

Birkdale Buzz



**A community magazine sponsored by the
Birkdale Community Hub & Library at
The Station Master's House
Find out what's going on in the Hub as well as in
and around Birkdale village**

How does the Library pay for itself?

Anyone can become a member of the library and then use the facilities at the Station Master's House and the Birkdale Methodist Church library at no cost. The Birkdale Community Hub & Library charity which runs the facilities receives no funding from Sefton, so how do we pay for heating, lighting, broadband, insurance, maintenance etc? The answer is simple: by the public generously contributing in some way to our running costs, either by joining the 200+ Club lottery, becoming a Friend of the Station Master's House, by the sale of unwanted books and by buying tickets for one of our events.

Thanks to everyone for their contribution. We couldn't do it without you.

The 200+ Club

The 200+ Club, launched in 2017, provides a valuable source of funds for Birkdale Community Hub & Library, while at the same time giving supporters a chance each month of winning a cash prize. The money raised is used as a mix of basic income and to fund ongoing improvements to facilities offered by the charity.

Being part of the 200+ Club costs just £2 a month per number, the more numbers you have, the greater your chance of winning. The monthly draw gives one prize of £50 and two prizes of £20 each month, plus an annual prize draw of £500.

To join or to find out more, contact Chrissy Gadd

Email: 200club@thestationmastershouse.co.uk

Friends of the Station Master's House

Being a Friend means that you will be kept up to date about recent activities and future events and plans.

Why not become a Friend for just £12 annually (payable in January each year) and help meet the costs of running your local library and community hub?

To join, pick up a form from the library reception or download an application form from our website:

www.thestationmastershouse.co.uk

Want to advertise in the Birkdale Buzz?

The magazine comes out every quarter (March, June, September and December) and is printed in A5 format. Paper copies of the next edition will be printed in B&W and in colour online via our website.

The charge for adverts in the next edition is: 1/8 page costs £10, 1/4 page costs £20 and 1/2 page costs £30.

We also offer a discount for placing an advert in four editions: four adverts for the price of three. For further information and advice please email us at:

birkdalebuzz@thestationmastershouse.co.uk

Hello Readers

Welcome to our sixth edition of the **Birkdale Buzz**, produced by volunteers at the Birkdale Community Hub & Library. We hope that quarterly editions of the Birkdale Buzz will help keep locals in touch with people and events around Birkdale. Copies of the Buzz are free and we are grateful to local advertisers who help pay for the costs of printing. Details of advertising costs can be found on page 2. This edition is printed on paper in B&W and online in colour.

The Community Hub & Library is situated in the Station Master's House next to the station, where there is a library, meeting rooms for hire, and a computer suite. The charity also runs a branch library at the Birkdale Methodist Church on Liverpool Road. All our facilities are free for members to use.

If you want to know more about future events organised by the Birkdale Community Hub & Library, why not pop into the library or visit our website www.thestationmastershouse.co.uk. Meanwhile enjoy the Buzz!

Phil Margham
Chair of Trustees BCHL

Becoming a Library member: it's easy

To borrow books and use the Station Master's House facilities such as computers, you will need to register as a member of the Library. **Membership is free.** When you come to join the Library please bring a form of ID with you. After signing up you'll be issued with a library card, and away you go!

Delivering Books to your Home

The BCHL Home Visit Book Lending Service is going from strength to strength. As of late January 2024 we have five volunteer home visitors with two more waiting for DBS checks, and 20 readers, one of whom is a lady who is now on her 133rd

home-delivered book! (See the table of books in picture.) Our volunteers are also regular visitors to several local care homes.

This is just the beginning. With more volunteers (see page 27 for contact details), I'm sure we can reach many more people who want to read at home but are unable to come into either the Station Master's House in Birkdale village or Birkdale Methodist Church on the corner of Liverpool Road and Sandon Road.

Onwards and upwards!





2024 Production of Gilbert & Sullivan's

Jolanthe



Wednesday 24th to
Friday 26th April 7.30pm
Saturday 27th April 2.30pm

Southport Little Theatre
Hoghton Street, Southport, PR9 0PA
Adults £16 Under 16 & Students £8

Book Online at www.crosbys.co.uk or by phone 07748 192953
Also from Wednesday 17th April (11 am to 1 pm) at the Theatre Box Office 01704 530521



Breathing Problems?

We have received the following helpful information from Simon Barson:

For the past 14 years the **Breathe Easy Sefton North** group has held monthly meetings in the area. We meet at Liverpool Road Methodist Church in Birkdale. The purpose of the group is to bring together people who suffer with a lung disease, such as Asthma, COPD and Bronchiectasis to name just a few. We meet in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and have a speaker at each meeting. Our aim is to keep local people up to date with new treatments and facilities that can help with our care. Meetings are very casual and provide an opportunity to share experiences over a cuppa. We meet on the 1st Wednesday of the month at the Methodist Church for around two hours, starting at 1.30pm. We also meet monthly for a meal and a chat in a pub. If you would like any further information, please contact Simon on 07552 182032.



NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME
Gardens Open For Charity



Please put these dates in your diary to visit the beautiful Ainsdale & Birkdale Open Gardens on **Sunday 16 June** and **Sunday 21 July**.

Details of opening times and locations will be on the notice board at the Station Master's House and in the June edition of the Birkdale Buzz.

Southport's Garrick Theatre

A visitor driving along the south end of Lord Street might not take much notice of the large, rather sombre, brick building on the corner with Kingsway. Yet, in its heyday, the **Garrick Theatre** (named after a famous Shakespearean actor) was the crown of Southport's entertainment venues, attracting many star names from stage and screen.

When the Garrick opened in 1932 it had an auditorium on two levels and seating for 1,600, along with boxes. It was designed by local architect George Tonge, who was also behind the iconic clubhouse at Royal Birkdale Golf Club. Both buildings are built in the art deco style of the period – streamlined, curved lines, bold geometric shapes and ornamentation. It is worth having a close-up look at the Garrick Theatre with its decorative panels around entrances and windows. When the building opened it was claimed to be the most beautiful in Europe, and the building's exciting design was matched by the glamour of the theatregoers of this time, as can be seen in the famous poster by Fortunio Matania.



The theatre put on a regular series of long-running and successful plays and musicals, interspersed by occasional visits by international stars. Those who attended the opening night on December 19, could see Gladys Cooper in the mystery drama *Firebird*, which came direct from the Playhouse Theatre in London's West End. Laurel and Hardy came for a week in August 1952, appearing twice-nightly with a matinée, staying over the road at The Prince of Wales, then Southport's premier hotel. Three years later Peter Sellers brought his stage act to the Garrick, entertaining his audience with impressions of famous people, such as Sir Winston Churchill.

However, along with cinemas, theatres around Britain in the 1950s were feeling the adverse effect of television, sales of which were booming. There was now much less need to leave the home for entertainment. The Garrick Theatre too felt these adverse changes and closed after Christmas in 1956. In January 1957 the Essoldo Cinemas chain



Linocut of
Garrick
windows

bought the Garrick and on January 21 it opened as a cinema. The first films to be shown at the venue were *Love Me Tender*, starring Elvis Presley, and *Miracle on 34th Street*.

The cinema lasted until 1963 after which it was converted to a Mecca bingo hall. The business was successful for more than 60 years until it had to close in March 2020 because of the Covid pandemic.

Afterwards, Mecca did not renew their lease on the venue and the bingo hall was closed. There are ambitious proposals to reopen the Garrick theatre as, "the UK's only theatre spa hotel". The hotel would include more than 100 rooms and the existing event auditorium would be refurbished. We can only wish the project well, hoping the wonderful building can be given a new purpose.

Henry James

Polansky's

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No appointment needed

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Visit Montenegro... you will love it!

As spring approaches are you thinking of this year's summer holiday? Ever considered Montenegro?... If not, then maybe you should! This small country has so much to offer!

Travel. Both easyJet and Jet2 fly direct to Tivat from Manchester – just a short flight too!

Where to stay? Again, so much on offer and to suit every budget, but here are a few ideas:

Top of my list is the beautiful Regent Hotel in **Port Montenegro**... it is stunning! Right on the front at the marina at Port Montenegro, which is just a short drive from the airport – seven miles. You are then transported into a chic new marina development with designer shops and great casual restaurants and bars.

Kotor Old Town – a world heritage site – definitely worth a visit, but not on a day when there is a cruise ship in the bay! There are a number of good boutique hotels – here too prices vary, but it does get busy! Lots of restaurants and bars.

Further up the beautiful Boka Bay with the dramatic “black mountain” backdrop (which is the translation for Montenegro) is **Dobrota**. Take the bottom road out of Kotor (like the locals) and you are on the water's edge. It is a lovely walk! Again, there are some super bistro type restaurants right on the water's edge. Here you will find a mixture of apartments and boutique hotels – I favour Forza Mare and the sister hotel Forza Terra... just fabulous!... 5*...right on the front... super food too. The Casa de Mare chain 4* is also very good... the rooms in the Casa de Mare Pietra which is on the upper road at the back of Forza Mare are huge... but you need one with a balcony... the view of the bay is fabulous!

Perast is definitely worth a visit: take a water taxi from Kotor, or arrange for a pick-up from your hotel if staying in Dobrota. It is a “one horse town”... just a few lovely water front restaurants... perfect for lunch, and now there are some lovely hotels popping up... There is not much to do, so just walk along the water's edge and enjoy the views over to the islets of St George and Our Lady of the Rocks.

Beaches. If you are looking for a beach holiday then all of the above places may not be for you....as there is no beach as such! Whilst some of the hotels on the water's edge advertise “beach front” most are on shale (although the Huma in Dobrota has put an artificial beach with sand in front of the hotel). **Budva** is perhaps the resort for you and this is where the majority of tour companies offer beach holidays.

Montenegro is developing quickly. Since we visited some eight years ago a number of the Luxe Hotels, e.g. One and Only, Cheidi etc have opened up. They are on the other side of the bay and rather remote, but worth visiting for a cocktail!

I hope this rather brief resumé of just some of the things Montenegro has to offer has whetted your appetite. I don't think you will be disappointed... it is fabulous! I highly recommend travelling before the crowds arrive ... May and September are perfect!

Jill Jones, our Travel correspondent.

**Mrs Jones
is delighted!**



she's got
**Attendance
Allowance**

The cost-of-living crisis means that it's more important than ever to make sure you are receiving all the government benefits that you are entitled to, such as Attendance Allowance.

Let me show you how you might be able to get regular financial assistance to help you remain independent in your own home for as long as you wish.



Carolyn Gorman
Life Navigator
Grey Matters Consultancy
Southport



Grey Matters
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SOUTHPORT

Attendance Allowance Claims
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07946 304426

grey-matters-consultancy.com/southport

Hello!

Easter is one of the key events in the Church. The Christian message of Easter is more irresistible and more heartwarming than the finest chocolate, uniting believers in the celebration of resurrection, redemption, forgiveness, and the boundless love of God for each of us.

This Easter, why not find out more about what Easter might mean for you?

Date	St James' Church	St Peter's Church
24 th March (Palm Sunday)	Sunday 24 th March – 9.45am Palm Sunday service with procession (St James' Church 9.45am, arriving at St Peter's approx. 10.30am)	
28 th March (Maundy Thursday)	7pm "Do this to remember me" Communion service	10am – Footprints Toddlers' Easter Celebration
29 th March (Good Friday)	9.30-12pm – The Passion narratives - Prayer stations <i>Reflective service at 10.30am</i>	2pm – Hour at the cross - all-age reflective service
30 th March (Easter Saturday)	11.30 – Crackin' Easter! Family friendly craft & activities, followed by an Easter egg hunt	10-3pm – Church open for quiet contemplation and prayer.
	Birkdale Dunes Carpark – 6.30pm -Watch and Wait - Sunset Service (weather dependent, bring a torch/light)	
31 st March (Easter Sunday)	8.00am BCP Communion	6.30am – Sunrise Service (in prayer garden) 9.00am – Easter Communion service
	10.15am – St James' and St Peter's Churches Joint Easter celebration (At St James' Church)	

We'd love to see you at any of our services!
Do contact me for more info (01704) 617458

REV SAM

Know your Birkdale Village
Q1 Where's this?
Answer on page 30

**tiona
sage
ker**



BASQUE BAKED COD [Sent in by Jill Jones]

Serves 4

- 4 cod fillets (you can use haddock) – skinned
- ½ green pepper – diced
- ½ red pepper – diced
- 1 onion – diced
- 1 tbsp fresh oregano leaves – chopped
- 2 garlic cloves finely chopped
- 2 plum tomatoes, skinned, seeded and chopped finely
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp dry white wine
- Salt/pepper
- 12 black olives (optional)*



Method

Pre-heat the oven to 190C (fan) oven – gas 5.

Use non-stick baking parchment – place fish in the parchment – slightly off centre.

In a bowl, mix together all the ingredients.

Spoon the mixture on top of the fish – scatter with the olives (if using).

Seal the parcels and place on a baking tray and bake for 15-20 minutes until the fish is cooked through.

Place the parcel on a warm plate, serve with buttered potatoes and green veg.

MAPLE GLAZED RIBS – VERY EASY! [Sent in by Jill Jones]

- 3lbs baby back pork ribs
- ¾ cup maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons soft brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon mustard powder



Method

Place ribs in a large pot, and cover with water. Cover, and simmer for one hour, or until meat is tender. Drain, and transfer ribs to a shallow dish.

In a small saucepan, stir together the maple syrup, brown sugar, ketchup, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and mustard powder. Bring to a low boil, and cook for five minutes, stirring frequently. Cool slightly, then pour over ribs, and marinate in the refrigerator for two hours.

Remove ribs from marinade. Transfer marinade to a small saucepan, and boil for several minutes.

Cook for about 20 minutes, basting with the cooked marinade frequently, until nicely glazed. (! cook in the oven, but you can place on the BBQ or under the grill if you wish). **Enjoy!**

SPAR 

BIRKDALE

We are proud to continue to be at the heart of the local community and have our very own butcher's in store offering a great selection of quality meats & ready meals.



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**Graham Eyes
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Southport & Birkdale Sports Club



Southport & Birkdale Sports Club is the leading multi-sports club in the area. The grounds, situated on Trafalgar Road are the back-drop for the well-appointed social club. Sporting members have the option to concentrate on one sport or take part in all five, cricket, hockey, snooker, squash and tennis.

If you just wish to have a social membership, this allows you to use the club facilities whether it be to have a drink, at discounted prices, on a summer afternoon, watching the cricket, take a meal supplied by the renowned D'vine Catering, or attend one of the many functions arranged throughout the year. This summer is the 150th anniversary of the founding of S&B Cricket Club and there will be events to celebrate the anniversary.



CRICKET NEWS



Lancashire v Nottinghamshire
Sunday 30 June—Wednesday 3 July at S&B

The 1st XI wicket keeper, Jack Carney, was in India in the last month, representing England Under-19s

Contact: Claire Crew, Honorary Membership Secretary
email: clcrew36@gmail.com S&B Sports Club, Trafalgar Road, Birkdale PR8 2HF
Tel: 01704 569951. email: social@sandbsportsclub.co.uk

Birkdale Bloomers



For over 20 years, the lovely floral displays within Birkdale village have been the hard work of a dedicated team of volunteers as part of the Birkdale Civic Society. Coined the '**Birkdale Bloomers**', the team have been planting and maintaining the tree squares and planters for all the community to enjoy. With over 1000 plants being put in every spring, as well as the thousands of bulbs and perennials which bloom each year, the Bloomers' ranks have grown in the last two years, with a team of 15 keen volunteers now meeting on a Sunday, every two weeks to make sure our village keeps looking as lovely as possible.



As well as their planting duties, the group have also risen to the mammoth challenge of trying to keep the village a clean and tidy environment, in the face of ongoing reduction of council road sweeping.

We are always keen to increase our ranks, and would love to welcome you into our team! If you would like further information, or for donations, please get in touch at info@birkdalecivicsociety.org.uk



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Welcome to your Warm Space

Our Warm Space continues to become increasingly popular! Since our dedicated group of Warm Space volunteers started in October last year we have welcomed so many new visitors. We now have regular visitors who look forward every Thursday to our warm welcome, planned weekly activities, various talks and free hot drinks, biscuits and newspapers. Our very own “Last Thursday of the month” quiz is now a most popular event! Since October we have had talks from several organisations including United Utilities, Merseyside Police & HSBC Bank, Age Concern and Citizens Advice.



We continue to welcome everyone in our community to our Warm Space every Thursday from 10am to 4pm. Come in for a chat and a hot drink and find out about our planned events.

We will continue from April as Welcome Space so all our volunteers look forward to seeing everyone throughout the Spring and Summer months.

Thank you for the donation of £73.70 from **The Acorns** which is a small fundraising group that have been working together over the last few years to raise money for local charities.

It says in their letter *‘I have had the pleasure of seeing what you do in the group. You are providing a warm and welcoming environment and an opportunity for people, who may otherwise be isolated, to meet together. The location of the library is perfect as it is within walking distance for people who may no longer feel confident about using public transport and is also very central for those that still do.’*

Visitors to Warm Space say ...

Lovely afternoon had at the Station Master’s House warm space. Lots of drinks and treats on offer and a fun quiz in which I came second! Came by myself and was welcomed by Mary and Leann. Lovely idea to meet new people or just come in to read a paper or magazine. I have sent off for my library membership as I think it’s an amazing space. Thank you ladies!

Always warm and welcoming. Fully accessible as right next to the train station.

Thank you for a lovely warm welcome from all the Warm Space volunteers. Warming cups of coffee, tea and biscuits are offered to us every Thursday and good to have a read of local papers.

*A friendly word, a kindly deed,
A greeting and a smile.
These are the simple blessings
That make our lives worthwhile.*

Poem written by Brenda R Tillston

**Sefton
Warm Spaces**

a space for community
and warmth in Sefton

in partnership with    Sefton CVS

Warm Spaces is supported and funded by **Sefton CVS**

<https://seftoncvcs.org.uk/warmspaces/>

Make a difference in your community by volunteering

Volunteering can be a great way of fostering positive change in your community; It not only benefits those you help but it can make a difference to your life too. Volunteering can be a catalyst for personal growth and development. It offers opportunities to acquire new skills, gain diverse experiences, and broaden perspectives. The act of giving back can instil a profound sense of purpose and fulfilment, helping to nurture empathy and a deeper community bond.

Volunteer Centre Sefton promotes volunteer roles supporting local charities and groups. We have hundreds of volunteering opportunities advertised including aiding the elderly, mentoring young people, environmental conservation, helping at community events, volunteering with animals, supporting your community library and more. All the volunteer roles can be found on our website – volunteeringsefton.org.uk

volunteeringsefton.org.uk
Sign up today



A Life of Blackbirds by Twitcher

Sitting in my garden in the middle of March last year I was startled by a loud noise in the hedge by the wall. It was the sound of Britain's most common bird, the blackbird, squawking to alert the presence of a visiting cat. Soon after the cat had meandered away the blackbird



could be heard singing. I guessed it was probably a male, since females don't sing a great deal, and sure enough out it came from the hedge, with its handsome black plumage, bright orange beak and beady black eyes surrounded by an orange ring.

I had seen a pair of blackbirds earlier that week and a careful investigation of the hedge revealed a large cup-shaped nest made of dry grass, moss, and small twigs high up in the branches. And there was the female blackbird with her sooty brown, mottled plumage and dull yellow/brown beak sitting in the nest. The female would have built the nest on her own with the male partner standing guard while she works and protecting her from any predators.

I didn't go any closer so as not to disturb the female but I was hoping that the nest might contain up to six pale blue eggs with speckles of black. This was confirmed a day or so later when I found an empty blackbird eggshell on the lawn, a sure sign that a predator such as a magpie had attacked the nest when the parents were away. Only the female blackbird incubates the eggs and broods the chicks. A week or so later the remaining eggs had hatched and both parents were busy searching out worms and insects for their new offspring, which at this stage would have been blind and featherless. Both male and female blackbirds are extremely territorial in behaviour, meaning that they have selected an area around the nest which they will vigorously defend. The males have larger wings than the females and are the chief defenders of the territory.

A few days later the chicks became fledgelings, growing their feathers ready for flight. At this stage both male and female young are dark mottled brown and easily confused with female adults. I saw several had left the nest but stayed close by in the undergrowth, still getting occasional feeds from mum and dad. If you come across a juvenile blackbird looking all alone and helpless, just leave it alone because one of the parents will probably be nearby to help. And of course, try to keep any pets well away from the youngster. Those fledglings that survived this last stage quickly learnt how to fly, not very well at first, and they were soon off on their own to establish a new territory not too far away, life starting all over again.

Sefton Councillor Surgeries

LibDem Councillors representing Birkdale Ward (i.e. Birkdale to landward of the railway line) and Dukes Ward (Shoreside Birkdale as well as Town Centre) will hold evening surgeries at the Station Master's House on the **3rd Tuesday of every month between 6 and 7 o'clock**. The Labour Councillor also representing Birkdale Ward will hold midday surgeries at the Station Master's House on the **first Wednesday of every month between 1 and 2 o'clock**. No need to book, just turn up to discuss any issues you may have.



**42a Liverpool Road
Birkdale Village
PR8 4AY
01704 568822
www.birkdalecheese.com**

Birkdale Connections

In the second of his occasional series on famous people with a connection to Birkdale, Adrian Cork tells the story of a Second World War hero: **John Connell Freeborn**, born in Leeds in 1919. After attending Leeds Grammar School he joined the RAF in 1938 and, after training, was posted to No. 74 “Tiger” Squadron.



John’s first taste of enemy action came in May 1940 over Dunkirk in which John was credited with two kills. During one action he crash landed in France and had to evade advancing German troops, at one point pinned down by machine-gun fire when hiding in a cemetery. He walked for several days to Calais from where an RAF Blenheim took him back to England.

John fought throughout the Battle of Britain as part of No. 74 Squadron. On 11 August 1940 he was scrambled four times in eight hours, destroying three enemy aircraft. By the time the Battle came to an end, John had flown more operational hours than any other RAF pilot, had seven confirmed kills and become an Ace. For these actions he was awarded a DFC medal, receiving a second DFC in 1941.

The rest of John’s war was equally as colourful. He was posted to the USA where he trained US Air Force pilots before becoming a test pilot for North American Aviation. He returned to the UK in late 1942 and served as a flight commander, flying escort operations. In 1944 John was promoted to become the RAF’s youngest Wing Commander Flying, commanding 286 Wing based in southern Italy. He resigned with honour and distinction in 1946.

In civilian life, John qualified as a driving instructor but took a position with Tetley Walker as regional director for their Minster soft drinks brand.

John moved to Birkdale in 2001 where he lived in Lulworth Lodge, Lulworth Road. He passed on 28 August 2010 at Southport and Formby Hospital and was laid to rest in Birkdale Cemetery.

OPEN MORNING AT THE STATION MASTER’S HOUSE



 **Birkdale
Community Hub & Library**
At the Station Master’s House

Easter Saturday 30 March 10.00—13.00

Sale of books, cakes, bric-a-brac, children’s knits

Lego Club, Storytime

All proceeds go towards supporting Birkdale Community Hub & Library

FORTHCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Please see the notice board in the Station Master’s House or go to our website www.thestationmastershouse.co.uk for details of forthcoming fundraising events.

Croquet is Amazing!

Looking for a challenging but fun outdoor activity? Why not visit one of Southport's hidden gems - the beautiful Croquet lawns in Victoria Park offer delightful surroundings in which to enjoy an amazing sport.



Established for over 100 years The Southport & Birkdale Croquet Club offers the opportunity for friendly competition and socialising, or even playing in regional leagues and national competitions. Anyone who can swing a 34 inch tall mallet can learn to play and it's a terrific way of enjoying the outdoors and getting some gentle exercise. Some members choose to play competitively whilst others play for fun – it's your choice. Whichever it is, however, the game calls for skill not only in directing the balls but also in strategy.

Membership is open at any time but **you can try Croquet at our very popular free taster sessions**. These sessions happen in May and you can register your interest now by emailing the Secretary, John Haslam on: southportbirkdalecroquetclub@gmail.com or leave a note addressed to Paul Ferguson on the Reception Desk of the Station Master's House.

So if you are looking for an outdoor activity to maintain your thinking skills and fitness why not give Croquet a try, you will find it simply amazing!



La piñata
Language Club

Spanish classes in Southport, Birkdale and Ainsdale for children aged 3-17 from a native Spanish speaker. Offering both private tuition in person or online up to GCSE and in lunch and after school clubs.

Recently nominated for 'Most Loved Activity Leader in the North of England' in the National Children's Activity Awards - What's On 4 Kids Awards 2023.

Please call Sandi Gomez on **07432 812516**
Or visit: www.lapinatalanguageclub.com



A day in the life of ... a humanist celebrant

Many funerals are still held in churches or are conducted by clergy but more and more people now want a non-religious or humanist funeral for their loved ones.

I have been conducting humanist funerals in and around Southport for nearly ten years now. I only do a handful each month but it's an incredibly fulfilling role and truly one of the best things I've ever done.

It's invariably the same pattern with each one. I will get a phone call from a local funeral director asking for my availability on a given date, for a funeral to be held at one or other of the crematoria at Southport or West Lancashire Crematorium. As a rule, I know nothing about the deceased at this stage, apart from their name, their age and when they died.

The next step is to contact the next of kin, to introduce myself and arrange a meeting with the family to learn about the deceased and to discuss with the family what kind of funeral they want. It's always a huge privilege to be invited into the family circle just a few days after their loved one has passed and to hear first-hand about someone's life and character. The meeting with the family will usually last a couple of hours. The funeral itself will last 30-40 minutes and my job is to write and deliver a script on the day that accurately reflects what the family has told me and that strikes the right tone. It's essential the family will be comfortable with what I say on the day and I'm totally dependent upon the family for information about the deceased and their back story.

Writing the script is usually done over the course of a few days, constantly reviewing what I've written and wondering whether I have enough material. It can be hard working against such a strict deadline - funerals are never postponed because the celebrant hasn't completed their work - but it certainly keeps me focussed! I usually have a week or two to get my work done but I once met the family just 24 hours before the ceremony and managed to present a service that they were very pleased with.

On the day, it's all about getting to the crematorium on time, looking my best and having confidence in what I've written. When I started doing this work, I worried that I might not cope with my nerves but I'm now very comfortable to stand in front of a group of strangers and talk about their friend or loved one.

One thing that has surprised me over the years is how much laughter there can be at a funeral and how important it is to give 100% to help family and friends get through such a difficult day in their lives. I know I've done my job well when people come up to me afterwards and say things like *'he'd have loved that'*, *'it's as if you knew her'* and - best of all - *'that was lovely, will you do mine?'*

Alan Martin
07803 169048

If you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans. Woody Allen

2 for 1 VOUCHER
 Entrance inc audio tour
 Shakespeare St, Southport, PR8 5AJ
lawnmowerworld.com

British Lawnmower Museum
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Gardeners' Corner

Early spring is here and things are beginning to happen in the garden. So why not get out there and get stuck in? Here are some jobs you could tackle.

Mulching any bare soil: applying a layer of organic material such as well-rotted compost or farm manure will reduce weed germination and water loss if we have another hot summer.

Repairing your lawn: now is the time to tackle any bare patches. Scuff up the bare soil and sprinkle with grass seed, covering over with a little soil and water. Water regularly and wait patiently for the seeds to germinate. This can take between two to four weeks, depending on the temperature and how much rain we get.

Have a go at growing potatoes: you can grow a few plants in a large tub or small bed. Rather than using old sprouting potatoes, it's better to use seed potatoes which are less likely to carry disease. If space is limited then clean out a large container and allow about 10 litres of good quality compost per seed potato. Make sure there are good drainage holes in the tub – seed potatoes don't like waterlogged soil. Fill about a quarter of the tub with compost and place the seed potatoes on top with their shoots or eyes facing upwards. Then cover the potatoes with more compost until the tub is almost full. Finish off by watering and wait for the tubers to sprout. If you start off in early March beware of frost and, if possible, cover them when it's very cold, or move the tub to a warmer place until the weather improves. Happy eating!



Move evergreen shrubs and trees: March is a good month to move evergreens, unless the ground is frozen. As the temperature rises the soil will warm up and the plants will establish themselves quickly. Remember to keep them well watered.

Look out for pesky plant eaters: aphids and caterpillars will increase in numbers as the temperature warms up. This may not be a problem to the plant (and other wildlife might benefit) but remove by hand if numbers seem harmful to the plant.

Pull up a paving slab: do your bit for wildlife in your garden and let a little unused area go wild.

Tend to your lawn: if the weather is mild and dry, give the lawn a light mow if it is beginning to grow. In late March apply a nitrogen-based lawn feed which will promote strong growth.

Help hedgehogs: they will just be coming out of hibernation and can make a valuable contribution getting rid of unwanted pests in your garden. So put out some suitable foodstuffs (not milk or bread!) like dog or cat food and water to help them along.



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www.randbclinical.com / randbclinical@gmail.com / Facebook randbclinical

Know your Birkdale Village
Q2 Where's this?
Answer on page 30



Exploring Your Family History

If you are one of those people who enjoy looking back on what happened in the family, who was married to who, where they came from and what they did for a living, then this article will be of interest.

Most of us start looking into Family History with certificates from parents and possibly grandparents or other close relatives, but then find that we need to go back further to establish who our ancestors were. National records kept by the General Register Office (GRO) were introduced on 1 July 1837 for England and Wales, 1855 for Scotland and 1864 onwards for Ireland. For England and Wales it is possible to obtain certificates for even the earliest records going back to 1837.

Previously all records were paper-based but now the process has become much easier. The GRO website <https://www.gro.gov.uk> allows users to carry out an online search of the indices and to order copies in digital and paper formats. However, although all records can be ordered from the GRO, not all records have been fully digitised yet.

The indices alone contain useful basic information: those for births cover the periods from 1837 to 1934 and 1984 to 2012 and provide much more detail. Similarly, the death records cover the periods 1837 to 1957 and 1984 to 2012, again with more detail. Currently a PDF copy of an entry costs £7.00.

The GRO is currently trialing a new service which is less expensive (£2.50) and which it intends to roll out further in due course. At the moment users can order a digital scan, which can be downloaded and saved permanently, of Birth certificates between 1837 and 1912 and Death certificates between 1837 and 1887. Hopefully this new service will prove to be both popular and reliable and will provide family historians with a low-cost way of viewing their ancestor's certificates.

Local Lancashire History

Did your ancestors come from the old county of Lancashire?

We have recently established a local History reference section in the library room at Birkdale Methodist Church. The heart of the collection is 50 volumes of transcripts of parish registers produced by the Lancashire Parish Register Society. These contain records of burials, marriages and baptisms dating from the mid 16th century to the mid 19th century. They are useful for tracing your family tree back before the census records began.

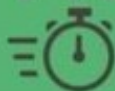
We have a large table and comfy chairs to accommodate you while you do your research. To find which volumes we have, search for parish registers in subjects on the BCHL online library catalogue. You can then search within results for the parish name. The reference collection also includes local history books about the Liverpool, Southport and Ormskirk areas.

Editor's Note: the two libraries in Birkdale (Station Master's House (SMH) near the station) and the Birkdale Methodist Church both have a selection of local history books, some for borrowing others as reference copies. You can search our book catalogue online by going to our website: thestationmastershouse.co.uk



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Ask Adam - the iPad doctor



Organising similar apps into one folder

Do you sometimes find it difficult to find specific apps on your device, particularly if you've downloaded many different apps?

One great way to help to organise your apps is by grouping them into folders. To make a folder:

- long-press on an app icon
- tap 'Edit Home Screen'
- drag over whichever app you want to organise first
- let go and you will see your folder
- then repeat to make different folders and then just drag app icons to the relevant folders

Using the Zoom-In feature

If you have issues reading smaller text sizes, the **Zoom-In** feature will help you.

Tap the [Settings] icon (the grey cog wheel, usually on your home screen)

Then tap [Accessibility]

Next, tap [Zoom] and toggle to the 'On' position

Now, to use this feature, you need to double tap with **three** fingers to zoom in. Then you can navigate around the screen using three fingers to move the magnifying box and view the exact parts of the text you need. Once you get the hang of this it's a very useful feature for examining finer details in documents and pictures in general, not just text.

New Pictures for Old?

Have you got memories locked away in old 35mm slides or the odd VHS tape? Well, help is at hand. One of our volunteers, Adam, has offered to unlock those memories by converting the pictures and tapes into digital files that can be stored, watched and sent around the world. To avoid overloading Adam, the service is limited to 25 slides or one VHS tape each time. The charge for the service is £5.00 but you can give more if you wish, all proceeds going to the charity. Bring your slides or tape into the Station Master's House next to Birkdale Station, enclosing them in an envelope marked "Photos for Digitising". You will be asked to sign a form giving your contact details.

When you have got your items back, why not organise a family/friends get-together and have a photo party? You'll be amazed how many memories come flooding back!

Would you like the **Birkdale Buzz** to fly into your inbox each quarter? Or do you know someone who would? We distribute 3,500 copies of the Buzz around Birkdale but we cannot cover all the roads. Rather than miss out please email Birkdalebuzz@thestationmastershouse.co.uk with your name and email address to be added to our email distribution list.





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A Local Doctor Writes ... Everybody Loves the Sunshine

Q: How does sunlight affect the human immune system?

A: Sunlight plays a crucial role in enhancing the human immune system by stimulating the production of vitamin D. When our skin is exposed to sunlight, it triggers the synthesis of vitamin D, a key player in immune function.

Q: What is the significance of vitamin D in immunity?

A: Vitamin D regulates immune responses, promoting the production of antimicrobial peptides and modulating inflammation. It helps the body defend against infections and may reduce the risk of autoimmune diseases.

Q: Can sunlight impact the prevention of respiratory infections?

A: Yes, sunlight-induced vitamin D production is associated with lower respiratory infection rates. Adequate vitamin D levels may enhance the respiratory system's ability to fend off pathogens.

Q: How much sunlight is needed for optimal immune benefits?

A: The ideal exposure varies but spending around 15-30 minutes in sunlight a few times per week is generally recommended. Factors such as skin type, location, and time of day influence the amount needed.

Q: Can sunlight impact mental health, indirectly influencing immunity?

A: Yes, exposure to sunlight influences serotonin levels, which can positively impact mood. Mental well-being, linked to immune function, underscores the holistic benefits of sunlight.

To sum up: sunlight is a natural immune booster through vitamin D synthesis, with many positive impacts on human health. So “get out there” regularly and give yourself a boost.

Current Volunteer Opportunities

Warm Spaces Host for two hours on a Thursday at a time to be agreed. We offer a warm welcome between 10am and 4pm with hot drinks and snacks, quizzes and talks from invited speakers.

Library Volunteer on a Tuesday 4pm-7pm to work alongside the session leader and another volunteer providing a library service to the public.

Storytime: we are looking for committed volunteers to read stories and organise activities for young children (babies to four year olds) between 10.15 and 11.15 on Saturday mornings at the Station Master's House.

Schools Liaison: we need volunteers to expand our Schools Liaison team, with the aim of encouraging more involvement with local primary and secondary schools, facilitating student visits to the library and encouraging budding journalists to write for our local community magazine.

Events: we are looking for volunteers to join the Events team to help organise a wide range of activities at the Hub and at outside venues like the S&B Sports Club. The team meets regularly to make plans and arrangements for future fundraising events such as quizzes, music evenings, demonstrations and talks.

Birkdale Buzz: the team producing the quarterly magazine is looking for two types of volunteers: one to promote and manage the local advertising sales, and the other to coordinate volunteers delivering the Buzz to shops and homes in the Birkdale area.

Home Visiting Service: the charity offers a Home Visiting Book Lending Service to local people who want to borrow our books but find it difficult to come along to our library branches. We are looking for volunteers to be a home visitor, collecting and returning books for people unable to access our premises.

If interested in a vacancy, please contact: volunteers@thestationmastershouse.co.uk

Birkdale Buzz

Would you like to contribute? Perhaps an article, a poem, thoughts about what is or isn't happening in Birkdale village. We also welcome feedback about the Buzz from our readers. We especially welcome small adverts from local tradespeople. Please email the Editor at Birkdalebuzz@thestationmastershouse.co.uk



Don't forget you can visit our updated website which provides a host of information, including what's on, upcoming events and meetings, the library book catalogue, how to become a member, book a meeting room, become a volunteer, read the Birkdale Buzz online, plus a video tour of the library.

www.thestationmastershouse.co.uk

Southport University Extension Society

Since 1874 the Southport University Extension Society (SUES) has been offering local people the chance to experience university level teaching that they otherwise had not been able to access. Despite two World Wars, dramatic changes to society and even the coronavirus pandemic, SUES remains active today, providing learning opportunities for all members of the local community.



Several courses and talks are planned for the rest of the 2023-24 programme. The longer course sessions are held on Mondays or Thursdays at 10.30 am and the single day events on Fridays at 2.30 pm. Sessions in the long courses last two hours and in the shorter meetings talks take approximately 45 to 60 minutes, with a drink and biscuits provided free of charge. The **£10** membership fee entitles attendance to all one-off lectures. More details about SUES can be found on our website:

www.southportues.com

Single Session Lectures and Events

Friday 22nd March 2024 at 2.30pm

Stephen Lloyd – Shakespeare, the Earls of Derby and the North West

Friday 26th April 2024 at 2.30pm

Alan Crosby – ‘The great and terrible wilderness, peopled by untutored savages’: providing elementary education in Victorian Lancashire

Friday 12th July 2024

Southport University Extension Society - Annual General Meeting

Courses

Alan Potter on Technology – Understanding just how things work!

2024: April 8, 11, 15, 18, 22, 29 (Six sessions: Course fee £30)

Peter Firth on The History of the University Extension Movement in Southport

2024: May 13, 20; June 3, 10 (Four sessions: No fee - open to non-members)

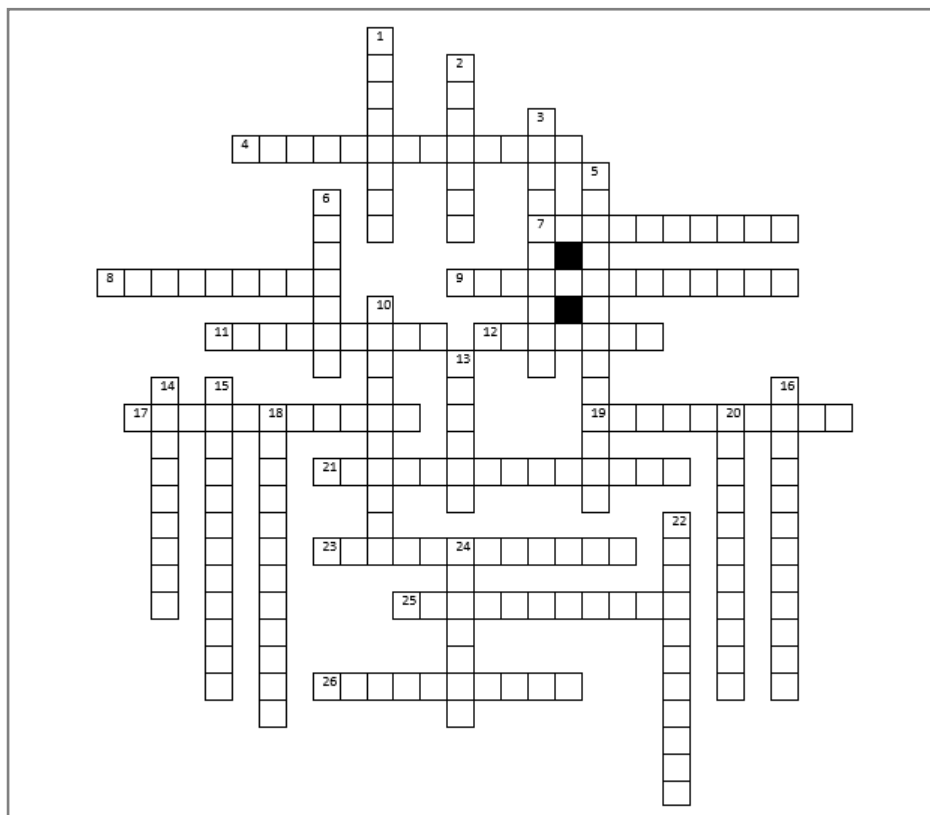
In addition to Peter Firth’s four-session course on the local history of the University Extension Movement, there will be a month-long **Exhibition at the Atkinson in June and July 2024.**



Know your Birkdale Village
Q3 Where’s this?
Answer on page 30



‘All About Spring’ Crossword



Across

4. 17th March. (2,8,3)
7. Russian composer celebrating pagan worship (10)
8. First flowers of spring (9)
9. When day equals night? (6,7)
11. A tasty party fountain (9)
12. A sparkling stone for April? (7)
17. Aretha Pepys (anag). We wish you this (5,6)
19. Chinese seasonal food? (6,4)
21. Caesar was warned about this date (3,4,2,5)
23. 5th Avenue annual event (6,6)
25. A wake-up call ends this (11)
26. Dior titans (anag). Things we do every year (10)

Down

1. A strait-laced flower (8)
2. Long pendulous pollen bearers (7)
3. Seven days before Easter (4,6)
5. A day for tricks (5,5,3)
6. Pink and white arboreal delight (7)
10. Worth hunting for? (6,4)
13. Easter cake. (6)
14. Wordsworth loved these (9)
15. What brings May flowers (5,7)
16. One a penny, two a penny? (3,5,4)
18. Irving Berlin's suggestion for a sonnet (6,6)
20. Lots of this going on in seeds (11)
22. Monarch's annual give-away (6,5)
24. Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail? (7)

Answers on page 30

Answers to Puzzles



Across

4. St Patrick's Day
7. Stravinsky
8. Snowdrops
9. Vernal Equinox
11. Chocolate
12. Diamond
17. Happy Easter
19. Spring Roll
21. The Ides of March
23. Easter Parade
25. Hibernation
26. Traditions

Down

1. Primrose
2. Catkins
3. Palm Sunday
5. April Fools Day
6. Blossom
10. Easter Eggs
13. Simnel
14. Daffodils
15. April Showers
16. Hot Cross Buns
18. Easter Bonnet
20. Germination
22. Maundy Money
24. Rabbits

Answers to Picture Questions.

Q1 Graham Eyes in SPAR **Q2** Birkdale Physiotherapy **Q3** Red Rose Tea Rooms

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New Children's Books in the Station Master's House Library

We have added some brand-new novels to our children's section for the new year, helped by a generous contribution from a volunteer. *The Swifts* by Beth Lincoln, a fun murder mystery set in a crumbling stately home, was a Waterstones book of the month for January. Pari Thomson's *Greenwild* is the first in a fantasy series set in a magical green world. We also have *Diamond Jack*, by Anna Rainbow, and *Stitch* by Padraig Kenny.



The young adult section is our best kept secret, and should be part of everyone's reading diet. We have an intriguing new thriller by Sarah Wishart, *Four Good Liars*, ideal if you are missing *The Traitors*. Some of our new graphic novels have been shortlisted for the Excelsior Award, a prize for graphic and manga stories suitable for children. Thank you to Broadhursts Bookshop in Market Street for helping us to choose from their excellent stock in the children's room.

School News

We recently received this letter of support:

The Station Master's House is a wonderful community resource which welcomes and supports our school in many ways.

As school librarian I have taken groups of pupils on visits to tour around the library and computer rooms and take part in fun activities.

Local school librarians run a very successful book award "Sefton Super Reads" and the Station Master's House buys copies of our shortlisted books for pupils in the community to borrow. This really helps to get more copies out to pupils when the school budget does not allow purchasing multiple copies of the same book.

I always introduce and promote the Birkdale Community Hub & Library to our pupils, not only for borrowing books and being able to use the computers and printers when school hours are over, but also for the many events and activities it offers for them and their families.

Joanne Hunter, Librarian, Greenbank High School



Important Numbers and Information

Birkdale Library:	01704 566992
BCHL website:	www.thestationmastershouse.co.uk
Station Master's House:	2 Liverpool Road, Birkdale. PR8 2AR
Birkdale Methodist Church:	Liverpool Road (near Mercedes Garage), PR8 4PD
Fire, Ambulance, Police emergency	999
Police (non-emergency)	101
NHS Health advice	111
Out of Hours GP service	01704 395755
Southport Police Station	0151 709 6010
Southport Community Fire Station	0151 296 6650
United Utilities (emergency)	0345 672 3723
Gas emergency (if gas smell)	0800 111 999
Sefton Council Services	0345 140 0845
National Rail Enquiries	03457 484950
Benefits Enquiry Line	0151 934 3660
Job Centre Plus	0800 1690190
Passport Advice Line	0300 222 0000
Samaritans	116 123
RSPCA Southport	01704 567624

Defibrillators in Birkdale

There are four defibrillators in the Village:

- in the Merseyrail Ticket Office
- on the side wall of ex Lathom's Bakery
- on the side wall of Morrisons Daily over the line.
- St Peter's Church



The next issue of the Birkdale Buzz will be out in June 2024



**We would like to extend our thanks to
Price Right Print Ormskirk
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