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# Discover...

SEFTON PARK palm house



green pennant award



## ...Sefton Park Palm House

Visiting Liverpool's Sefton Park you can't fail to notice the Palm House rising majestically over the tree tops. After a multi-million pound restoration from a state of dereliction, it was re-opened to the public in 2001. Enjoying a new lease of life as a popular visitor attraction with a lively arts and events programme, it also showcases plants from around the world and is available to hire for weddings, parties and corporate events.

### ...History

Liverpool millionaire Henry Yates Thompson gifted £10,000 to the city to build the Palm House. Originally opened in 1896, it measures 25m high on a base of red granite from the Isle of Mull. There are 3,710 flat panes of glass, all individually cut.

In 1939 the glass was painted in camouflage colours to avoid the reflection of moonlight guiding enemy bombers. However, in 1941 a nearby bomb shattered the glass, but left the main structure intact. It was reglazed and opened again in the 1950's. In the 1980's a lack of repairs meant it was closed and threatened with demolition.

Local residents organised a public meeting in 1991 with 800 people attending. The campaign led to a partial restoration and re-opening in 1993.

In 1997 Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage grants allowed for a complete restoration. Work began in Spring 2000, and the Palm House reopened on September 6th 2001.

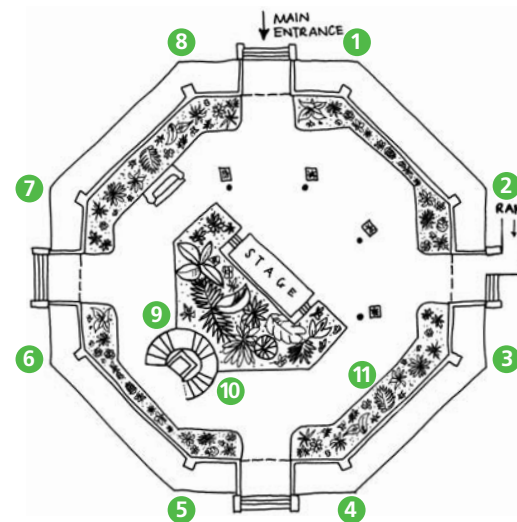
### ...the Restoration

The £3.5 million restoration involved, firstly, the City Council gardeners removing the collection of palm trees and exotic plants to their nursery. Then Shepley Engineers Ltd. of Cumbria dismantled and numbered the cast iron structure piece by piece. These were blast-cleaned and given five coats of protective paint. Only the main eight support beams remained in situ. After returning the iron sections, the glass was replaced. In Summer 2001, the building was re-planted with a collection of exotic plants.



### ...the Trust

Sefton Park Palm House Preservation Trust, a registered charity composed of local residents, manages the Palm House as a venue and visitor attraction. The Trust raises all its own income in order to cover operational costs, make a contribution to the maintenance of the building and to present an arts and community events programme for all to enjoy. It achieves this by hiring out the venue for weddings, civil partnerships, private parties and corporate events. The Trust's mission is to promote and develop Sefton Park Palm House as a beautiful, creative botanical space for Liverpool.



### ...the Statues

The eight external marble and bronze statues by French sculptor Chavalliaud represent world explorers and botanists. A protection coating of wax and resin keeps them in good condition. Clockwise from the main door:

- 1 **Andre le Notre** 17th Century designer of the Versailles gardens and St. James's Park. The first person to describe himself as a landscape architect.
- 2 **Captain Cook** 18th Century naval explorer from Yorkshire, discoverer of New Zealand & Australia, the first European to cross the Antarctic Circle and explorer of the North West Coast of America.
- 3 **Mercator** 16th Century Flemish astronomer & geographer, invented the method of mapping the world by lines of longitude & latitude.
- 4 **Linnaeus** 18th century Swedish botanist who devised the modern system of scientific names of plants and animals.
- 5 **Charles Darwin** 19th Century evolutionist who devised the theory of natural selection in his work *On the Origin of Species* published in 1859, incurring the wrath of the Church and Victorian Society.



Peter Pan



(1) Chamaerops Humililis

(2) Date Palm



(3) Papyrus

(4) Banana Plant

(5) Shell Ginger

(6) Sugar Cane

**6 Christopher Columbus** 15th Century Italian explorer and discoverer of the New World in 1492. On October 12th, Columbus Day, American forces from Burtonwood used to lay a wreath at the statue.

**7 Henry the Navigator** 15th Century Portuguese Prince who captured Ceuta in Morocco and colonised Madeira and the Azores.

**8 John Parkinson** (1567-1650) Apothecary to King James 1. Best known for his book about plants and their medical uses.

Inside the Palm House are three statues

**9 Mother and Child, 10 The Goats and**

**11 Highland Mary** who was the great love of poet Robert Burns.

## ... Peter Pan

This much loved statue by Sir George Frampton was commissioned by JM Barrie, author of *Peter Pan*, as a gift for the visiting public to Kensington Gardens. This replica was commissioned by George Audley for Sefton Park and was launched with a Pageant attended by many thousands on 16 June 1928.

After recent restoration Peter Pan was returned in December 2005 to frolic again in Sefton Park.

## ...Palms and other plants

Our global tour starts with *Butia*, from Brazil, *Trachycarpus* from the Himalayas, *Washingtonia* (named after the American president) from the American southwest, as well as *Chamaerops humilis* (1), the only palm native to Europe. The young leaves of the *Cabbage Palm* (*Livistona australis*) are eaten by Australian aboriginals – but please don't be tempted to try them! Our most edible palm is the *Date Palm* (2), perhaps the oldest known fruit, and we have a fine specimen of about 100 years old, nicknamed *Palm Olive*, belonging to the Palm House's original planting.

In the righthand bed as you enter, you will find the *Panama Hat plant*, often mistaken for a palm and used to make hats, in Ecuador, not Panama.

Although not an edible plant, *Papyrus* (3), between the stage and the spiral staircase, is grown as a crop and is well known as the raw material of ancient Egyptian manuscripts.

*Agave* is distilled in Mexico to make tequila and is an important source of fibres such as sisal.

Look out for flowers and fruit on the *Banana plants* (4) by the South door. On the other side, climbing the metal support, is an *Air Potato vine*, related to the yam.

## Plant Cultures

Exploring plants & people

### The Spice of Life

In the Banana bed you can also find some unusual spices: *Curry Leaf* (*Murraya koenigii*), with leaves that are an essential part of authentic curry, and *Cardamom*, the world's third most expensive spice, also from Asia. Cardamom seeds and pods are a versatile spice for both sweet and savoury foods and said to be a cure for colds. Look out for *Shell Ginger* (5) (*Alpinia zerumbet*). This close relative of true ginger is not used as a spice; instead, it's important in traditional Chinese medicine. *Sugar Cane* (6) is growing nearby. It originated in New Guinea and spread to the Caribbean by way of India and the Mediterranean. In the 18th century sugar and slavery were closely linked and Caribbean sugar did much to fuel the rise of Liverpool and Bristol as wealthy cities.



Images from left to right:  
Crushing sugar cane juice ( Bangalore)  
Nicola Fryer  
Vegetable market (Syhlet town)  
Jane Robinson and Tony Woods  
Ginger rhizomes  
[www.plantcultures.org.uk](http://www.plantcultures.org.uk)

*Plant Cultures* is a unique collection of information, images and stories exploring the uses and meanings of Asian plants. It's freely available for all and includes memories contributed by Liverpool's Asian communities.

To learn more about plants and history, visit Kew Garden's new website:  
[www.plantcultures.org.uk](http://www.plantcultures.org.uk)



(7) Candelabra Plant



(8) Bougainvilleas



(9) Jasmine



(10) Bird of Paradise

## Citrus and other fruits

Over in the European bed, to the left of the main door, is a collection of small citrus plants. *Lemon*, *Orange* and *Lime* trees have all made fruit, but not enough for a fruit salad - more a slice in a drink. By the side of these you will find a *Pomegranate*, which has pretty flowers when not fruiting. Tucked away at the back is a *Fig* establishing itself.

## Evolution

Plants as living specimens adapt to their environment over time. An interesting example of this is the *Euphorbia* in the central bed, which differs from the many varieties you see in gardens. You could be fooled into thinking this one is a cactus. Originating from Africa it is often called the *Candelabra Plant* (7). It photosynthesises through the stems where it stores water, rather than producing leaves which would shrivel up in the heat or get eaten.

We have examples of plants that have been around for hundreds of millions of years: the *Tree fern* by the West Door (earliest ancestors 360 million years ago), and *Cycads* (280 million years).

## Colour and Flowers

The various varieties of *Bougainvilleas* (8) provide us with superb colour nearly all year as they weave their way around the perimeter. The *Jasmine* (9) by the East Door perfumes the early spring.

Other beautiful plants include various *Cannas* between the Main and the West door, the *Bird of Paradise* (10) in the central bed with its distinctive flowers, reminiscent of birds' heads, and the *Angel's Trumpet* with its large white flowers. The *Lantana* from the West Indies is very attractive to butterflies and insects. The variegated foliage of the *Hibiscus* in the Americas bed competes for attention with its red flowers.

Look out for plants growing on other plants (*Epiphytes*) – the dramatic *Stag Horn fern*, the delicate lacy *Spanish moss*, and the *Bromeliad* searching out enough leaf mould for its roots.

## National Collections

Liverpool City Council is proud of its national collections of *Dracaena*, *Codiaeum* and *Coleus* and is currently applying for National Collection status for the *Bromeliads* as it has the largest collection in the UK.

# MERCHANDISE



## Quality Photographic Print

Sefton Park Palm House at twilight in all its glory. This high resolution print is perfect for your home or office or as a gift.

Sizes available:

16" x 12" (40.5cm x 30.5cm)

20" x 16" (50.5cm x 40.5cm)

24" x 20" (61cm x 50.5cm)



## George Melly Print

Painted during his cubist period in 1947. The painting remained in George Melly's family before he donated it to the SPPHPT in 2001.

Limited edition of 1000 prints

Size: A3 (42cm x 29.7cm)



## Limited Edition Prints: Roscoe Collection

Limited (500) edition fine art prints of 6 specimens. Printed on a white, silk-finish, heavyweight paper. Size: A3 (29.7cm x 42cm) Can be purchased individually or as a set of 6



## Limited Edition Prints: Botanical Collection

Limited (500) edition of 8 colour drawings. Taken from original drawings at National Museums Liverpool. Size: A4 (29.7cm x 21cm) Can be purchased individually or as a set of 8



## Postcards /Greetings Cards Invitation/Thank you Cards

Various cards are available for different occasions. All cards are A6 (14.8cm x 10.5cm).

Please contact us for current options and availability on 0151 726 9304 or visit the website.

**Become a Friend** A great way to support Sefton Park Palm House. For more information contact us on 0151 726 9304 or email [info@palmhouse.org.uk](mailto:info@palmhouse.org.uk)

Our full range of merchandise is available at [www.palmhouse.org.uk](http://www.palmhouse.org.uk) or call **0151 726 9304**



# A MEMORABLE EVENT IN UNIQUE SURROUNDINGS

[www.palmhouse.org.uk](http://www.palmhouse.org.uk)

Sefton Park Palm House is available for private and corporate hire. From weddings to barmitsvahs, from conferences to dances, we can offer a full range of services. Please contact us on **0151 726 9304** for more information

## Sefton Park Palm House Preservation Trust

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A large print version of this leaflet is available on request.

The Palm House is open free of charge to the public on most days, but will be closed at certain times for events. Prior notice will be posted at the entrance, on the website and Information line.

Summer (April – October) 10.30am – 5.00pm Winter (November – March) 10.30am – 4.00pm

For information on forthcoming events or for more information visit [www.palmhouse.org.uk](http://www.palmhouse.org.uk) or call us on **0151 726 2415**