 13.

13. A studied change of plan

Port Sunlight War Memorial and The Causeway

Directions 13

Continue through the gardens towards the gallery. Pass the fountain and car park then bear left towards the island with a column and group of statues. Carefully cross the road to the island and face the statues and gallery. Listen to Track 14.

14. A visual memorial

Leverhulme Memorial and Lady Lever Art Gallery

Directions 14

Carefully cross the roads to the Lady Lever gallery entrance. Turn left and continue around the back of the gallery. Stop at the junction with a small roundabout and look at the group of trees across the road. Listen to Track 15.

15. Save the trees

Tree plantation opposite 29-33 Lower Road

Directions 15

Pass the roundabout then cross the road towards the group of trees. Continue up to the junction and stop opposite the entrance of the building on the corner, now the Port Sunlight Museum. Listen to Track 16.

16. Attracting visitors

Port Sunlight Museum, 23 King George's Drive

Directions 16

With the Museum on your right go along Windy Bank towards the school. At the end turn left into Church Drive. After a short distance turn right between the stone piers to go into Lodge Lane. Stop by the entrance of the large grey building on the right. Listen to Track 17.

17. Beneficial treatment

Leverhulme Hotel and Spa, Lodge Lane

Directions 17

Continue along Lodge Lane and follow the pavement through a gap in the hedge. Cross the road (Pool Bank), turn right and immediately left into the continuation of Lodge Lane. At the end of Lodge Lane turn left then continue up to the bus stop. Listen to Track 18.

18. Different standards

New Chester Road past the junction of Lodge Lane

Directions 18

Continue along New Chester Road. Stop at the first junction on the left, the corner of Boundary Road. Look at the large building opposite. Listen to Track 19.

19. Hall of learning

Hesketh Hall, corner of Boundary Road and New Chester Road

Directions 19

Turn left into Boundary Road and take the first left into Circular Drive. Almost immediately turn left into a small road that gives access to the rear of the houses. Listen to Track 20.

20. Growing space

Rear of New Chester Road / Circular Drive / Pool Bank

Directions 20

Return to Circular Drive, turn left and take second left into Primrose Hill. Note the great variety of house styles here. Pass the back of the Lady Lever gallery on the left and continue to the end of Primrose Hill which is lined with trees. At the very end of the road, take the footpath to the right. Stop by the Duke Of York Cottages sign on the houses set back from the road. Listen to Track 21.

21. Care for the elderly

Duke of York Cottages, corner of Bebington Road and Greendale Road

Directions 21

With the cottages behind you take the footpath to the main road (Greendale Road). Turn left and continue along Greendale Road. Pass the Leverhulme Memorial on the left then stop outside the large black and white timber-framed building on the left. Listen to Track 22.

22. A classy copy

Kenyon Peel Cottages, Greendale Road

Directions 22

Continue along Greendale Road. Take the second left into The Causeway so that a car park is on your right. Stop on the pavement by the car park at the sign for Port Sunlight Garden Centre. Listen to Track 23.

23. No swimming

Port Sunlight Garden Centre, The Causeway

Directions 23

With the car park on your right follow the railings and turn right into Queen Mary's Drive. Carefully cross the road and continue up to a stone arch on the left. Stop just past the arch and look at the houses ahead. Listen to Track 24.

24. A housing bubble

Southeast end of Jubilee Crescent

Directions 24

Follow Jubilee Crescent as it curves to the left. Pass the stone balustrade and turn left up the shallow group of steps. To avoid the steps cross the grass. Stop by the circular mosaic in the ground showing a ship. Listen to Track 25.

25. Lever's legacy

Port Sunlight Village time capsule mosaic

Directions 25

You may now like to explore the village further, perhaps visit the Lady Lever Art Gallery and Port Sunlight Museum. Alternatively, there are two optional extensions to the walk that you might like to try, See the directions below.

To return to Lever House or Port Sunlight railway station head towards the War Memorial and turn left into The Causeway. Continue to the end then turn left onto Greendale Road. At the end of Greendale Road the station is on the right hand side. Lever House is past the station at the junction with Wood Street.

Walk extension to Bromborough Pool

Bromborough Pool is another example of a planned development for factory workers. It is located about 1 mile southeast of Port Sunlight.

Directions (from Stop 18 of the Port Sunlight walk route)

Continue in the opposite direction along New Chester Road so the edge of Port Sunlight is on the right. Cross Bolton Road at the large roundabout and continue past the golf course.

The road becomes a dual carriageway over a bridge. Take care here of fast moving traffic. Use the pedestrian crossings outside the car showroom to cross over the road then turn left into Pool Lane. Where the main road bends to the right take the left fork lined with trees. Take care as there is no pavement on the right hand side. Take the first right and continue towards the red brick houses. This road is South View.

To reach the centre of Bromborough Pool turn left and pass the small recreation ground.

Walk extension to Trafalgar Drive

The Trafalgar Drive area is another example of a planned development for factory workers. It is located a short walk to the west of Port Sunlight.

Directions (from Port Sunlight railway station)

From the station turn left onto Greendale Road. Cross over Ellen's Lane then turn left to go under the railway bridge. Take the first left into Gardens Road then at the end turn left at the petrol station. Pass the Brown Cow pub then cross over the road to go into Trafalgar Drive.



Scenes from around Port Sunlight
© Martin Haslett / Rory Walsh

Further information

Christ Church, Port Sunlight

www.ccpsurc.info

Gladstone Theatre

www.gladstonetheatre.org.uk

Hulme Hall

www.hulmehall.com/index.html

Lady Lever Art Gallery

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ladylever

Port Sunlight Community Online

www.portsunlight.org.uk

Port Sunlight Garden Centre

www.portsunlightgardens.co.uk

Port Sunlight Museum and Garden Village

www.portsunlightvillage.com

Tudor Rose Tea Room

www.tudorrosetearooms.co.uk

The Victorian Web – Port Sunlight

<http://victorianweb.org/art/architecture/portsunlight/1.html>

Other model villages:

Saltaire Village (West Yorkshire)

www.saltairvillage.info

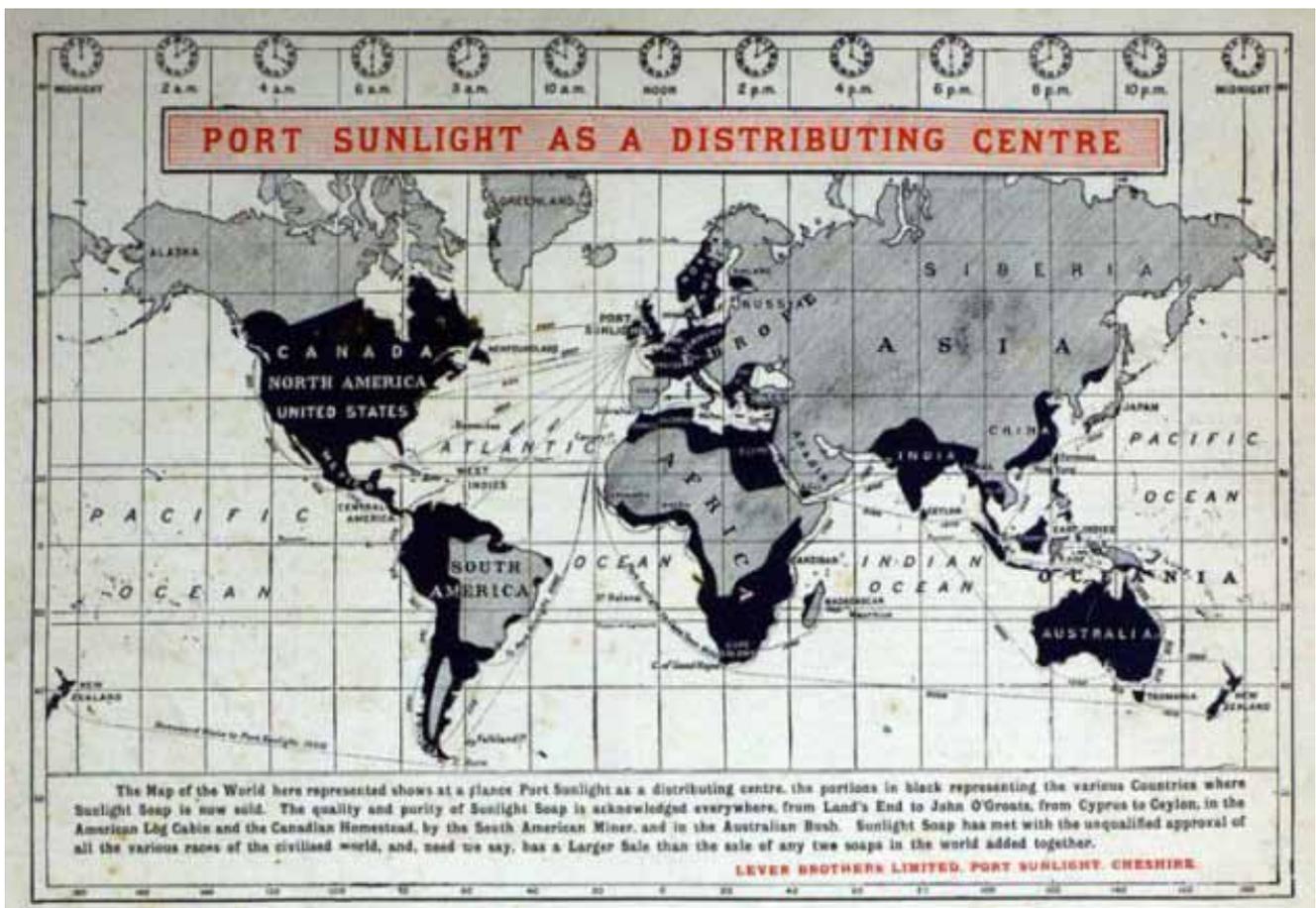
New Lanark (Lanarkshire, Scotland)

www.robert-owen.com

Credits

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Lever Brothers poster (1898) - the countries in black show where Port Sunlight soap was exported worldwide
Reproduced courtesy of Grace's Guide - www.GracesGuide.co.uk

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