

ISSUE 7

Southport's Journey

MAGAZINE

S.F.S
A SHOW BOLD & ALIVE

**YOUR
AUGUST
GUIDE**

SOUTHPORT
ARTS
FESTIVAL 2025

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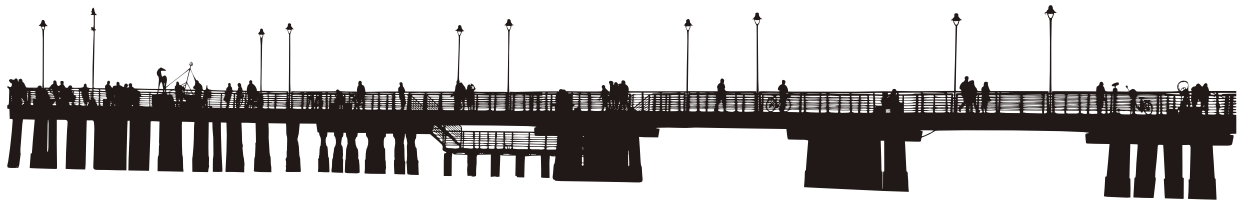
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— *INTRO*

Southport: The People, The Passion, The Legacy

Welcome from the editor



Welcome to the August edition of Southport's Journey.

There's something about this time of year—a golden glow in the evenings, the gentle loosening of routines, and that familiar hum of a town in full swing. Southport is alive with it: festivals, family days, local markets, international guests, and that slow summer pause where connection feels just a little easier.

This month, we're celebrating the new.

New writers have joined us, bringing fresh voices and brilliant ideas to the page. New businesses are making their mark. And new friendships are forming through shared passions, community spaces, and chance meetings at pop-ups, parks, and cafés.

There's a noticeable shift—a town not just keeping pace, but setting one. Whether it's a flower show tradition reimaged, a creative summer camp, or a simple ice cream van pulling up at just the right moment, these stories reflect a Southport that is vibrant, supportive, and full of possibility.

As we soak in the last of the summer sun, this issue is an invitation to pause, notice, and appreciate all the ways our town shows up—for each other and for what's next.

Thanks for walking this journey with us—

Lizzie Barnett

Welcome your *Journey* starts here



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Delve into a park bursting with colour, creativity, community spirit, and joyful summer celebration.

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**SOUTHPORT ART'S
FESTIVAL 2025**

This August join in a joyful celebration of creativity, community, performance, and local talent.



**TO FRANCE AND
BACK AGAIN!**

Discover a 7-year-old's love for swimming and her inspiring charity challenge.



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Flower Sew 101

VICTORIA PARK

Passion. People. Performance. Progress.

In the heart of Southport, something is always growing—and we're not just talking about flowers. For over 100 years, the Southport Flower Show has been blooming into one of the UK's most iconic outdoor events, drawing more than 50,000 visitors annually and pumping over £5 million into the local economy. But what really makes it flourish? A dedicated army of volunteers, a resilient spirit, and a park that never sleeps.



Victoria Park spans 34 acres and is cared for year-round—not just during showtime. It's one of the finest outdoor event spaces in the Liverpool City Region, open to the public most days of the year, with temporary closures only when safety or event logistics demand it. The park isn't council-run; since 1991, it's been managed by the Southport Flower Show charity, which receives no council tax funding. Every penny comes from ticket sales, bookings, and community support. And it shows.

What started as a traditional flower show has evolved with the times—now boasting wellness tents, alpacas, celebrity garden talks, and the famously sold-out Ladies Day. The show remains friendly, inclusive, and family-oriented. Whether you're a celebrity guest, a first-time visitor, or a volunteer, you're treated like part of the Southport story.



Victoria Park now hosts events with capacities reaching 15,000—including food and drink festivals and the much-loved comedy festival, with new events being added all the time. The show's artwork often features pieces by local artists, and behind the scenes, a small but incredibly dedicated office team works alongside an essential crew of volunteers—going above and beyond every year to make each show better than the last.

So next time you walk through Victoria Park or buy a ticket to the Flower Show, know you're not just attending an event—you're investing in Southport's identity, its economy, and its future.

From the sceptics to the superfans, there's one thing we can all get behind: Southport deserves to be proud of its roots—and even prouder of how it's growing.



With heartfelt thanks to Alan and his dedicated team, to the incredible volunteers who bring every Victoria Park show to life, and to MAF Photography for capturing the magic so beautifully. Your passion and commitment make it all possible.



ALAN ADAMS: MR FLOWER SHOW!



If Southport Flower Show has a beating heart, it's Alan Adams. Alan started volunteering in 2005, drawn in by the smiles and spirit of the event. Over the years, he's worn many hats—from volunteer, volunteer manager to trustee director, and now General Manager of both the Flower Show and Victoria Park. His job isn't easy.



When the world stopped in 2020, Alan was there with a very reduced team keeping the park alive during months of cancellations and quiet. He nearly handed back the keys back to the council, but his passion wouldn't let him.

“I couldn't do it without my team and the help of hundreds of volunteers”

Since then, he's helped the show come roaring back, evolving the park to include music, comedy, markets, and more, all while preserving the community soul that makes Southport special.

“It's the best job he's ever had—and the hardest”

Alan says it's the best job he's ever had—and some of the hardest but is blessed with a great team who are equally committed to the cause as he is. But when the crowds arrive and the park bursts into life, he knows it's worth every minute. Next time you're in Victoria Park, remember: behind every blooming flower and smiling face is a story of dedication, heart, and a town proud to keep growing.



“ These fish rise together,
facing the wind as one — a
reminder that even in
stillness, unity gives us
strength, and movement
begins with those brave
enough to lead. ”

These tall, wind-swayed fish rising above Southport's sea wall are more than decorative—they're a quiet tribute to the town's tide-turning shift towards creativity and renewal. Installed to echo our coastal roots and inspire movement, they remind us that art doesn't always sit behind glass—it can dance in the wind, stand out in the everyday, and guide us towards something new. Like sentinels of change, they point not just to the sea, but to the future of a town beginning to see itself through the lens of expression, connection, and quiet pride.



Life's a journey

What's on this

August

A Concert for Queenscourt

Queenscourt Musical Theatre Company is thrilled to bring A Concert for Queenscourt back to Ormskirk Civic Hall for a second sensational year! Taking place from 11th–13th September 2025, this spectacular event promises an exciting journey through the world of musical theatre — from golden-age classics and iconic movie musicals to today's chart-topping hits and brand-new numbers.

Expect dazzling vocals, stunning harmonies, and heartfelt performances, all in support of a wonderful cause. Whether you're a lifelong theatre lover or a newcomer, this uplifting concert offers something for everyone.

Book your tickets today!



A Concert FOR Queenscourt

Thursday 11th & Friday 12th September 7.30pm
Saturday 13th September 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Ormskirk Civic Hall

NODA Adults £20 | Children £15 (15 and under)

Scan the QR code or visit
queenscourt.org.uk/concertforqueenscourt

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Julie B.

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Activate & Elevate is a transformative 12-week live virtual course designed by spiritual life coach Julie to help you step off the exhausting treadmill of everyday life. Especially tailored for those navigating perimenopause, this journey supports you in releasing what no longer serves your wellbeing and aligning deeply with what truly ignites your passion and joy.

Through gentle guidance and powerful tools, Julie helps you create a balanced, fulfilling pace—mind, body, and spirit. If you're ready for real change and connection, join Julie's supportive community.

Local Southport clients can also benefit from in-person sessions.

www.juliebcoaching.com/activate-elevate

Learn & Relax Mini Retreats

At its heart, functional medicine is deeply personal. It's not just about meal plans or quick fixes—it's about nourishment, from the inside out. Grounded in nutrition and supported by lifestyle medicine, this approach honours your full self—body, mind, and spirit. It's about slowing down, listening closely, and understanding your whole story—not just your symptoms. Together, we gently uncover what's truly going on, and walk step-by-step toward changes that feel possible, sustainable, and kind.

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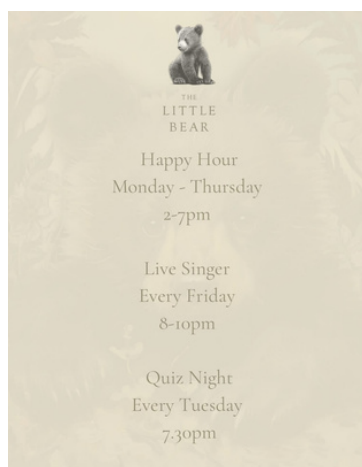
Mini Relax and Learn Retreats

Sep '25	Balancing Hormones in Perimenopause
Oct '25	Sustainable Health, Weight & Mindset
Nov '25	Digestive Wellness
Feb '26	Sustainable Health, Weight & Mindset
Mar '26	Living Well with Cancer
Apr '26	Mood, Mind and Nervous System Health
May '26	Staying Well with Autoimmune Conditions

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WHAT'S ON



Got something going on in Southport?
We're always on the lookout for local events to feature in our What's On page—from community meetups to creative workshops, charity fundraisers, live music, and everything in between. Send us the details at southportsjourney@gmail.com and let us help spread the word!

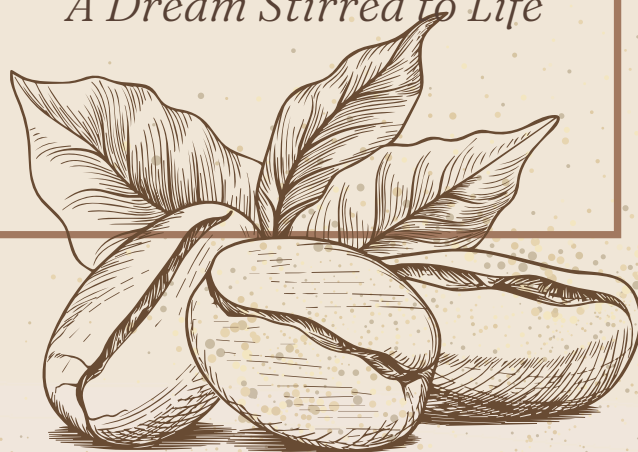
WWW.SOUTHPORTSJOURNEY.COM



A Success Story of

Roxy's Cafe

A Dream Stirred to Life



“It’s a journey,” she says. “It should resonate—you should feel it.”

As I step inside Roxy's Café, I'm met with a smile that feels like home, the rich aroma of freshly brewed coffee, and the sweet temptation of Italian pastries drifting from the counter. There's an instant sense of ease—as if I've stumbled into a little slice of somewhere sun-soaked and far away. That authentic Italian taste, right in the heart of Southport. Each bite and sip is more than food—it's a brief, beautiful escape.

“I always dreamed of it,” Roxy shares. “I was always interested—and my husband helped me make that dream real.” From the moment she got the keys, every inch of the café has been lovingly renovated, with a blend of her creativity and his craftsmanship.

“My brain, his hands—we're a good team.”

“You can feel the pride in every detail, from the silky smooth whipped coffee to the sweet treats that line the counter. Coffee here isn't just made—it's understood. “It's a journey,” she says: “It should resonate—you should feel it.”

Roxy's passion is infectious. With two fabulous children and a steady stream of loyal regulars, there's a rhythm to the café that keeps people coming back. The coffee is strong (double shot flat whites are a favourite), the atmosphere genuine, and the welcome unforgettable. People come for the coffee—but they stay for Roxy.

You can find Roxy's Cafe on London Rd Southport





Something inspiring is
starting—let's connect,
move, and grow together.



The Level Up Network.

Level Up

Ever felt like traditional networking—sit-down meetings and stiff greetings—just didn't feel like you? Enter the Level Up Network, a fresh take on meeting and supporting local businesses by bringing the conversations into Southport's streets.

Each meet-up starts at a different independent business—whether that's a café, shop, or creative space. Small groups walk, chat, and connect organically, before looping back to the host venue. It's simple: walk beside someone, talk about what matters, and you'll naturally discover how to help each other—no awkward elevator pitches needed.

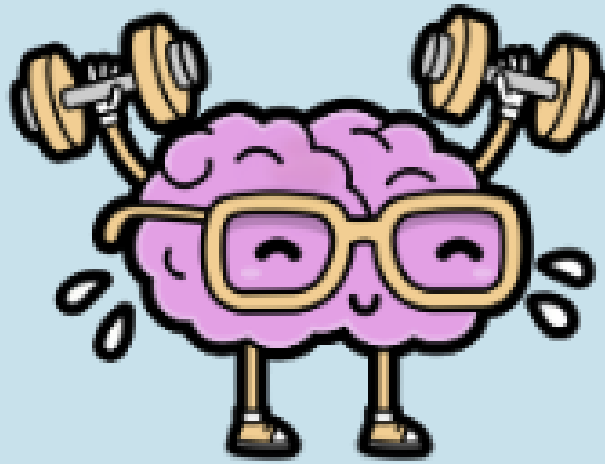
This idea isn't entirely new. Across the UK and beyond, activities like "netwalking" and "rucking meetings"—essentially walking while networking—have gained traction because of how well they foster real conversation and ease social tension.

Being outdoors and active lets people open up in ways that stuffy boardrooms can't.

But what makes Level Up special is its local focus. Every walk spotlights a Southport business, giving hosts a genuine platform to showcase their work—and attendees a chance to explore their town in a whole new way. The energy is contagious: you'll meet a new contact, learn about a local maker, or get inspired by a café owner's story—all while moving through the place you call home.

Looking to launch a new project, grow your reach, or just connect more deeply with your community? Lace up your shoes and walk with us.





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I CAN!
EDUCATION



PATTERN, ESSENTIAL FOR EARLY YEARS

Curiosity lays the groundwork for crucial developmental skills across mathematics, language, and scientific thinking. But pattern-making is more than lining things up; it's about noticing, exploring, and building the ability to explain why things are the same... or different.

F

From the earliest stages of life, children are natural pattern seekers. They instinctively search for order in

the world around them—through repetition, rhythm, and arrangement. One beautifully simple and engaging way to explore this is through shells.

Spread a small collection of shells out in front of a child, and you'll see their brain begin to whirl. Which are similar?

Which feel the same? Are some heavier, shinier, or more cracked?

This early stage of spotting similarities and differences is far more than a sorting task—it's a foundation for vocabulary development. As a child describes what they see, they stretch their language. This one has bumpy lines," "That one's got a swirl,"

or "These are pointy." We begin to hear the language of comparison, classification, and descriptive thinking emerge.

From there, children often begin to make patterns of their own—without instruction. Two stripy shells, then a smooth one... then another two stripy. It's not about teaching a right or wrong way, but allowing them to explore pattern freely. What 'rules' will they create? What stories will they attach to the sequence?

And the shells themselves are rich in patterns: the spirals of a whelk, the radiating ridges of a scallop, the dappled dots on a cowrie.

Encouraging children to interact with the natural world in this way helps them slow down, look closely, and think deeply. Pattern-making becomes not a task, but an exploration—one that helps shape how they see, speak, and understand the world around them.



Noticing these natural designs can lead into stories—Why do snails have shells? What animals live in them? Are all shells empty? These moments fuel curiosity and build bridges between literacy, science, and creative thinking.

“

Wellness begins in stillness —
when we pause long enough to
breathe, we invite clarity, calm,
and the quiet return of
ourselves.”

”



This summer, give yourself permission to stop — just for a moment. In the stillness, the noise quiets, the nervous system softens, and the mind begins to settle. It's in these gentle pauses that we begin to see things differently: new ideas bloom, perspective returns, and inner calm starts to replace the chaos. Taking time to reflect isn't a luxury — it's a necessity. Whether it's five minutes under the sun or an afternoon away from your phone, every breath taken in awareness is a step toward healing. Let this season be your soft reset.

SPOTLIGHT

Southport's

ART FESTIVAL

MORE THAN AN EVENT — A MOVEMENT
TOWARDS IDENTITY



THE FESTIVAL IS ABOUT MORE THAN PERFORMANCES; IT'S ABOUT MAKING SOUTHPORT SEE
ITSELF AS A CREATIVE COMMUNITY," SAYS ONE ORGANISER.

This summer, Southport steps confidently into its future as a vibrant hub of arts and culture. The Southport Arts Festival isn't just nine days of live music, poetry, and galleries—it's a statement: Southport is a town that celebrates creativity in all its forms.

For years, Southport's image is often tied to its seaside charm and retail scene. But behind the scenes, a growing community of artists, musicians, and performers is shaping a new narrative. The festival brings that creative energy into the spotlight, uniting artists and audiences in a shared celebration of local talent and culture.

ART

Building Community Through Creativity

At the heart of the festival is a powerful desire to connect people—to build community ties through shared cultural experiences. From choirs to young musicians, magic acts to gallery trails, the event invites everyone to take part, whether as performers or spectators.

This emphasis on community marks a deliberate shift toward making the arts accessible and relevant to all. It shows that culture doesn't live only in galleries or theatres—it thrives in markets, cafés, and open spaces—right where people gather.

"The beauty is seeing familiar faces come together, discovering new talents in unexpected places," remarks a Tony Wynne one of the curators of the festival.

Scouse Van C



CULTURE

Over a Decade in the Making

The Southport Arts Festival is the result of a long-held vision sparked over a decade ago by local artist and educator Tony Wynne. Born from early partnerships with the council and inspired by the Waterfront Arts Project in the old casino block (2010–2017), the festival builds on years of creative collaboration. From pop-up events in 2011 and 2014 to Southport Artists for Ukraine in 2022, the festival has grown into a town-wide celebration—now powered by the Southport Arts Initiative and its founding partners, Andrew Portersmith MBE and theatre director Suzy Walker, alongside Tony Wynne.

“Aspiration is the driver in everything we do—especially when it comes to young people and their creative futures, says Tony Wynne.”



TALENT

Setting the Stage for the Future

The Southport Arts Festival 2025 lays the foundation for a recurring celebration of creativity that grows with the town. By spotlighting local talent and making use of familiar venues, the festival sends a clear message: arts and culture belong at the heart of Southport's identity—now and moving forward.



Follow the events through their social media pages Southport's Arts Festival 2025

SOUTHPORT'S SUCCESS

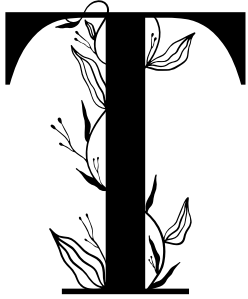
THE QUIET MAGIC OF CREATIVITY



Comfortably Heard



Sarah McEntee our expert shares her guidance and knowledge



here's something stirring in Southport this summer. From street performers

to art trails, live gigs to craft pop-ups, it feels like creativity is taking centre stage, and rightly so. But it's got me thinking... why do we so often treat creativity like it's something reserved for the elite? Great painters. Genius musicians. Award-winning writers. As if you need a BAFTA or a battered paintbrush to call yourself creative.

But the truth is, creativity is everywhere. It's not just in galleries and theatres, it's in kitchens, classrooms, back gardens and boardrooms. It's in the way someone styles a charity shop outfit like they're on the front cover of Vogue. It's in the dad who makes up bedtime stories on the spot. It's in the teenager editing TikToks with film-school-level precision. And yes, it's even in spreadsheets, don't tell me turning a chaotic calendar into a thing of colour-coded beauty isn't an art form.

Just last week, my boss claimed, very earnestly, that he wasn't a creative person. But within five minutes of talking, it was obvious: the way he gets people onboard with new ideas, the way

he pitches, presents, and persuades, it's a form of storytelling. A quiet kind of creativity, hidden under a lanyard and a meeting agenda.

We don't always give that kind of creativity its due. Maybe it's because it doesn't come with a standing ovation or a shiny award. But it should come with respect. Because in a world that's changing fast, creativity is often the thing that keeps us afloat. It's how we solve problems. It's how we bounce back. It's how we make something out of nothing, whether that's a business, a community event, or a decent dinner when the fridge looks empty.

Some of our greatest leaders were deeply creative. And our most successful entrepreneurs, from Richard Branson to the local shop owner with a knack for window displays (hello Northwest Air Ambulance Shop window) have used creativity to carve out something new. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that tapping into your creativity (in whatever form it takes) is often the secret ingredient to success. Not just the kind of success that's measured in money but the kind that feels like freedom, like flow, like finding your thing.

So, this summer, as the town comes alive with colour, music and imagination, I hope you'll

join me in celebrating all forms of creativity. The loud ones. The quiet ones. The ones still hiding in your 'maybe one day' list. Because Southport isn't just a seaside town, it's a town full of creative minds, beating hearts, and people doing life with flair.

And that?

That's pretty magical.

Comfortably Heard

A Creative Reminder

- Creativity isn't just for artists – it lives in meetings, menus, and messy to-do lists.
- Problem-solving is a creative act – don't underestimate it.
- Your “maybe one day” ideas deserve space.
- Respect the quiet forms of creativity too – not all magic makes noise.
- Creativity is your power tool in business, life, and community building.

Remember
creativity
is intelligence
having fun.
– Albert Einstein

BUILT TO PERFORM

Meet Mike Settle

I COACH EVERYONE FROM BEGINNERS TO ATHLETES, WITH HONEST ADVICE THAT CUTS THROUGH THE NOISE. EXPECT REAL TIPS ON TRAINING, MINDSET, NUTRITION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION.

I always recommend gymnastics as the ideal foundation for any young athlete. It teaches body awareness, posture, and movement control — essential tools that carry over into every other sport and discipline. Each month in this column, I'll be bringing you honest, practical advice on training methods, nutrition, and supplementation — cutting through the fluff and focusing on what actually works. ➔

“Keep evolving, keep thinking, keep pushing yourself. Stay on top of it.”

I've lived in Southport my whole life, and my journey into fitness began at a young age at Ainsdale YMCA, where I trained in gymnastics. I was selected for the competition squad and went on to represent both Sefton and the North West at national level, winning multiple medals alongside some of the UK's top gymnasts — including Olympic medallist Daniel Purvis. Much of that success is thanks to my first coach, Jeff Brooks, a legend in the local gymnastics scene whose training philosophy still shapes how I coach today.

Still hungry for competition after gymnastics, I transitioned into martial arts and began training under Phil Barton - another local legend in the martial arts scene — at Elite Kickboxing & MMA. There, I won multiple area and national titles while training

alongside world-class fighters such as Kev Ward (world kickboxing champion), Liam Gittins (Cage Warriors champion), and Jack Kennedy (Thai boxing world champion) — all Southport lads.

These days, my competitive focus is on functional fitness, including HYROX, CrossFit, and hybrid-style events. Last year, I won the Arnold Fitness Games in the Masters category — one of the biggest and most competitive functional fitness events in the UK, held at the NEC Birmingham as part of the Arnold Sports Festival, which brings together thousands of elite athletes and fitness fans from around the world.

I work with everyone from beginners to elite athletes, offering 1:1 coaching, group sessions, and a local run club that values community as much as performance. In this column, I'll share practical advice, training tips, and local fitness events to help you reach your next goal — whatever it may be.

**Follow on instagram
@hogansettle**



TOP TIP

WHY WEIGHTS ARE YOUR FRIEND THIS SUMMER?

Strength training doesn't just shape your physique — it protects it. After 30, we lose up to 5% of muscle mass every decade if we're not lifting, which slows metabolism and increases injury risk. For women, it's even more crucial — resistance training helps prevent osteoporosis and bone loss later in life. And no, weights won't make you bulky. They'll make you strong, athletic, and confident.



DISCOVER CONNELL COURT CARE HOME

A TRUSTED NAME IN CARE SINCE 1976



Nestled in the heart of Southport, Connell Court Care Home has been providing high-quality, person-centred residential care for over four decades. Purpose-built and thoughtfully designed, their 37-bedroom home offers both long-term residency and respite care in a warm, welcoming environment. Connell Court's long-standing management, in-house chaplain, and dedicated care team remain at the heart of the home, ensuring continuity, familiarity, and trusted support. Recent refurbishments have further elevated the comfort of their facilities, including beautifully updated bedrooms designed with residents' wellbeing in mind.

This summer, Connell Court truly came to life with its lovely Garden Party on Saturday 19th July. As the sun shone over Southport, residents, families, and staff gathered to enjoy an afternoon of joy and connection. Homemade cakes—baked fresh on the premises—were shared over flowing cups of tea and coffee, while a beautiful live piano performance filled the room with warmth and nostalgia.

Laughter echoed through the garden as guests enjoyed a lively tombola, followed by classic garden games that sparked friendly competition and heartfelt conversation. The event was more than just a party—it was a celebration of community spirit, a testament to the care and joy that defines life at Connell Court.

Visit Connell Court Care Home and see for yourself what makes it such a special place.

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20-22 Weld Road, PR8 2DL



AN INSPIRATIONAL GUIDE TO

SUMMER ESCAPES

Cath Reese travel consultant

When couples come to me dreaming of their perfect romantic escape, the Maldives often tops the list—and while it's a stunning destination, I love introducing people to options they may not have considered.

Take the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express: a three-day journey of pure nostalgia and indulgence. Board in Paris, glide through Tuscany, and sink into your art-deco cabin with champagne in hand—it's a love story on rails.

Or there's Jade Mountain in St Lucia, where rooms melt into the horizon and your infinity pool opens to the Pitons. It's organic, peaceful, and impossibly beautiful.

For something cooler, quite literally, an Alaskan cruise is unforgettable—imagine spotting whales from your ocean-view suite, surrounded by glaciers and vast, wild silence.

But romance doesn't have to involve a passport. Sometimes the most meaningful moments are found close to home. A staycation in Southport might be just what your relationship needs—think coastal walks, late brunches, and soaking in sea air with no airport queues. From boutique guesthouses to seaside spa hotels, Southport offers that slow, reconnecting pace so many of us crave. Sometimes, love grows best just down the road.

travelcounsellors.com/cath.reese

Making Waves

To France... and back again!

At just 7 years old, one incredible swimmer is making serious waves – both in the pool and in the hearts of everyone who meets her.

Charlotte started swimming lessons at age 3 and has fallen in love with the water. Supported by a devoted family, she's been given the freedom to dive headfirst into her passion. "Fish swim, swim, swim – my feet are becoming webbed," she jokes. But behind the humour lies hard work, dedication, and a dream of one day becoming a marine biologist.

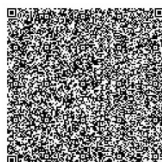
Already, she's swum 27.35 miles – the distance to France – and is now "swimming back," she says with a grin. She's passed all her badges, tried water polo and synchronised swimming, and recently inspired her whole village with a sponsored swim to "France" – a 42-mile round trip challenge completed to support Macmillan Cancer Support and earn her Brownies charity badge. The cause is deeply personal to Charlotte, who sadly lost her grandmother to cancer and wanted to give something back to the organisation that helped her family.

What started as lessons with her favourite swim teacher, Charlotte Hughes, has turned into something much bigger. Charlotte speaks with excitement and pride about everything she's achieved so far. She's created her own posters, involved her Brownie group, and even helped raise funds at Tesco with her friends Aubrey and Amelia—always smiling, always eager to share. The fundraiser, organised by Aubrey's mum, was a real team effort. Her love for swimming, guided by Southport Swimming Club coaches Eleanor, Jess, and Charlotte, is infectious—and her hugs and joyful energy are inspiring others to take the plunge too.

Swimming up to twice a day, chasing goals like completing 25 metres in 25 seconds, Charlotte shows what's possible with dedication, support, and a strong sense of purpose.

With her sights now set on entering her first galas and continuing to smash her personal bests, she's not slowing down any time soon. From doggy paddle to front crawl, Charlotte is ready for whatever challenge comes next – and she's diving into the future with focus, determination, and a smile.

If you've been inspired by Charlotte's story and would like to support her fundraising efforts for Macmillan, you can donate directly to her page by scanning the QR code below. Every little bit helps her swim further – and make an even bigger impact.



“ She motivates the others – even those older than her – and is always aiming to beat her own times. ”

13 July 2025 10:00

A Thriving Village Hub

What happens when a much used and loved local facility like a public library is lost due to austerity cuts? Well, in Birkdale's case, the answer is that we created a new charity, the Birkdale Community Hub and Library, found a new venue, raised over £200k, and recruited over one hundred volunteers to run the operation at no cost to the public. All this would not have happened without a heart-warming amount of support from local people, anxious to restore the old facility but, more importantly, to create a space and an organisation that would focus on getting people together in all sorts of ways.

How are we doing? Since opening in 2021, the Library in Birkdale village is busy, and we have created another branch at the Liverpool Road Methodist Church. We stock over 8000 books and over 1000 jigsaws. We have a thriving mix of groups (such as reading, creative writing, discussion, crafts, Lego, Storytime, computing, chess, gardening, map reading), we offer a Warm Welcome for people to get together on Thursdays and provide a Home Visit book service to those unable to leave their homes.

“ All this would not have happened without a heart-warming amount of support from local people ”

These efforts were recognised on a national scale last year when we received the King's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest honour available to voluntary groups. Are we sitting back? No way, we're always looking to widen our activities. The latest possibility is a Community Workshop at the church branch for locals to meet, learn and share their skills.





Hello friend?

The quiet courage of making friends as an adult.

Why saying "Will you be my friend?" might be the most radical thing you do this year. When we were five, it was simple. You spotted someone with sparkly shoes or a dinosaur lunchbox, and the words tumbled out: "Wanna be my friend?" Done. Friends by snack time.

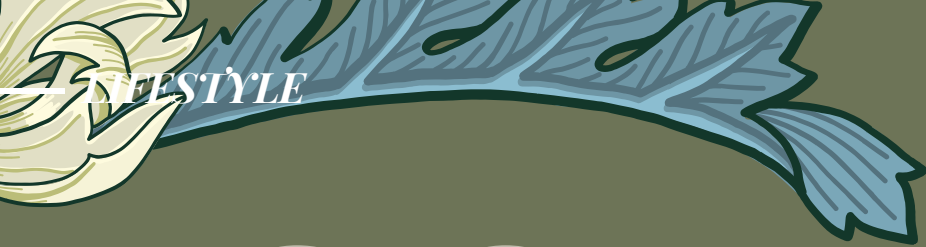
But as adults, something shifts. We get cautious. Polished. Quiet. Friendship becomes a slow dance of proximity—someone we see often enough, laugh with occasionally, maybe text if we're feeling bold. Rarely do we say, outright, "I'd like to be friends."

Recently, I noticed this missing moment in real life and fiction alike. In *Beauty and the Beast* [which is on my mind as I've just been part of an amateur production of it at the Little Theatre in Southport – which BTW has been, and continues to be, a rich source of friendship] Mrs. Potts warmly tells Belle, "I hope that we'll be friends, though I don't know you well."

And I thought: that's it. That's the thing we don't do anymore. We don't signal that we're open to friendship. We wait for it to happen—naturally—whatever that means.

I'm someone who considers themselves a collector of people. Once you're in, you're in. But even I notice how rare it is, as an adult, to acknowledge the becoming of a friendship—to name it, even celebrate it. I've met some great people lately, people who I've felt at ease with, some sort of affinity, people who I've felt a spark of joy just being around. I've thought: I'd like to be friends. But I didn't say it. Why not? Is it fear of rejection? Do we worry we'll come off too intense? Or have we been taught that new, deep connections are meant to belong to youth? There's a moment in Aaron Sorkin's *The Newsroom* where a character tells someone she's just met, "I feel like we're going to be great friends." It's bold. It's hopeful. It's refreshingly uncool. And I love it.

Simon Sinek calls friendship "the ultimate lifestyle hack." Studies back him up. According to Harvard's nearly 80-year-long Study of Adult Development, close relationships—not fame or wealth—are what keep people happy and healthy as they age. Friends buffer stress. They boost our immune systems. They quite literally help us live longer. So why are we so shy about making more? Maybe it's time we started treating friendship less like a lucky accident and more like something we can choose. What if we said: I like you, and I'd like to know you better. What if we dared to go first? Let's bring back the childlike bravery of saying, "Will you be my friend?" Because we all need one. Or two. Or ten. And maybe—just maybe—someone is waiting for you to ask.



LOCAL LOVE



Interiors Edit

Small changes can make a big impact—and when it comes to refreshing your space, we're all about clever updates that feel effortless.

Think mirrors that bounce the light around, or a throw in a trending colour that lifts the whole room. This season, olive green and butter yellow are having a moment—bringing calm, warmth, and a touch of sunshine indoors. And the best part? Everything you need to refresh your space can be found right here in Southport.

From handcrafted homeware to locally sourced styling gems, here's our pick of this summer's must-haves—and exactly where to find them.



1. DAVID BOOTH ARTIST-ARTWORK 2. NEPTUNE PAINT -SAGE 3. DUNELM-FRESH EUCALYPTUS ROOM SPRAY

4. SAINSBURY'S- HABITAT X MORRIS & CO. PIMPERNEL CUSHION - GREEN

5. HARVEST MOON-EDISON VINTAGE LIGHTING CLASSIC DISTRESSED METAL TABLE LAMP 6. STOKERS-ODESSA GABRIELLE CHAIR

MILLS
INTERIORS



“

The past doesn't hold us back —
it roots us, so we know where to
grow next.

”

Small towns carry history like a heartbeat — steady, quiet, always present. In places like Southport, the past lives in the architecture, the markets, and the benches where stories have been shared for decades. Journey back with us in the Southport Nostalgia pages, where we preserve the town's rich history while shaping its future. By celebrating astonishing moments, intriguing people, and unforgettable events, we keep Southport's legacy alive. When we honour where we came from, we build a more grounded, thoughtful future.

— INTERVIEW —

LIFETIME MEMORIES YOUR WAY

An interview with Catherine a local celebrant

Catherine can you tell me why you chose to become a celebrant?

After 40 years in the NHS, care and compassion are at the heart of everything I do. I've always found myself at the centre of life's most meaningful moments—especially family funerals—where I realised just how vital it is to make each goodbye truly personal.

Do you have a personal style?

My style is open, inclusive, and rooted in empathy. I work with all sections of the community including traditional, blended and LGBTQ+ families, or if you're looking for something truly non-traditional, I work with you to create something that feels right. It's about people, stories, and memories—never a one-size-fits-all script.

What is a celebrant?

A celebrant is someone who guides and delivers personalised ceremonies that reflect your values, your stories, and your people. Unlike a registrar or religious official, we can host a ceremony anywhere—a beach, a garden, a family home—and bring whatever tone or elements you wish. From non-religious to spiritual or culturally blended services, it's your moment, your way. Whether it's a funeral, wedding, vow renewal, or baby naming, celebrants help shape meaningful milestones into lasting memories.

How do you bring a families vision to life?

From traditional to alternative, I help families bring their ideas to life. Want the grandchildren to read a poem? Prefer laughter to formality? Planning a celebration of life instead of a conventional funeral? Let's do it.

Catherine creates warm, meaningful moments—from first vows to final goodbyes.

How do you make it personalised?

I meet with families, gather their memories, photos, and favourite music, and help shape the ceremony around them. For weddings, handfasting and symbolic rituals are coming back into style, bringing families together through ribbon-tying or sand vase ceremonies. Every event is as unique as the people at its heart.

How do you support a family event?

I bring calm, warmth, and heart to life's big moments—helping you create a ceremony that feels authentic, personal, and completely yours. Whether it's welcoming a new life, saying goodbye, or exchanging vows, I'm here to guide and support every step of the way.

Visit www.ckcelebrants.co.uk



WHY THE FUTURE IS OURS TO MOULD

SOUTHPORT'S JOURNEY TO A INDEPENDENT HUB

Southport has always been a town built by hands—clay-stained, sea-worn, and proudly self-made. From the fertile fields of Banks to the bustling arcades of Lord Street, this coastal gem has long been defined by its trades, its entrepreneurs, and its ability to adapt while holding on to what matters most: community, creativity, and care.

Historically, Southport was a hub of skilled workers. The town thrived on glass-blowers, clock repairers, furniture makers, and florists who. Markets bustled with fresh produce, and the promenade echoed with the sounds of independent traders setting up stalls long before chain stores arrived. Families passed down their crafts, and customer loyalty was built on a handshake and a reputation for excellence.

Today, while many of those original trades have faded, their spirit is far from gone.

In fact, Southport's identity is experiencing a quiet renaissance—driven by a new wave of independent businesses and a shift toward wellbeing, culture, and community-first thinking.

Walk down Wesley Street and be transported to a street filled with independent bustle. Local studio spaces host yoga classes, art workshops, and breathwork sessions. Local coffee shops are run by people who know your name, and your dog's too.

Many of today's entrepreneurs are children and grandchildren of former traders, blending tradition with new purpose. Their businesses often double as social spaces, advocacy platforms, and places of calm amid the chaos of modern life.



The ripple effect is felt across the town. The Southport Market's revival as a creative food and drink space has brought with it live music, local art, and a whole new energy. Pop-ups in repurposed buildings offer a taste of Southport's inventive streak. There's an unspoken understanding among the town's independents: collaboration over competition, passion over profit, people over process.

In essence, Southport has always known how to look after its own. And now, it's doing that again—through the backbone of its independents. By choosing to shop local, to attend a community event, to rent a studio, or simply say hello to the business owner who opens up each morning with pride, we're all helping write the next chapter of the town's story.

Because Southport's greatest trade has always been its people.

Let's hear from a local

These are personal responses and an insight into the top spots in town. This month we hear from Julie a mum of 2 who runs her own business.



Go-to place for coffee or brunch?

I love going to Cove, Birkdale – It is a fabulous meeting spot with amazing food and truly friendly staff.

Favourite local event or tradition?

I look forward to the Southport Air Show every year. It is a fun event for all ages. I like to set up near Marine Lake with a picnic—it's less noisy and still a brilliant view!

Hidden gem shop or stall?

If you haven't been to Silver Moon Crystals – Just off Marshside Road, it is an amazing wholesalers who lets you buy crystals directly at great prices.

Local business recommendation?

I cannot recommend at EB Aesthetics & Beauty enough – Elaine's massages are incredible. She's based above Seven Hairdressers on Bold Street.

Groups or spaces that helped you feel connected?

Fever Dance Company – It's a welcoming space, even for beginners. It's a brilliant mood booster and makes you feel young again.

Hopes for the future of Southport?

I'd love to see more unique events that boost tourism and investment into our historic buildings to preserve their heritage. Though originally from Newcastle, I was drawn here by the warmth of the community.

Want to recommend your favourite places, events, and local gems?
We'd love to hear from you!

 Get in touch: southportsjourney@gmail.com

Quiz

In what year was the first Southport Flower Show held?

Which famous gardening broadcaster opened the 2024 Flower Show?

- A) Carol Vorderman
- B) Justin Fletcher
- C) Adele Roberts
- D) Michaela Strachan

What iconic feature appears annually at the entrance of the Southport Flower Show?

Which landmark Victorian building hosts art, theatre, music, and exhibitions in Southport?

- A) Royal Birkdale Pavilion
- B) Southport Arts Hub
- C) The Atkinson
- D) Victoria Pavilion

Which iconic venue in Southport once hosted The Beatles before they became famous?

- A) Southport Theatre
- B) Floral Hall
- C) The Atkinson
- D) Marine Lake Pavilion

Find the answers on our website



Southport's
Journey

Want to be featured, email southportsjourney@gmail.com