

HALTON **HIGHLIGHTS** Issue 3



TRAILS

TANTALISING THE ORIGINAL A LOVE LETTER INFLUENCERS

TO HALTON





STEP INTO HERITAGE

WELCOME

I am delighted to introduce Issue 3 of Halton Highlights; this edition features glimpses into Halton's rich history and heritage and helps to preserve the area's cultural legacy.

Officially formed on 1st April 1974, the Borough of Halton was named after the ancient Barony of Halton which had owned land on both sides of the River Mersey, uniting the two towns Widnes and Runcorn, 10 miles upstream from Liverpool.

And whilst the Borough itself is relatively young, its towns, villages and open spaces have a rich and surprising heritage dating back to the Bronze Age. The Romans also had a presence in Halton, with a fort established on Castle Rock by Aethelflaed in 915 AD. The fort was strategically located on a hill overlooking the River Mersey. Fast forwarding to the 19th Century and Widnes was regarded as the birthplace of the chemical industry and its development spread to Runcorn where the towns were renowned for soapmaking and inland ports transporting goods across the country.

Our landscapes of waterways, pathways and built environments that have played a pivotal role in our industrial past provide surprising, unforgettable and Instagrammable moments across several important heritage sites, including Halton Castle, the Runcorn Railway Bridge, and Norton Priory Museum and Gardens. Halton is a place where you can take a selfie with the Childe of Hale giant, a legendary figure in English folklore, embark on a journey of scientific exploration at the Catalyst, immerse yourself in the world of literary greats such as Alice in Wonderland at the Lewis Carroll Centre and not forgetting musical masterpieces including one of the most legendary concerts ever held in the UK, the iconic Stone Roses gig at Spike Island.

Whether you're a resident or visitor, simply follow one or more of our trails to soak up the engrossing stories of our past that make the culture of our today.

Rob Sanderson-Thomas

Chief Executive Officer Norton Priory Museum and Gardens Chair of Marketing Halton and Halton Heritage Partnership

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Images kindly supplied Runcorn & District Historical Society, Ken Pye & The Discover Liverpool Library and Melanie Dodd. To the best of our knowledge all historical information is correct at the time of publishing.



BRIDGES, BOBBIES, BOATS AND A BUSTLING TOWN

RUNCORN OLD TOWN

Located on the banks of the Mersey you can witness the views and structures of Halton's iconic bridges with the contrast of ancient and modern. Head into the old town and meander along the streets lined with interesting architecture, taking in the sights and sounds.

Navigate along the Bridgewater Canal Towpath, onto historic pathways down along the Promenade and through the heart of Runcorn. You'll be riveted by the cargo of stories this old inland port Town has. You can't come to Runcorn without a visit to the Borough's cutting edge

cultural hotspot, The Brindley Theatre; it's the town's star of the show, located on the site of a former soap works. Once you wipe away what's on the surface, you'll find there's so much more to explore.

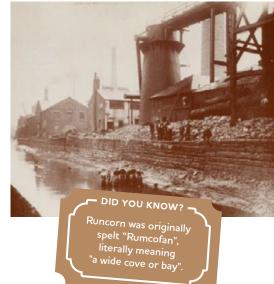
THE BRINDLEY

This key cultural asset is currently undergoing redevelopment which will transform the already award-winning theatre with a refreshed design, making it more visible and accessible, taking advantage of a new outdoor public realm and vistas connecting to the town.

Previously the Brindley's sought after location on the Bridgewater Canal has been the site of some of the town's pioneering industries including Soaperies and Tanneries.

You can get a real sense of the area and the landmarks, with great views of the Mersey and town from the existing theatre terrace or from the top of the pedestrian footbridge over the canal. Once you're ready to discover more take the Bridgewater Canal tow path, to continue your journey and delve deeper into the Old Town's heritage.







The Brindley Theatre stands on the site which once was Hazlehurst's soapery, which was opened in 1816 by Thomas Hazlehurst.

1837

A massive 102 million lbs of soap was made in the country, 33 million lbs coming from London. The next largest amount was 9 million lbs, from only two Runcorn soaperies, Hazlehurst's and their rivals the Johnson Brothers.



The Brindley Theatre stands on the site which once was Hazlehurst's.

1914

The soapery closed this year, and was quickly converted into a tannery, to help with the production of leather, needed for WW1.



One of the main tanneries, Camden, closed during this year. Based on Runcorn High Street, located where St. Paul's Gardens are now.

HALTON HERITAGE
RUNCORN OLD TOWN



DELPH BRIDGE

Built following the completion of the famous and first truly man-made Bridgewater Canal in 1776, this 65km waterway connected Runcorn to Manchester and Leigh.

Head for the towpath along the canal and you can imagine the scenes of busy steam packets transporting passengers and goods bound for Manchester departing from Runcorn Top Locks. Close by on Canal Street stands the Navigation Inn which would have previously served as accommodation for travellers and canal

workers with its then three rooms and eight stalls for horses. The aptly named Bridge Street close to the towpath takes you on a gentle footpath down to the town. Historic buildings line the street, including the Egerton Arms which also had three bedrooms with room for ten horses and the imposing red brick Old Market Hall, erected in 1856.

THE OLD POLICE STATION

Located on land given by the Bridgewater Trustees, for a nominal annual rent of five shillings, it was built by William Rigby for £450, mainly from local sandstone, and completed in 1831.

Within the building there was a large court room for petty sessions and public business, and living accommodation for the constable. In 1884, the town's administration moved to Waterloo House, Waterloo Road, which then became the Town Hall. Cheshire Constabulary then took over the whole of the building, becoming the town's very own Police Station

This historic building still contains markings of its history as a police station, and picture of what it looked like in 1800.



RUNCORN SHIP YARDS AND PROMENADE

At the promenade you'll be rewarded with the fantastic views of the historic Manchester Ship Canal, Mersey Estuary and the town of Widnes which lies on the opposite side of the Estuary.

Promenade plaques marking the history of Runcorn Ferry are visible. Take a seat on the benches and you can also see the two iconic Bridges (Mersey Gateway Bridge and Silver Jubilee Bridge) and the remains of the four shipyards of Mersey Street, Mill Street, Belvedere and Castle Rock, which made Runcorn famous for ship building.

Mersey Street yard was opened around 1800. When Dennis Brundrit took over around 1820, shipbuilding in the yard began in earnest. He and his sons expanded the business to become a major employer, producing vessels of the highest quality. The yard closed between 1888 and 1890, with the coming of the Manchester Ship Canal, which sadly killed off shipbuilding in Runcorn.

Mill Street Yard started as a timber yard and smithy around the early 1820s, and by 1836 ships were being built there. Around the 1870s, Philip Speakman sold the yard, and the Brundrit's absorbed it into their Mersey Street yard.

Belvedere Yard was opened between 1838 and 1840, by Samuel Mason, though like most of the yards, they changed owners quite often. One of the last vessels built at the yard, was the 'Traffic', a steam tender built by Philip Speakman in 1872.

Castle Rock Yard existed from around 1810. Like the other yards, It ceased shipbuilding due to the introduction of the Manchester Ship Canal. However, Richard Abel took over the yard, and Mersey Flats (barges) were still being built. Repairs to vessels were also undertaken until 1953, when the last Flat, the 'Ruth Bate' was launched, and the building of the Silver Jubilee bridge forced the closure of the yard.





ALL SAINTS CHURCH

One of Halton's "Hidden Gems" is the beautiful and distinctive All Saints Church, which overlooks the Mersey waterfront.

As you walk along the perimeter wall of the church, you'll see the old tomb stones in the grounds of the churchyard which were laid flat to form paths in 1963, after each stone had been photographed and recorded. The oldest stone dates to 1626, with the date still legible.

There has been a place of worship, on or near this spot, since 915, when Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians and eldest daughter of King Alfred the Great, built her fortification on the bank of the river at its narrowest point to prevent attacks from the invading Viking forces. There was also an Augustinian Priory around the area, built in 1115, by William FitzNigel, 2nd Baron of Halton.

It was later moved to Norton in 1134, by William FitzWilliam, 3rd Baron. About 1240 an ancient parish church was built, it was originally the church of St Bertelin, at an unknown date it became St Bartholomew's and then in the 19th century the new church became All Saints. The church was demolished in 1846, due to it being unstable and dangerous. A new church was built on the same spot and opened in January 1849.

DID YOU KNOW?

The church clock was made by Runcorn clockmaker Jonathon Handley, who also made the clock on the original Town Hall.



FRAILER'S GUITAR SHOP

Frailer's hits a chord with musicians the world over. This prestigious and high-quality guitar shop has left an indelible mark on music and culture, while being a staple of Runcorn's heritage and making a contribution to the wider area and nation.

DID YOU KNOW? -

Many famous musicians have stopped by to shop at Frailer's. Rory Gallagher, Arctic Monkeys, Noddy Holder, Pete Doherty and many more! A must-visit for any music fan. Once you step inside you'll be hit by the beautiful guitars that swoop down from the ceiling tempting prospective customers to try them out and strum along as you chat to the shop owner Frank, listening to his stories will be music to your ears.



Start point: Car Park at The Brindley, High Street, Runcorn, WA7 1BG

1 THE BRINDLEY

Runcorn's cultural hub is the perfect start for the Old Town walk. Take the Bridgewater Canal tow path eastbound as it curves round to the next point of Delph Bridge.

DELPH BRIDGE

Follow the towpath along the canal, then join Bridge Street as it takes you on a gentle footpath down towards the town

THE OLD POLICE STATION

As you continue along Bridge Street you'll come to the Old Police Station, built by William Rigby for £450, mainly from local sandstone it was completed in 1831.

4 RUNCORN SHIP YARDS & PROMENADE

Turning right onto
Mersey Road you'll hit
the promenade and
be rewarded with the
fantastic views of Mersey
Estuary and the remnants
of the Shipyards.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH

as you head up Waterloo Road turning left at Church Street, is one of Halton's "Hidden Gems", the

Opposite the promenade

"Hidden Gems", the beautiful All Saints Church, overlooking the waterfront.

6 FRAILER'S GUITAR SHOP

Continue along Church Street to the famous Frailer's Guitar Shop, a family-ran business for over 50 years. Head back through the bustling town to The Brindley to finish.

HALTON HERITAGE RUNCORN OLD TOWN



THATCHED HAMLET, **FAMOUS GIANT AND 45FT LIGHTHOUSE**

HALE

Hale's countrified charm punches way above its weight compared to the popular hamlets of the Cotswolds and Yorkshire Dales.

It has it all, even a lighthouse at Hale Point. You can stroll from the village along edges of farmland and skirting fields of barley to the shores of the Mersey to Hale Head. Beyond the estuary stand the rolling hills of Cheshire's Frodsham and Helsby. As you walk the route there's so much stock to fill your social media feeds, including

the picture postcards views of the Lighthouse, the Village Cottages, and the impressive statue.



HALE HALL

Tucked away in the woodland of Hale Park you'll discover the heritage spot and former site of Hale Hall, which was originally an extremely elaborate building, featuring a home farm, kitchen gardens, glasshouses and an icehouse.

Some parts of Hale Park became farmland and modification through the years. Unfortunately a great fire destroyed the remaining south front of the Hall. The Hall fell into ruin and was eventually demolished. Today, you can still explore the site of the Hall as its stonework is still visible while walking among the woodlands. From the Hall head out of the park down Church End and you'll discover all the fascinating history Hale has to offer.



The detached, Grade II listed, thatched cottage opposite the Statue, dates back to the 15th century and was the birthplace and home of John Middleton. Because of his size, it's said that he sleet with his fact out of the that he slept with his feet out of the window



CHILDE OF HALE

Stroll past the picturesque, thatched cottages and on the opposite side of the road you won't miss the larger-than-life bronze statue of the giant, John Middleton, 'Childe Of Hale'.

Dwarfing the tiny cottages, born in 1578 Middleton was an agricultural worker famed for his incredible height and strength whose stature was legendary. Standing at a height of 9ft 3in (2.82m) tall before his 20th birthday, when King James I learnt about the Childe of Hale's great

height, he invited him to his court. where John Middleton challenged the King's wrestler in the King's court and won!

DID YOU KNOW?

The name Hale is thought to derive from an Anglo-Saxon word (halh) meaning a corner or angle of land





MANOR HOUSE

The village's imposing Grade II listed Manor House, was built originally as the parsonage just across the road from St Mary's Church. Subsequently it served as the residence of successive squires, the last being the late Mr Peter Fleetwood Hesketh.

The Rev. William Langford added the impressive west face to the house in the 18th century. His coat of arms and monogram sit carved in stone over the entrance. This elegant Queen Anne building has an intricate facade complete with blank windows. One curious feature, though, is the facade's lack of depth, although successive residents have attempted to compensate for it by adding on at the rear of the house.



HALE LIGHTHOUSE

Leaving the village, continue your journey down Church Road and you'll be hit by the resplendent whitewashed Lighthouse standing 45ft tall and the open views of the River Mersey.

The original lighthouse was a short square tower, erected in 1838. Its purpose was to stand as a beacon of safety lighting the way for vessels plying the river to avoid accident.

The current lighthouse that you can see today was built in 1901 replacing the original. It was a target for Luftwaffe bombers during the Second World War. Hale Head was the southernmost point of the traditional county of Lancashire in the days when the Mersey formed the border with Cheshire

You'll see the sweeping red rocks that meet the mudflats and sparkling waters of the Mersey Estuary, with views of Frodsham and Helsby on the horizon

ST MARY'S CHURCH

The first church to be built in Hale was built by Johannes de Hibernia (John of Ireland) in 1081. There has been an unbroken history of a place of worship ever since.

The church is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade II listed building, the oldest part of the existing building is the sandstone tower which dates back to the 14th century. Its square churchyard contains the graves of two of Hale's most notable residents: the Childe of Hale and John Ireland (dating from 1462).



















DUCK DECOY

The area surrounding the duck decoy is a protected nature reserve, covering over 3,000 hectares. This part of the manor of Hale was drained in the medieval period, with the idea of increasing the amount of land suitable to plough.

The trade-off was a reduction in land that wetland wildfowl could use. To counter this, the duck decoy was built. Designed to look like the many other coverts that dotted the landscape, the lack of shelter for water birds would make it an attractive spot. A pond was dug in the centre to complete the picture.

The distinctive star shape of the Decoy comes from the five pipes which allowed the game keeper to approach the pond from whichever direction he needed to keep downwind of the fowl. The pipes were lined with wicker arches, joined together by nets. With the help of his dog, and strategically placed screens, the keeper would scare the birds down the pipes, the netting decreasing in width. At the pipes' tip, the netting would be small enough to make catching the birds easy. A restored gamekeep's hut is also on-site.

The area itself is officially a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a Site of Special Scientific Interest, built in the 17th century. The exact construction date of the Hale Duck Decoy is not known, with early records only proving that it was prior to 1754 - when it underwent improvement and repair.

Access is restricted. Friends of pickering pasture occasionally organise public visits.





Start point: Hale Park Car Park L24 4EA (entrance opposite Hale Post Office)

1 HALE HALL

Start at the Hall and continue out of the Hale Park car park, turning right down Church End. You'll see the rows of picturesque, thatched cottages come into view.

CHILDEOF HALE

Located on Parsonage Green opposite the cottages is the statue of Hale's most celebrated and tallest resident, John Middleton.

MANOR HOUSE

Just behind the Statue you'll see the impressive Manor House. Passing by it you'll see the curious feature of the facade's lack of depth.

4 ST MARY'S CHURCH

On Church Road stay on the same side of the Manor House and only a couple of minutes away you'll arrive at the Church.

5 HALE • LIGHTHOUSE

Continue your walk and half a mile along Church Road you'll come to Lighthouse Road, with the views of the whitewashed lighthouse beyond, which can be accessed through the gate and along the track.

DUCK DECOY

If you're able and the tide is out walk along the coast or take the Small Ends path around the lighthouse. Carry on through the open fields to Ram's Brook and follow the brook northwards. You'll see the trees that form the wooded perimeter of the Decoy then head back along Town Lane to the Village centre.



TREE LINED WALKWAYS, A TOWER AND MINATURE TRAIN

RUNCORN TOWN PARK

The largest park in the Borough sits at the heart of the New Town and is an expansive oasis for locals, visitors and wildlife, recently it has been made even more accessible, with picnic spots, plenty of attractions, plus heaps of historic and modern landmarks.

Make your way up through the park to the iconic and imposing Water Tower, lose yourself in the meadows and woodland which are alive with birds. Listen to the woodpeckers and look out for even more wildlife in the ponds along the way. If want to let off steam, swing and slide head for one of the multiple play areas or take a journey on the enchanting Miniature Railway.



HALTON MINIATURE RAILWAY

Opened in 1979, the railway is run entirely by volunteers. (Members of the Halton Miniature Railway Society Limited.)

The 10-minute journey takes you through parts of Town Park and woodland. The rail track is 7 1/4" gauge and almost a mile in length. There's no charge to ride the train but donations are always welcome. Look out for Mousetrap Hall Station where you can board the train, take a look at the rolling stock ranging from petrol hydraulic locomotives and battery electric trains.

Trains run 1pm until 4pm on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, March until October.



You can ski in the park at Runcorn Ski Centre -Open daily 11am -7pm







RUNCORN TOWN PARK

Due to the Park's status as a central part of the Runcorn New Town development, there is a continued link between the creation of the park and the formation of Halton as a whole, with the Borough celebrating its 50th year in 2024.

The creation of Town Park preserved nearly 157 hectares of existing woodlands and undulating grassland. As you explore the park you'll come across a 'Mini Wembley' an area dedicated for recreational and cultural activities, climbing rocks, sculptured seating and street furniture, picnic and play areas, along with accessible pathways that flow around the edge of the park and through the ancient woodland.



NORTON WATER TOWER

Best viewed from within Town Park, Norton Water Tower cuts a distinctive and imperious figure as it rises above the trees. The Water Tower is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade II listed building. The red sandstone building is an imposing 99 feet high and has a diameter of 82 feet, built in the shape of a cylinder.

The huge sandstone tower is visible as you cross the Mersey from Widnes and for a closer look you can stand in awe gazing upwards along the long grass vista from the park. It was built between 1888 and 1892 on the water pipeline between Lake Vyrnwy in North Wales and Liverpool to act as a balancing reservoir in the process of supplying water to Runcorn and Liverpool. Water is carried to Liverpool through a tunnel 10 feet (3 m) wide under the River Mersey. It's also the largest UK tromboned pressure relief device currently in operation, designed by George F. Deacon, the Chief Engineer of the Liverpool Corporation Waterworks Department.

ST BERTELINE'S WOOD

The wood was added as an extension to Windmill Hill Wood in 1997 when the Commission for the New Towns gifted the land to the Woodland Trust. Windmill Hill was once part of the estate attached to the Augustinian monastery of Norton Priory.

It's an oasis of mixed woodland and a haven for a varied range of wildlife, with extensive network of gravel surfaced and grass footpaths, most of which are suitable for buggies and wheelchairs, although they can become muddy in winter. The woodland is alive with birds, including owls and woodpeckers and hosts a wide range of tree and plant species, while the ponds are home to frogs, toads and newts.

- PIT STOP —

If you want to press on further, lying to







Start point: Town Park Car Park, Stockham Ln, Palace Fields Ave, WA7 6PT

HALTONMINIATURERAILWAY

Pick up steam and start your walk from the Miniature Railway heading past the Town Park Playground into the Park.

2 RUNCORNTOWN PARK

You'll find yourself on the park pathways, passing the climbing rocks, picnic ground, then recreational area on your left. Continue north and you'll soon see a path open up on your right.

• NORTON 3 WATER TOWER

Walk up the tree lined path and you'll see imposing Norton Water Tower rising above the trees at the end of another grassy pathway. This is the closest view you'll have of the Tower as you double back to continue your walk.

ST BERTELINE'S WOOD

Carry on northwards along the park path and then you'll hit Norton Lane where you'll turn left to explore the wooded oasis of St Berteline's Wood. From the wood travel south back through the park and pick up Stockham Lane, following the lane you'll be back at the car park and your finish point.



What was the inspiration behind the project?

We wanted to celebrate Halton's 50th anniversary by bringing to life some of the incredible stories from the community. After some creative/artistic research on what may work well for this project, we took inspiration from one of the most successful shows in the West End at the moment – 'Standing at the Skys Edge'. This musical follows the history of a landmark housing estate in Sheffield and charts the hopes and dreams of three generations over 6 decades, navigating the themes of love, loss and survival.

What can we expect from the performance?

Love Letter to Halton will explore the power of community and what it is we call home, documenting personal stories of hopes, dreams, poverty, immigration, migration, decline and changes in industry and most of all the people who have lived here, which will all be curated into a unique performance piece. Halton has always had such a huge connection with its community, and it is these stories that are deep rooted in the history and heritage and inspire Halton's residents today.

I am extremely honoured and proud to be a Chair for Halton Heritage Partnership as it plays a vital role in keeping the love for Halton's heritage alive.

Bringing together different groups, such as history groups, local museums and many more, who all care passionately about local heritage.

How will the performance be brought to life?

It is born of, and created for, the people of Halton. using stories gathered from the local community. Kate Allerston and Chris Bastock (A Place for Us CIC) curated a script which will be delivered by the professional storyteller Gav Cross; this will be a Love Letter for Halton's relationship with its residents.

Tell us how you have uncovered the stories?

The community have been asked to uncover things like: What is the story of the house/flat you live in who might have lived there 50 years ago? Who lives there now? Any connections? How has the neighbourhood has changed in 50 years? Any unusual items found from houses/areas - stories around these? Any unsolved/strange mysteries from the place you live (50 years or more old)? Community

stories from where you live? Funny anecdotes from the community from the past 5 decades?

Where can people see it?

The performance will take place at Norton Priory, in September followed by a week-long tour ground some of Halton's community venues.

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION

BY NORTON PRIORY MUSEUM TRUST

To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Halton Borough, a very special performance will take place at Norton Priory on 6th September at 4:00pm. This performance, by renowned storyteller Gay Cross. will explore what has helped build Halton's identity over the past 50 years. This is a FREE event, but book your space on our website to avoid missing out!

Norton Priory Museum & Gardens, Tudor Rd, Manor Park, Runcorn, WA7 1SX

Friday 6th Sept 16:00-18:00 • nortonpriory.org

Performance • Performance Arts • Museum/Gallery/Library/Archive









Full wheelchair acc	cess 🕓 Accessible	toilets	Assistance	ce dogs welcome	Changing Places toilet
Roadside parking	Hearing loop	♠ Push	chair friendly	Sign Langua	ge 🕔 Disabled Parking

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

BY ST MARY'S CHURCH **WIDNES**

Come along to St Mary's in West Bank to explore the past, present and future of this historic Grade II* listed church and the heritage of its local community. Follow our family friendly trail and join Hazlehurst Studios for a 'Snap & Social' session.

St Mary's Church, St Mary's Road, West Bank, Widnes, WA8 ODP

Sat 7th Sept 10:00-16:00 For more info visit facebook.com/stmaryswb

Exhibition • Local History • Historic Building/Park/Garden







CIRCULAR HERITAGE WALK - NORTON PRIORY TO HALTON CASTLE

BY INDEPENDENT

(Member of u3a and delegate to Heritage Partnership)

A two hour walk (approx four miles) from Norton Priory to Halton Castle. The walk will focus on the architecture of Runcorn New Town

and Halton Village - including the Bridgewater Canal and Halton Castle.

Norton Priory Museum & Gardens Car Park, Tudor Rd, Manor Park, Runcorn, WA7 1SX

Sun 8th Sept at 11:00

To book your place, please email bissenden146@btinternet.com

(Max 20 people)

Walk/tour • Local History • Historic Building/Park/Gardens







*Partial wheelchair access or partial access in certain areas.

LIVE TALKS AND PICTURE DISPLAYS

BY DARESBURY DISTRICT **HERITAGE GROUP**

Talk by various speakers on theme in Lewis Carroll Centre.

Lewis Carroll Centre, Daresbury, Warrington WA4 4AE

Weds 11th Sept 19:00 • ddhg.org.uk

Talk • Local History • Education





HAZLEHURST STUDIOS OPEN DAY

BY HAZLEHURST STUDIOS

Visit our renovated Grade II listed building at 71 High Street and the adjoining original premises at 73a High Street. See our latest exhibition, meet resident artists, join workshops, and purchase artwork.

71 High Street, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1AH

Thurs 12th Sept 13:00-20:00

It is an open door event, but we would encourage to book a free ticket via our website hazlehurststudios.co.uk/events Also check out our other FREE events including The Big Halton Heritage Nature Watch!

Site opening • Visual Arts • Historic **Building**





OPEN EVENING & "NETWORKS" DISPLAY

BY RUNCORN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Discover our earliest appearance on the map in Saxon times, the first roads and how they brought new

people to our town. See how our River Mersey location was key to keeping the Vikings out of Mercia, and how important our waterways were to the start of the Industrial Revolution, opening access and trade to the rest of the world.

Wicksten Drive Christian Centre. Runcorn, WA7 5UX

Friday 13th September 19:00

For more info visit: facebook.com/ RuncornDistrictHistoricalSociety

Exhibition • Local History • Church Hall









ST LUKE'S **HERITAGE DAY**

BY ST LUKE'S PARISH CHURCH

Tours of the ancient church, graveyard and historic Village of Farnworth, Light refreshments available.

St Luke's Parish Church, Farnworth Street, Widnes, WA8 9HU

Sat 14th Sept 10:00-16:00

st-luke.co.uk

Walk/Tour • Local History • Faith









DISPLAY AT HATTON SHOW

BY DARESBURY DISTRICT **HERITAGE GROUP**

The Hatton and District Show Society was founded in the 1890s and holds an annual event.

An exhibition of home and garden skills, craftsmanship showcasing the very best of rural traditions. The Hatton Show boasts sections

including farm, domestic, junior, horticulture, handicraft and equestrian events. There are a wide range of horticultural classes to compete in and there are fifteen classes for juniors. Field opposite Daresbury Church, Daresbury, WA4 4AE

Sat 14th Sept 13:00-16:00

hattonshow.wordpress.com

Exhibition • Local History • Educational





HERITAGE OPEN DAY EVENTS

BY CATALYST

Come and take part in a guided walk, explore the routes, networks and connections across the local area and see some fascinating artefacts, reminders of the once busy industrial site. Visit our archive collection where you can find rarely seen artefacts. Discover the connections between the local industry, the soap works and the families in our local community.

Explore the Interactive galleries, learn about the history of the local area or marvel at the 360 degree views from our glass-walled rooftop Observatory Gallery where we'll be hosting Runcorn and Widnes Historical Societies and representatives from the Daniel Adamson Steamship!

Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Museum, Mersev Road, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 ODF

Sat 14th September 10:00-17:00 Sun 15th September 10:00-17:00

catalyst.org.uk

Site Opening • Local History • Museum/Gallery/Library/ Archive

















YEARS OF HALTON



By completing all of our Quirky Things to see and do!

To find out more pick up a leaflet, scan the QR code or go to:

visithalton.co.uk









SCIENCE, INDUSTRY, STONE ROSES AND PROMENADE STROLLS

WEST BANK

As you stand here today it's hard to imagine how West Bank, Spike Island and the Sankey Canal all played a pivotal role in the Industrial Revolution. The area's location and waterways made it the perfect place to pioneer copper, soap, and chemicals production.

As you look out over the River Mersey, you'll see the ultra-modern Gateway Bridge cutting across the water and through the horizon. Along the riverbank

you'll discover hints of Halton's past that punctuate West Bank and Victoria promenade.





CATALYST SCIENCE **DISCOVERY CENTRE AND MUSEUM**

A great place to start and learn about the history of the area is at Catalyst, which is partially housed in the Tower Building, one of the only remaining buildings from the chemical industry era.

Once inside you can explore the award-winning galleries, visit the stunning interactive theatre, experience fun activities in the lab or travel 30m above the river Mersey in the external glass lift to the glass walled observatory gallery, you'll be rewarded with spectacular 360-degree views across the Northwest and Wales! The museum archive holds a wide collection of material from the local chemical industry including Towers, ICI, Brunner Mond and McKechnie. You can also visit the gift shop and Elements Cafe, the perfect place to enjoy a tasty snack whilst admiring the riverside views, before you see more.

VIEWPOINT **OUTSIDE CATALYST**

From the elevated viewpoint by the Catalyst entrance, you get a beautiful vantage point of West Bank & Spike Island.

Take note of how much greenery is in the area, and contrast this with how the space looked from 1847-1970s when the land was covered in large grey sheds, emitted black smoke from chimneys due to the burning of coal, and was buried beneath a noxious layer of gases that killed vegetation in the area.







SANKEY CANAL

Heading down from the Catalyst you'll come to The Sankey Canal constructed in 1757, it was the very first industrial era canal in Britain.

The 18th century canal was originally created to transport coal from the numerous mines in St Helens and surrounding areas down to the River Mersey, shipping them to Liverpool, the Canal initially ended near Warrington, before being extended to West Bank in 1833. Nowadays, boats on the canal are solely for pleasure purposes, and the canal is a peaceful home for swans and geese. However, this

waterway still has a rich history of much cargo being moved through the Sankey Canal Locks, where you can cross to access Spike Island.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can join the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) from the canal locks. The Trail runs a total of 346km from Southport to the North Sea Coast. From here the Trail runs along the riverside to Pickering's Pasture to the west and along the canal to Fiddler's Ferry going east

SPIKE ISLAND

This artificial island formed when the Sankey Canal was extended cutting it adrift from Widnes in 1833. The land remained relatively untouched until in 1847, when the chemist and industrialist. John Hutchinson visited the area and observed the waterway links to Liverpool and Manchester on the Mersey. He decided it was the ideal place for a Leblanc chemical manufacturing factory.

Spike Island would become effectively the birthplace of the British chemical industry. By the late 19th century, the huge factories established by Hutchinson and Gossage would completely dominate the area. Thousands of workers poured into Widnes, with many





DID YOU KNOW?

Back in 1990 local band, The Stone Roses performed their legendary Spike Island gig in front of 28,000 fans. The show would enter indie folklore, as a milestone night in British music history and be immortalised in a 2013 film

railway lines criss-crossing the island. Cargo boats would constantly traverse the Sankey Canal, carrying their cargo to the port of the River Mersey and from there to the world beyond. During World War II, the island was used as a storage depot for munitions and was heavily bombed by the Germans. After the war, the island was used as a landfill site, in the seventies it contained

VICTORIA PROMENADE

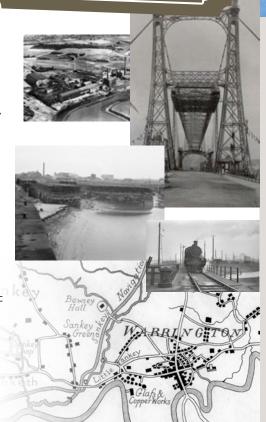
From Spike Island just follow the river, you'll reach the Victorian Promenade, popular with the Victorians before the building of the transporter bridge, when the River Mersey offered fresh air with uninterrupted views of the Cheshire countryside.

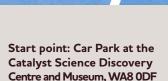
The area had been regarded as a holiday resort, previously known as Wood-end 150 years earlier. The promenade itself is dotted with historic architecture including the local cottage hospital for the Welsh community who lived in West Bank and the square tower of St Mary's Church rises above the houses. Now the riverside trail takes you past Community Gardens, play area and Victoria Gardens, with views of Runcorn on the south side of river and straight in front of you you'll see the Iconic Silver Jubilee Bridge. At the end of the Promenade, you'll come to other scenic and historic spots, including Transporter Bridge Powerhouse, the Mersey Inn and remnants of the ferry service can be seen at the bottom of the slope.

abandoned chemical factories, rail lines, disused canal and industrial dockage, and extensive chemical pollution. In modern years, following much hard work particularly between 1975-1982, the land has been reclaimed and is now a thriving nature reserve and a welcome oasis in the middle of the bustling town of Widnes. You can follow the pathways and trails, hearing the distant echoes of the Stone Roses and smelling the scents of the Island's industrial past.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Transporter Bridge was opened in 1905 and for the first time ever, it enabled vehicles to travel between Widnes and Runcorn without having to make the 21km journey via Warrington





1 CATALYST

Changing places facility available within Catalyst

(Open 11am-3pm

closed Mondays)

Start at the Catalyst, explore the Museum and move onto to the vantage point to soak up the vistas just outside the entrance.

2 VIEWPOINT . OUTSIDE . CATALYST

From this point you'll be able to see most of your walk, across the open parkland in front of the Catalyst you'll get views of the Mersey with the pathways along the riverside.

3 SANKEY CANAL

CATALYST

WEST BANK

Taking the gradual pathway down from the Catalyst you'll see the Sankey Canal and locks, that bridge Widnes to Spike Island. Crossing over the locks you can explore the Island and watching the boats, swans and other wildlife of the nature reserve.

SPIKE ISLAND

Following the pathed trail that hugs the banks of the Mersey, the Silver Jubilee Bridge will be in view. Follow the circular route anti-clockwise around the Island, you'll pass the through woodland and the remains of the old brick

pyrite Kilns which were used to house furnaces.
The route will bring you

RIVER MERSEY

Mix of pavements with gentle

which are all fully accessible.

40min

inclines, tracks and promenades

back along the SankeyCanal with the Locks

ahead of you.

DISTANCE

3 km

5 VICTORIA PROMENADE

Back across the locks head along the riverside path as it gradually slopes up onto Terrace Road. Carrying along the Road you'll see the Promenade on your left and St Mary's Church on your right. You'll continue along St Mary's Road and as you follow the bend, you'll see the Silver Jubilee Bridge and the end of the Promenade.



ZEPPELINS, RED ADMIRALS, A WAR HERO AND A HIT RECORD

VICTORIA PARK

Who'd have thought a small pocket of Widnes could be filled with so much history and significance, from the station to one of the town's oldest parks, this area has plenty of tales to tell, it has inspired world famous musicians and immortalized a Victoria Cross awardee.

Pick up your trail at Widnes Station, which is more than just a railway station. Musical myths say it was the birthplace of a global hit single! Find the inspiring open space of Victoria Park, with its Butterfly House and bandstand, once the stage for the world famous Foden

Brass Band. Still curious? Continue and discover the stunning Grade II listed St Bede's Church and try to solve the mystery of Appleton Hall. So, what are you waiting for, it's time to make tracks...

At Widnes Station in 1965 Paul Simon wrote the song Homeward Bound



WIDNES RAILWAY STATION

The Station dates back to 1st August 1873 and was originally opened as Farnworth station. A stop was added to the railway line between Glazebrook and Cressington & Grassendale.

It's a twin-pavilion building, which was at the time very common of the Cheshire Lines Committee. However, this station has a Nineteenth-century carved stone drinking fountain set against the station wall, which wasn't so common.

The station, which was refurbished in 2009, is designated as a Grade II listed building by English Heritage and was also immortalised due to a famous singer songwriter who caught a train from Widnes, which inspired his hit song. From Birchfield Road, which bridges the train tracks, you get an immediate sense of the importance of bridges in Halton's heritage, which all play a vital role in connecting Widnes and Runcorn.

VICTORIA PARK

As you enter one the oldest parks in Widnes, you'll be hit with a sense of calm in your surroundings. The green and serene space dating back to the late Nineteenth-century, officially opened in 1900 to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

You'll see many points of interest and historical features as you make your way around the park, designed by the renowned landscape architect Thomas Mawson, who was responsible for many of the UK's most famous parks and gardens.

VICTORIA PARK LAKE

The lake is one of the most picturesque features of the Park, originally created as a reservoir to supply water to the nearby chemical industry. Today, it's a popular spot for a variety of wildlife, including ducks, swans, and geese.

HALTON HERITAGE
VICTORIA PARK 31











THE BANDSTAND

At the central hub of the park you'll bet transported back to pre-WWII era and imagine watching Foden's Brass Band play here. The band earned £35- £40 each time when they played here in the 1920s and 30s. The bandstand is a refurbished version of the original and frequently showcases free concerts from local musicians.

WAR MEMORIAL

Take a moment to appreciate the striking the Grade II war memorial, which is more than 16m high and with detailed carvings. Designed by Harold E Davies and unveiled by the 17th Earl of Derby in a ceremony on 28th September 1921 after a civic parade from Widnes Town Hall.

The memorial cost £6,000 and was paid for by public subscription. The sculptural additions were undertaken by the national artist Herbert Tyson Smith and it is a designated Grade II listed building.

MILESTONE MARKER

Close to the War memorial you'll see the damaged local milestone marker which was caused by the Zeppelin raid.

Installed with a plaque commemorating the last effective Zeppelin air raid of World War I in England - the only one on Lancashire.

PIT STOP -

Grab a bite to eat, a scoop of Gelato or an Italian coffee at Esposito's Deli in the park.

GLADSTONE MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

Another prominent feature within the park is the fountain, a fitting tribute to one of Britain's greatest Prime Ministers, William Ewart Gladstone. He was born in Liverpool to Scottish parents and went on to become British Prime Minister for over 12 years cumulatively, unusual in that it is made completely from terracotta tiles

MOTTERSHEAD STATUE

Just near the main Birchfield Road Park entrance is Mottershead statue, a touching tribute to Sqt Mottershead, a Widnes war hero. His plane was ignited by German fire over the Western Front in January 1917, but he saved the life of his observer by landing behind British lines. Sadly, he died from his injuries and was buried in France. Sqt Mottershead was awarded the prestigious Victoria Cross posthumously, with his wife being presented with her late husband's medal by King George V in London in June 1917.

THE GLASSHOUSES AND TROPICAL BUTTERFLY HOUSE

Other highlights of the park are The Glasshouses and Tropical Butterfly House.

The Glasshouse is run by volunteers, explore 50 exotic butterflies from all over the world. If you fancy a flutter around Butterfly House. Opens between May and September, Saturday and Sunday 10.30am-1pm.









APPLETON VILLAGE & ST BEDE'S CHURCH

Leaving the park from the south meander down to the historic Appleton Village. Recorded as Epletune in the Domesday Book of 1086, it means 'a settlement where apples grow'. The village has lots of fascinating history, including the mystery of Appleton Hall.

You will come to centre of the village where you will see the active St Bede's Roman Catholic parish church, which is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. It was completed in 1847 and is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade II listed building. The church was designed by architects Weightman and Hadfield, on land donated by members of the local Dennett family. Wealthy locals of their time, the Dennett family also paid towards the cost of the building.

After consecration of the church on 22nd September 1847, the bishop of Liverpool (Revd Alexander Goss) consecrated the original church bell in May 1856. This bell was replaced in 1879 with the new bell, again blessed by the bishop of Liverpool, which was then Revd Bernard O'Reilly, the 1856 bell survives and remains today.

? GIVE IT A GO CAN YOU TRACE THE LOCATION OF APPLETON HALL?

Pictures of the 16th century hall, which was built for the Appleton's, prove its existence, but local experts and historians can't quite agree where exactly on the road it was.

On the corner of Appleton Village and Birchfield Road is thought to be the site of Appleton Hall, its location seems is a mystery but, immediately as you turn into Birchfield Road, the row of houses on the right is called Pineapple Terrace, and it is thought that Appleton Hall had pineapple stoves or glass frames for the cultivation

of pineapples. Is that a clue to where the grand hall once stood?





Start point: Widnes Station Car Park, Victoria Avenue, Widnes, WA8 7TJ

WIDNES RAILWAY STATION

Whether you start at the Station or make it your last stop, the fascinating history will stop you in your tracks. From Widnes Station head south on Victoria Avenue and continue south on Birchfield Road, you'll see an entrance to Victoria Park on the opposite side of the Road.

VICTORIAPARK

From the north of the park you can stroll through the open spaces of Victoria Park. There's plenty to see including the lake, Bandstand, Memorials and even a Butterfly House. Soak up all the history in beautiful surroundings and treat yourself to few scoops of Gelato at Esposito's.

You can leave the park from the main south entrance on Birchfield Road onto the equally beautiful Appleton Village.

3 APPLETON VILLAGE & ST BEDE'S CHURCH

As you exit the Park, follow Birchfield Road southwards, then turn left and you'll discover Appleton Village. Meander through this historic hamlet to find St Bede's Church and try to solve the mystery of Appleton Hall.



A MAD HATTER, ENCHANTING WOODLANDS AND FAMOUS FOOTSTEPS

DARESBURY

Once you discover the small, charming Village of Daresbury, you'll feel a world away in this wonderland waiting to be explored.

Take a stroll around 'The Birthplace' of one of the world's best loved writers, Lewis Carroll and you'll be inspired by the idyllic surrounding that will make you curiouser and curiouser to find out more.

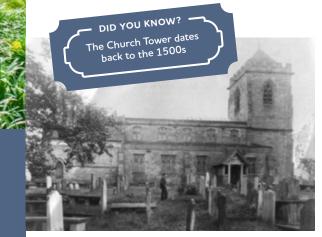
RING O'BELLS

As you step out of the church grounds, you'll see the Ring O'Bells pub opposite, flanked by old cottages and a former smithy.

Originally Daresbury's courthouse. The early 19th century building still has a session room where court proceedings once took place. At the front of the pub, there is a listed old stone horse stop and trough decorated beautifully with flowers and hanging baskets. As well as a plethora of

original features at the Ring O'Bells pub, you can also enjoy a traditional pub menu serving the best of British seasonal dishes lovingly prepared by their talented chefs. So when you've built up an appetite and completed your wanderings it's the perfect place to refuel.







ALL SAINTS CHURCH

Entering the church grounds you'll weave through the picturesque paths to the church. Lewis Carroll was baptised here and his father was also the much-loved vicar of the church for 16 years, from 1827 to 1843.

Once inside you can't leave without gazing at the magical stained-glass window in the Daniell Chapel, which illustrates all of Carroll's Characters from Alice in Wonderland, see how many you can find. Based on John Tenniel's illustrations and designed by glass artist Geoffrey Webb, the five scenes of the windows include the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, with the dormouse asleep in the teapot and an especially eccentric March Hare with straw in his hair. Make sure you spot the grinning Cheshire Cat too!

LEWIS CARROLL **CENTRE**

Adjoined to the church is the beautiful building of the Lewis Carroll Centre, which is dedicated to celebrating Daresbury's world-famous villager and writer.

Admission is free and through visual displays, you can delve deeper into the story that defined the man and how Daresbury inspired his writing, chart his timeline seeing all the things that Lewis Carroll saw as the young Charles Dodgson.

Over the centre door hangs the mission bell that used to call the canal folk to Revd Dodgson's floating chapel at Preston Brook.

Listen to the Audio programs that include readings of Carroll's work by local children and the famous performers Ken Dodd and Dillie Keane













DID YOU KNOW?

Nine of Lewis Carroll's ten siblings were also born in the house

LEWIS CARROLL BIRTHPLACE

Approximately 1.5 miles from the village of Daresbury, lies the birthplace and home of Lewis Carroll, a parsonage which was destroyed by fire over 100 years ago.

Born in 1832 this is the site where Carroll spent the first 11 years of life. It's possible that his environment sparked the inspiration for him to write Alice's adventures years later.

Today you'll see a ground-level brick outline and wrought-iron sculptures, depicting where the original parsonage building once stood. You can let your imagination wander in Carroll's very own wonderland. The intricate iron workings serve as a fitting memorial to the writer, you'll also see a dormouse design covered well at this popular literary National Trust site.





Grab a scoop of delicious artisan ice cream at **Daresbury Dairy**, if you take a slight detour before you turn onto Morphany Lane, take Newton Lane and you'll arrive at the Dairy.





LEWIS CARROLL **CENTENARY** WOODLAND

Follow your trail to the Centenary Woodland, purchased by the Woodland Trust, with the help of the Lewis Carroll Birthplace Trust and planted in early 2000 to commemorate the centenary of the Writer's death.

Explore the hectare of woodland and you can imagine the setting of Carroll's Tulgey Wood in Wonderland or Through the Looking Glass. It could be the forest that never seems to end, home to many bizarre creatures, such as the Jabberwockey or the Bandersnatch.

Find the bench to sit, ponder and take in this magical place, then seek out the Millennium Feature comprising of a circular stand of six oaks around a commemorative tablet featuring Carroll's signature. When you're ready set off and head back to Daresbury Village.





Start point: All Saint's Church, Daresbury Lane, **Daresbury WA4 4AE**

RING O'BELLS

- Your journey starts at the Ring O'Bells pub set
- within the historic village of
- Daresbury.

ALL SAINTS DARESBURY CHURCH

Opposite the Ring O'Bells pub is the Church. Explore the grounds and inside, where you'll be enlightened by the influence Lewis Carroll had on this rural Anglican place of worship.

LEWIS CARROLL CENTRE

Located in the extension of the Church is the Lewis Carroll Centre. Leaving

the Centre and Church grounds by the main exit on Daresbury Lane, cross the road and head through the gated field. Continue south and look out to your left as you may catch a glimpse of remains Daresbury Hall. Passing through the fields and rolling countryside you'll reach Newton Lane. Turning left you'll pass several farms and cross over the bridge of the M56. Over the bridge you'll reach Summer Lane. Following the lane left you will see the signs for Lewis Carroll Birthplace, which will bring you to Morphany Lane where you go right.

LEWIS CARROLL BIRTHPLACE

Following the route down Morphany Lane you will reach the entrance gate

to Carroll's Birthplace, follow the white rabbits

- into the site. There are
- also interpretation signs
- that tell you all about the historic site and sculptures
- that celebrate the writer.
- **CENTENARY**

WOODLAND Adjacent to Carroll's birthplace is Cenenary

Woodland, the wood was planted as two blocks of trees separated by a grass path ride that leads into a small glade which has a seat, here you'll find commemorative Lewis Carroll stone tablet, there's also a small pond by the eastern boundary of woodland. Once you've had chance to take in all your surroundings head back to Daresbury Village walking the same way.

ROUTES, NETWORKS AND CONNECTIONS

For this year's Heritage Open Days Festival we have created six unique trails that follow the theme: Routes, Networks and Connections, each trail will take you on a journey of discovery around our Borough. Retrace the **Routes** of our famous ancestors, travel the **Networks** of waterways, and roads that pathed the way for innovation and industry, and discover the Connections of our towns and villages that have bridged not only Borough but the world beyond. Take the steps and learn how each parish has influenced Halton's local heritage and national reputation as a pioneering place from the past to the present day.

- BRIDGES, BOBBIES, BOATS AND A BUSTLING TOWN RUNCORN OLD TOWN
- THATCHED HAMLET, FAMOUS GIANT AND 45FT LIGHTHOUSE HALE
- TREE LINED
 WALKWAYS, A TOWER
 AND MINATURE TRAIN
 RUNCORN TOWN PARK
- 4 SCIENCE, INDUSTRY, STONE ROSES AND PROMENADE STROLLS WEST BANK
- ZEPPELINS, RED
 ADMIRALS, A WAR HERO
 AND A HIT RECORD
 VICTORIA PARK
- A MAD HATTER, ENCHANTING WOODS AND FAMOUS FOOTSTEPS DARESBURY



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TO DISCOVER EVEN MORE HALTON HERITAGE!



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TO FIND MORE FROM THE HALTON HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP



