

Formby U3A Newsletter

U3a

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Southport Offshore Rescue Trust



Author, Steve Whitefield.

You are probably aware that Formby famously had the first lifeboat station in the country, but you may not be aware of the lifeboat services that serve our stretch of coastline today. **Local History Group 6** had a fascinating and awe-inspiring visit to Southport Offshore Rescue Trust (SORT).

The old RNLI station closed in 1925 and the coast between the Ribble and Mersey

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estuaries was covered from Lytham and New Brighton. But of course because of the port of Liverpool and increasing leisure activities it is extremely busy. In the 1980s bereaved relatives were campaigning for better rescue services. RNLI were asked to reinstate the lifeboat at Southport but refused. In 1987, Kath Wilson's son lost his life while out fishing with friends. She founded a new independent organisation which has developed into the wonderful service it is today.

The Trust receives no funding from the RNLI; it's one of about a quarter of lifeboat stations which

IMPORTANT: It is vital that our membership record is accurate and up to date. Please ensure that changes to address, emails and telephone numbers are reported to the Membership Secretary as soon as possible. Many thanks.

are independent and all the crew and those who provide support are volunteers and give their time and commitment for no fee. Most of the funding comes from SORT's charity shop in Birkdale which Kath still runs. The crew have a huge range of skills between them and they are trained and accredited at least to equivalent level to the RNLI. For instance, they are all trained in casualty care which involves far more than simple first aid.

Up until the beginning of last year SORT was housed in the old lifeboat station which just wasn't fit for purpose. It didn't even have a toilet! It now has its impressive modern building on Marine Drive which has space to properly house the modern range of kit and equipment it has. There are two boats which have state of the art comms and other rescue equipment. These are launched from tractors which start off as standard agricultural vehicles but are then 'marinised' to enable them to be partially submerged in the sea. There are two ATVs (all-terrain vehicles or quads) which are approaching the size of small cars and are invaluable in supporting SORT's work. Drones are also invaluable. All this kit requires a great deal of money, skill and expertise to use and maintain and much of the maintenance is done by the crew themselves. They have a monthly maintenance night where they spend time servicing all their kit, all their personal specialist clothing and kit as well as the boats, drones and vehicles.

You might think that putting to sea off Southport beach is a relatively simple affair, but the crew has to take account of the weather, the tides, the mud, the sandbanks, the channels and even the shipwrecks. All the rescue work they do is co-ordinated through the coastguard and might involve all their own boats and vehicles plus those from Lytham and New Brighton, the police, lifeguards, the fire service, the coastguard helicopter from Caernarfon. So you can see it's a pretty complex operation and they do a great deal of training and practice exercises to ensure that they are as effective as they can be. They cover a wide range of live incidents: shipping in distress, children lost on the beaches and dunes, ventures in small boats or even on foot, sometimes ill-planned and ill-equipped, people or vehicles stuck in mud etc. The SORT crews are hugely committed and non-judgemental. We should all be grateful they are there.



Quiz

Author, Steve Whitefield, Quiz Group.

- 1) Which country has the world's longest coastline?
- 2) Which is the lowest officer rank in the navy?
- 3) What animal lives in a formicary?
- 4) What is the capital of Mongolia?
- 5) What type of clothing is a glengarry?
- 6) Who was Henry VII's first son?
- 7) Who led the march on Rome in 1922?
- 8) Who was/is the lead singer of the Pips?
- 9) The name of a bombed Spanish town and a painting by Picasso?
- 10) What is the US equivalent of the British Library?
- 11) In which Yorkshire town was "The Last of the Summer Wine" set?
- 12) In which pantomime would you find Alderman Fitzwarren?
- 13) Joseph Smith founded which religion?
- 14) Who wrote "The Wind in the Willows"?
- 15) The Aleutian Islands are part of which US state?
- 16) What is the name given to cooked potato and cabbage, mixed together and fried?
- 17) What was the middle name of the poet Percy Shelley?
- 18) Nuuk is the capital of which country?
- 19) What was the original name of Snickers before it changed in 1990?
- 20) In which city would you find the Clifton Suspension Bridge?

Battles, Bullion and Black Widows



Author, Mary Gregg.

Rather than walk in the cold winter weather **Local History Group 12** opted to ask Julie Kershaw, Blue Badge guide, to come and give us a talk in a warm room whilst having a cuppa. Julie's talk was the three Bs "Battles, Bullion and Black Widows" which covered three separate areas but each being equally fascinating. As we are



not very tech savvy we decided not to have a slide show so Julie kindly provided us with numerous photos which were passed around the group during the talk. Julie's talks are well researched and she has a professional and easy manner when speaking to her audience. At the end of Julie's talk we had a Q&A session followed by another cup of tea and coffee and tasty biscuits. We are looking forward to our next event with Julie, a tour of Churchtown in May.

Lewis Carroll



Authors Ron & Barbara Marsh.

Local History Group 7 enjoyed a great trip to the Lewis Carroll Centre in Daresbury village, Cheshire. Our visit started with tea/coffee and biscuits followed by an extremely interesting and informative talk about Charles Dodgson, the real name of Lewis Carroll. The talk took place in the adjoining All Saints church close to the large stained glass window depicting the life of Lewis Carroll and the characters in Alice in Wonderland. Following the talk, we looked around the church and gift shop before heading across the road to the Ring O'Bells pub for a very enjoyable lunch.

For any groups interested in a visit, contact Sue White bookings@lewiscarrollcentre.org.uk or you are welcome to contact us if you require any further information at barbron75@icloud.com.

Musical Afternoons

Author, Linda Sharratt.

As Ray Charles once said, "Music is powerful. As people listen to it, they can be affected. They respond."

Once a month members of the **Music Group** meet up to listen to an afternoon of music. One of us hosts the session at home and chooses tracks they want to share. There might be instrumental, folk, classical, film scores, jazz, blues, or choral. It varies so much depending on who has had the pleasure of deciding on the programme that month. After listening to one of the tracks we share our thoughts around it. Often there are memories attached or an anecdote to share. We have a mid-afternoon break for refreshments and this is when we have a sociable catch up.

We'd like to invite new people to the group. Why not come along for a taster session to see if it is for you? There's no pressure to host, it is voluntary. You don't have to have a deep understanding of music: it's enough to enjoy listening.

I will be only too happy to discuss any queries you may have. Contact me by email: indigo4943@gmail.com or by phone: 878232.

Quiz Answers

- 1) Canada
- 2) Midshipman
- 3) Ant
- 4) Ulaanbataar (also spelt Ulan Bator)
- 5) Hat or bonnet
- 6) Arthur
- 7) Mussolini
- 8) Gladys Knight
- 9) Guernica
- 10) The Library of Congress
- 11) Holmfirth
- 12) Dick Whittington
- 13) The Church of The Latter Day Saints also known as Mormons
- 14) Kenneth Grahame
- 15) Alaska
- 16) Bubble & squeak
- 17) Bysshe
- 18) Greenland
- 19) Marathon
- 20) Bristol

The St George's Hall Experience

Author, Andy Dickinson.

Local History Group 16 travelled to St George's Hall for 'The History Whisperer' Experience. The 45 minute tour was marketed as an 'Immersive' Journey for an Irish girl called Livie as she led us through sights and sounds of the courts and of prison life at the time St George's Hall was being built. The Neoclassical building was opened in 1854 and became the meeting point of "both opulence and destitution" in the city, contrasting the magnificent Hall with life in the cells.

The story shows that Livie's father and brother were both involved in the construction of the Hall. When her mother was dying her father stole a blanket to keep her warm and was subsequently sent to Australia for the crime. Livie loved to write and her brother stole a pen so that she could continue writing to her father. A moving scene showed a letter she had written placed in a bottle and then tossed into the sea in the hope it would reach him. Her brother was found guilty of theft and followed his father to a penal colony in Australia. The multi-media presentations gave some idea of conditions in the cells and a depiction of her brother's trial in the courtroom.

The general feeling was that the experience was best suited to smaller groups which may have had more time to enjoy the presentations but it was moving story and an interesting look into the social history of St George's Hall in the 1800's none the less! Following the 'Whisperer Experience' some of the group went into the Great Hall for organ recital from Professor Ian Tracey from Liverpool Cathedral.

Liverpool Synagogue Visit



Author, Andy Dickinson.

Local History Group 16 met at the Princes Road Synagogue for a tour of the Grade I listed building which is home to the oldest Jewish congregation in the city. After tea



and coffee on arrival our welcoming and knowledgeable guide gave us a history of the building before we entered the interior of the synagogue. When the congregation outgrew an earlier synagogue in Seel Street in the city centre a larger synagogue was needed. After the designers W and G Audsley travelled widely to study both Eastern and Western art the synagogue was built in 1874 from donations, including £1000 from David Lewis. After a brief history of the

synagogue we were taken inside and what a wow factor was had. The interior is simply stunning and such a contrast from the plain brick outside of the building. The interior is laid out like a Gothic basilica with the Ark at the Eastern end. The aisle is dominated by the beautiful Bimah or reader's desk. The original wooden structure later being replaced by a grander marble design. Our guide then gave us a fascinating insight the Jewish traditions and life of the synagogue in Liverpool, including the Ark of the Covenant and sample prayer scrolls, all given with much Liverpool humour along the way. The synagogue suffered very little damage during the two World Wars but suffered an arson attack in 1979 which caused a lot of damage. Fortunately the restoration has returned the synagogue to the beautiful interior we can see today. Many thanks to Irene Kershaw for arranging such an interesting visit.

Cafe At The End Of The Rainbow

Author, Frances Taylor.

Walking Group 5 were treated to a lovely view of a rainbow towards the end of the March walk with the cafe at the right hand end. The walk started and finished at Pensarn on the North Wales



coast. We walked through Abergele, mainly off road, to Gopa Wood which is managed by the Woodland Trust. We climbed up a zig-zag path to a coffee spot with a good view over Gwrych Castle which is being restored and was used for "I'm a Celebrity." Dropping down, we headed across fields towards the hill fort at Pen-y-corddyn-mawr and had lunch just below it. We walked round the high cliffs surrounding the fort to the village of Rhyd-y-foel. From there we walked down to the Wales Coastal Path and then back to the cafe and cars. The cafe provided tea and excellent carrot cake. The weather was mainly fine with a few light showers.

Coffee Mornings



Author, Andy Dickinson, Membership Secretary.

It is great to see our monthly Thursday coffee mornings continue to be well supported. At our March coffee morning there was a visit from Suzanne Shoonan from the Liverpool based 'The Brain Charity'. Suzanne gave a short talk about their work supporting people with a range of neurological conditions.

Coffee Mornings are from **10:30 to 12:00** on each second Thursday of the month, except August. These are held in the Workshop, Holy Trinity Church, with free coffee and the chance to pick up information about other groups and meet some of your Committee.

Speakers/ events have been arranged for the next few Coffee Mornings and are:

Thursday May 11th: Professionals from Liverpool University are coming to offer free health checks as below. They have been offering these at various locations in Liverpool and Sefton and offered to attend U3A which we thought might be something members would welcome. The small room will be available for privacy.

They will provide the following tests/advice **free**:

- Blood pressure
- Atrial fibrillation (using a hand-held device)
- Height and weight
- 12-lead ECG (if needed)
- Lifestyle advice

They have a team a people who will attend the screening. The people doing the tests are all healthcare professionals (nurses, doctors, allied health professionals) and other staff will take consent and weigh and measure people. They are doing the project to increase public awareness of high blood pressure and atrial fibrillation (the most common irregular heart rhythm) both of which increase the risk of stroke. Cardiovascular disease (including stroke) is one of the main causes of death and rates are high in the North-West and they are part of the Liverpool Centre for Cardiovascular Sciences. They have ethical approval for the study and people will be asked to consent before anything is done. They are taking consent so that they can write to your GP if they find high blood pressure (new diagnosis or if you have known hypertension that is not controlled) or atrial fibrillation. All the results will be explained

and people will be encouraged to make an appointment to see their GP if appropriate. They will record the information and this will be held anonymously (everyone will be given an ID number). They are collecting the data to see how many cases of high blood pressure (new or uncontrolled) or atrial fibrillation (new and already known) are detected via these community health screens and the mean age, number of men and women, etc. People are taking part at community screening events (not via the NHS) so the study requires University ethics not HRA approval. Participation is voluntary.

Thursday June 8th: Sophie from Action Tutoring will be attending at 11am. She will do a 15 min talk and be available for people to talk to. She is from a national education charity that supports disadvantaged young people to achieve academically, by providing tutoring delivered entirely by volunteers, to help them progress to further education, employment, or training. Their vision as a charity is a world in which no child's life chances are limited by their socio-economic background. Sophie is one of the programme coordinators for Liverpool and the North West where they currently partner with a number of schools across Merseyside, Sefton, Crosby, and Southport. They are really keen to engage local volunteers, especially those within the retired community, with these opportunities to join us as volunteer tutors in English or maths for an hour a week. Their programmes are well structured and they provide training, specialist resources, and direct support.

Folk Band at St Peter's



Author, Kathy Steel.

The group entertained parishioners and friends at St Peter's.

Formby U3A Draft Minutes Of The 2023 AGM

Held Wednesday 9th March 2023

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the committee. There being 62 members attending the quorum requirements for the AGM to take place were met, with no objections or abstentions.

..... continued

Apologies for absence: Philip Collins, Pam Ashton, Pat Dunne, Chris and Steve McIlraith, Val Tibbitts, Pamela McKee Noel Blundell, Marilyn Siddons-Smith, Sheila McGuinness, Barbara Gibbons, Jeff Gibbons, Evan Bale.

The chairman explained that the formal aspects of the AGM would take place first, then the talk by Gillian Russell (North West U3A Vice-Chair), followed by an opportunity for informal discussion.

Approval of Minutes of the 2022 AGM: Draft minutes have been published in the April 2022 Newsletter and on the website. There being no matters arising from these minutes, approval was proposed by Martyn Rodmell and seconded by Graham Higley, to be signed by the chairman Helen Lewandowska.

To receive and approve the Annual Report: The Chairman talked through some of the points she wished to highlight.

Formby u3a adopted the Beacon system last October as their computerised record system.

The membership as of the end of December 2022 was 1129. 19 new members joined during January 2023. The Committee have continued in their efforts to support new groups. The regular monthly Coffee mornings have been re-started on the second Thursday of the month, and thanks to all those who have supported these. In addition a monthly informal new members coffee morning has been started at the Queens Social Cafe in Formby.

At the end of December 2022 there were 78 groups. 2 new groups have started during the year and 8 have closed. A couple of groups have closed as leaders have resigned. The committee would welcome volunteers to take on the role of Group Leaders for these, and new groups.

The committee would welcome additional volunteers to join the committee.

Our singing and music groups have been approached about them performing a Christmas concert in 2023 and a keen response was received.

To receive and approve the Treasurer's Report and Independently Reviewed Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2022: The Treasurer reported on the financial statements highlighting the principal sources of income (membership subscriptions) and expenditure. Accounts were prepared on Receipts and Payments basis. She ran through the figures in the report, explaining major expenses. Overall the surplus for the year was £1,165.00, with accumulated reserves of £18,499. A question from the floor on the total surplus led to an explanation of the rules that control how charities can spend these.

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Graham Higley seconded by Patrick Parkes, and approved by the members present, with no objections, no abstentions.

To Appoint an Independent Reviewer: The re-appointment of Kit Robinson was proposed by Nikki Harrison and seconded by Patrick Parkes.

The Chair expressed her thanks and appreciation of the work done by all committee members, to Noel Blundell (Webmaster, Data Manager, and Formby u3a Beacon Site Administrator), Dave Goodwill (Newsletter Editor), and all members who have helped run Formby u3a for the past year.

Election of Trustees: The following committee members are standing for re-election:

Secretary - Evan Bale

Treasurer - Anne Rodmell

Committee Members Nikki Harrison, Martyn Rodmell, Helen Beaver, Andy Dickinson.

Election of Committee Officers: The following new committee members put themselves forward for Committee Officers

Chair - Helen Lewandowska

Groups Secretary - Graham Higley

These names were confirmed en bloc with no abstentions or objections.

Informal discussions were held after the Speakers presentation, but as no items were raised the meeting was closed.

Welcome To Our New Members

Formby U3A is pleased to welcome the following new members.

Pauline Abbott	Jonathan Airey	Peter Broom
Ann Cawley	Margaret Evans	Sue Finnesey
Kevin Gillam	Carol Hamer	Peter Heron
Graham Higley	Kenneth Jones	Allan Lewis
Leonard Morris	Lesley Murphy	Stewart Nairn
Peter Shaw	Patricia Williams	Barry Wilson

Formby U3A Committee 2023-24

Chairman	Helen Lewandowska (2022 Co-opted)	07548 213496	chair@formbyu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Evan Bale (2020)		secretary@formbyu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Anne Rodmell (2019)	621835	treasurer@formbyu3a.org.uk
Membership Sec.	Andy Dickinson (2022)	643971	membership@formbyu3a.org.uk
Group Secretary	Graham Higley (2023)	0780 1261537	groups@formbyu3a.org.uk
Officers	Helen Beaver (2022)	0777 1 717387	1stofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
	Nikki Harrison (2021)	871308	2ndofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
	Martyn Rodmell (2021)	621835	4thofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk

Monthly Meetings

Martin Rodmell, Speaker Organiser.

Speaker meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month in **The Holy Trinity Parish Hall, Formby**. The meetings start at 2.00pm and last about an hour.

Access: There is ramp access to the hall.

Parking: Please remember to enter your vehicle registration number on the electronic pad in the hall foyer each time you park. There is no charge for parking but failure to enter your number will almost certainly result in a heavy fine. If you are unsure what to do please ask for help.

Wednesday 10th May: David Hearn – Battle of the Atlantic. There was an important element of the battle filled by women and older people which makes it a “war story” that is out of the ordinary and 2023 marks the 80th anniversary of the turn in the Battle from defence to taking the battle to the enemy.

Wednesday 14th June: Sing me Merseyside, a Eurovision Song Medley.

Remember to bring your current membership card to all U3A activities. The 2023 card is YELLOW.

Newsletter Contributions informing members of your group and its activities are always welcomed. **Contributors’ names should be given.**

Please send contributions to the Editor, e-mail: ***newseditor@formbyu3a.org.uk*** No e-mail providers guarantee 100% delivery rate and if, 7 days after submitting an article you have not received an acknowledgement one of the e-mail systems failed, so please try again. Formby U3A Committee would like to remind contributors that it is their responsibility and not the Editor’s to check their submitted articles for the grammar, spelling, punctuation etc.

Photographs submitted must be members’ own photos as copyright of third parties’ photos remains with the owner and the Newsletter cannot publish such photos. Please do not send more than 4 photographs and ensure that all people shown are aware that photographs are being taken for inclusion in the Newsletter.

Previous Newsletters: are available at: https://formbyu3a.org.uk/?page_id=331

Next Newsletter: The deadline for articles for the next (September) Newsletter is midday, Thursday, 24th August at the latest.