

The Pavilion Keeper of The Mount

For hundreds of years, right beneath your feet, tiny grains of sand have been gathering one by one to create a magnificent hill... The Mount! It is one of the most famous sand dunes in all of England.

Celtic warriors, Roman soldiers and Viking raiders all probably stood and looked out across Morecambe Bay from the top of this sandy giant. Even one of the most famous queens of all time visited too, so you are literally standing in the footsteps of royalty!

This sleepy sandy giant known back then as Starr Hill is about to become VERY famous; something VERY exciting is going to happen...

Welcome to Georgian England, 200 years ago... ladies are not allowed to show their ankles, men are expected to grow giant face whiskers and it is considered very rude to look straight into the eyes of a stranger... unusual times! But more importantly a local landowner called Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood (who had amazing face whiskers) is planning a brand new town. He wants to transform the sand dune, the mouth of the River Wyre and the land around them into a stylish new town with a port and a park and guess what... The Mount will be the magnificent centrepiece!

The park around The Mount will have to be really fashionable, with exotic plants from around the world and hidden gardens. If you hunt carefully today you can still see and smell eucalyptus trees from Australia and purple lavender too; they both smell AMAZING! Georgian 'Regency' gardens are magical places with lots of surprises, beautiful colours and the best views. The Mount Regency garden must be fit for kings and queens!

Let's fast-forward a bit... It's 1836 and the first buildings, the Custom House and a pub are being built. Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood has hired a trendy architect called Decimus Burton to design his new town. Apparently Decimus is 'cool, rich and well-dressed', just the man for the job! Thanks to his super ideas The Mount gardens and Fleetwood town are really starting to take shape. How exciting!

Times are changing quickly, though; just a few years later Queen Victoria wants to visit and Fleetwood is a bustling 24-hour port with a new pavilion built on The Mount watching over land and sea. The pavilion helps guide ships into the port; because it's SO high up it's a great place to see and record the weather too... and it's mostly... WINDY!!

Also, a very clever sea captain called Captain Henry Mangles Denham has helped to build three lighthouses to guide bigger ships into port: the Wyre Light, the Pharos Lighthouse and the Lower Lighthouse. Do you know them? There are also powerful steam trains bringing passengers up from London and boats sailing from Fleetwood to Ireland and Scotland. What a VERY busy and VERY important place Fleetwood has become!

BUT... How rude of me!! I was so excited to tell you my beloved town's story that I completely forgot to tell you who I am. My name is Charlie and I was the pavilion

keeper here at The Mount in the Victorian times. Like all other types of keepers (lighthouse keepers, gate keepers, zoo keepers) I have a really important job to do and only I keep the keys!

Every day at the pavilion I have to take weather recordings, like wind speed, wind direction and rainfall amounts, so that all the ships out at sea know what the weather will be like when they arrive at Fleetwood port. I have a smart new piece of equipment called an anemometer that tells me the wind speed and a rain gauge to measure any rainfall.

We don't have computers or phones yet, so I use an electrical telegraph machine to send messages. I tap out Morse code signals for each weather recording and send a telegraph with dots and dashes on it down to the Meteorological Society in London. I get paid £10 a year to do this really important job.

Turn over to the map side and have a go at Morse Code

It's September in 1847 and there are some very important visitors coming to Fleetwood today: Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert are on their way back from Scotland!

In the Victorian times Fleetwood was one of the busiest fishing ports in England; in the top three, some say! Fleetwood is also famous for ferocious storms and fearless lifeboatmen who venture out in all weather to save lives, so I can see why a queen would want to visit.

The queen will be arriving this evening in her Royal yacht steamer ship, accompanied by her other boats, the Black Eagle and the Fairy. They are going to moor up near the North Euston Hotel... I must make sure I wear my best hat!

My friend who works in town at the printers has made her a copy of the local newspaper, the Fleetwood Chronicle, and printed it in gold. I really hope the Queen gives me a wave as they sail past The Mount! I'd better make sure the pavilion windows are squeaky clean and the flag is waving at full mast... The Mount will probably be the first thing they see as they head inland.

Now where are my keys???

Mmmmmm... It would seem that someone has stolen Charlie's keys! Can you spot them on the map?

It's a good job we have courageous coastguards on the lookout here in Fleetwood as there are some very cheeky visitors around The Mount, and often it's very hard to spot them. Victorian whisky smugglers have been known to use secret tunnels that start under the North Euston Hotel and go all the way to The Mount. I hope they aren't hiding under the pavilion!

Talking of cheeky visitors, have you ever heard of the Hairy Boggart...?

During the Victorian times in the 1860s there were hundreds of boggarts in the North of England, and guess what? Lancashire was the hotspot of their mischievous

games! They are very strange-looking creatures, half man and half beast, with a grizzly face and hairy, pointy ears. Boggarts love to steal things and play naughty tricks on you. They are very clever and can change into any animal at any time; they're shapeshifters. They like to live underground and on top of hills too. OH HECK!!

They won't cause you any harm though, if you leave them alone, but they do cause a bit of havoc around The Mount. Sometimes at night time when there is no wind, my lantern will blow out, leaving me with only the stars for light. And occasionally in the mornings my chest will be open with a piece of my equipment missing... in fact, LOOK!... Today there is nothing left in there at all!

When you are walking around The Mount, take care if you spot a small hole in the ground or see a tree with slime on it; clues that the Hairy Boggart might live there. But don't worry, you can always protect yourself by keeping some salt in your pocket; that's the Victorian way.

It's also really important not to name the Hairy Boggart, because if you do, he might follow you home, pull your ears at night time and turn your milk sour, and you can never get rid of them. Saying that, though, boggarts can be very helpful around the house if you look after them and leave a few crumbs of bread out. In fact, a friend of mine has kept one for years that likes to change itself into a ginger cat. Anyone fancy a new furry friend?

Can you help Charlie find his equipment on the map? Watch out for boggarts and smugglers!!

It's 1902 and the start of a new era... the Edwardian period. King Edward VII is now on the throne and I have long since retired as pavilion keeper, but I still like to take a walk around the park, so keep a lookout for me. Big changes are happening at the top of The Mount too. A new octagon-shaped pavilion is being built, with a smart, shiny copper roof... It's the same pavilion you can still see today. It's more than 100 years old!

How many sides has the pavilion got? Each one has a different view and different weather! I wonder what you will spot when you visit...

A little bird also told me that a local man called Isaac Spencer presented a beautiful pavilion clock, in memory of the men who died in World War I, and that it is still ticking today... is that true?

You might also be able to spot a weathervane on the roof; a great way for you all to see which direction the wind is coming from. Watch out when it comes from the north... very chilly! Can you spot the clock and the weathervane? What shape can you see on top?

Talking of little birds, did you know that there are hundreds of different animals and birds that live on and around The Mount? They are always about, and if you walk and talk very quietly you will be able to spot them. Let me tell you where the best places to see them are...

In the park I often see seagulls soaring in the skies above and I hear little garden birds tweeting in the trees. In summer I have spotted sparrows, blue tits and blackbirds looking for worms, and once I even spied a rare yellow-browed warbler passing from Siberia!

When the beautiful flowers are in bloom you might spot some helpful bees and beetles busy pollinating too. They make sure that the flowers come back next year. Did you know that bees have five eyes and can't see the colour red! Also, hiding under the ground, right beneath your feet, there could be some seaside-loving reptiles like common lizards and grass snakes; maybe even mice, moles and rabbits!? It's not just humans that love The Mount.

Have a look on the map to see the 'Pavilion Keeper's Wildlife Hotspots'...

I can't lend you my binoculars, I'm afraid, but if you are lucky enough to have some of your own, you can spot all sorts of amazing wildlife from the top of The Mount. On the beach there are little ringed plovers, sanderlings and turnstones all looking for snacks, and if you are really lucky you might spot seals, dolphins and even whales diving through the waves. Fleetwood really is bursting with life if you take the time to see it.

Many years have passed since I was the proud keeper of the pavilion. Many ships have sailed in and out of the port, many thousands of seabirds have soared across the bay, and many little footsteps have climbed up and down The Mount... you might still see or hear mine occasionally!

I feel so lucky to have lived where the land meets the sea; a magical place full of sea shanties, salty stories and amazing places like The Mount. Everywhere you look there are things to remind us of times gone by... a shipwreck out in the bay, a flower in The Mount gardens... and the pavilion, of course! It's good to wonder about the people who left them too.

So, now make your way to the top of the magnificent Mount, that's here for all of us... wonder at the wildlife around you, gaze across the silvery sands of Morecambe Bay and enjoy this little sea shanty that I have left for you...

**Ohhh Ohhh over the bay
the big boats chug and the fisherman sway
the seabirds soar and the dolphins play
on the crest of the waves in the turquoise spray
Up on The Mount where the wind blows free
and the salty air smells like home to me
Watch the ships sail by on the big blue sea
Oh Fleetwood town is the place to be...**

A short history of Fleetwood and The Mount for little ones

1820s A big old sand dune called Starr Hill or Tup Hill has been stood on by Vikings, Romans and Celts and is home to hundreds of rabbits and seagulls. Soon it will become The Mount.

1830s Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood makes plans for a new railway line to link the coast to Preston and London. He is really rich and owns lots of land around Fleetwood. His ambitious plans includes a new town, a port with a sheltered harbour, access to golden sands, clean air and views... what more could anyone want!

1836 Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood hires architect Decimus Burton to design the town. Thanks to his super ideas The Mount Gardens and Fleetwood new town start to take shape.

1838 The old sand dune becomes The Mount... a central point watching over land and sea with a hilltop pavilion constructed on it; it's all about the views! Fleetwood becomes a 24-hour port with state-of-the-art navigation aids and a weather observation point.

1840 The Mount, the pavilion and flagstaff and various lighthouses were part of the new series of navigation aids, a series of landmarks and lights to help guide large ships into port.

1844 Steam trains start bringing passengers up from London Euston and boats sail from Fleetwood to Ireland and Scotland.

1847 Fleetwood is one of the most successful fishing ports in the UK. Queen Victoria also came to visit in this year.

1861 The pavilion is an important lookout for the coastguards too. In this year Sir Peter Hesketh- Fleetwood also builds a stone cobbled wall around The Mount but the locals tell him off, so most of it is removed. You can still see some of it by the entrance lodge.

1886 The Meteorological Office installs an anemometer to measure wind speed. The pavilion keeper sends weather information to Greenwich every day by telegraph. He is paid £10 a year!

1891 The Fleetwood fishing industry is booming; a new steam-powered trawler called the Lark is launched and puffs proudly past The Mount out to sea.

1902 A new octagon-shaped pavilion is built, with a shiny copper roof. It's the same one you can still see today. The pavilion continues to be one of Fleetwood's best-loved landmarks.

1919 Local businessman Isaac Spencer presents the beautiful pavilion clock to the town in memory of the men who died in World War I. It is a registered war memorial. A weathervane is also added so the pavilion keeper can see which direction the wind is coming from.

2021 The Mount Park still looks just like a 'Regency' garden. It really hasn't changed much in the last 200 years. It is also 'listed', which means it is a very special historic place that needs to be looked after. The restoration was completed and thank all the funders involved.

Visitor Information

Getting There

By public transport: The number 14 bus (Fleetwood to Blackpool) stops on Poulton Road, Fleetwood, a 10 minute walk away from The Mount.

Car Parking: There is free car parking at Central car park, Promenade Rad, FY7 6QE.

Find out more at: www.taletrails.co.uk

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