

Sefton Park Palm House



Author, Catherine Bass.

Local History Group 5 recently visited Sefton Park Palm House. This was originally opened in 1896 having been built due to a donation of £10,000 from a local benefactor Henry Yates Thompson. It contained plants from all the continents and soon became a popular place to visit. Sadly the building was damaged during the Second World War and, despite repairs, it gradually fell into a state of disrepair and was closed in the 1980s for safety reasons. After much fundraising and a National Lottery grant, the Palm House was re-opened in 2001. It had been



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dismantled, painstakingly restored by a specialist company and then completely rebuilt. It is now a popular venue for concerts, weddings, and dances. A volunteer, Su,

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.

gave the group a fascinating talk illustrated by photos and memorabilia whilst we had coffee. She then went round pointing out certain plants before taking us outside to talk about the 8 original statues surrounding the Palm House. We finished our visit with a delicious lunch back inside. We can thoroughly recommend a trip here.

Eurovision



Author, Nic Dickson.

Cycling Group C members decided to go into Liverpool Town Centre and soak up the atmosphere associated with the forthcoming Eurovision Song Contest. There was so much to see at St Georges Hall, Exchange Flags, Pier Head, Liverpool One and the Albert Dock and the city was thronged with visitors from all over the world. What a great advert for Liverpool.

Archaeology at Lunt

Author, Elizabeth Goodwill.

Lunt Meadows, situated in the valley of the River Alt was the site for **Local History Group 6's** recent visit. It wasn't always the wildlife wonderland it is today. Archaeological excavations, yet to be completed, were commissioned and funded by the Environment Agency, supported by National Museums Liverpool when the agency recently bought the land with the intention of transforming what had been farmland into a wetland reserve and flood alleviation scheme to protect the Hightown & Formby areas. Apart from being a haven for numerous birds, it is one of just a few surviving sites providing important evidence of life during the Mesolithic period. Only a few miles from the prehistoric footprints on the modern beach at Formby, the footprints are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years later than the Lunt settlement, although



the people at Formby were still following the same kind of hunting and gathering lifestyle on the coast as their ancestors had done previously further inland at Lunt.

The site is currently in the middle of a 5-year project aimed at enhancing the visitor experience. 8,000 year old houses were discovered in 2012-13. These provide an important understanding a way of life that began to disappear about 6,000 years ago with the introduction of farming into Britain. Evidence shows that the earliest people at Lunt were hunter-gatherers, dismissing the previous common view that people at that time were nomadic, living in small groups. Until Lunt's discovery, there was little evidence to support any building of substantial settlements. Earlier excavated sites were interpreted as small, ephemeral, temporary camps with only light shelters, or the occasional slight remnants of the original camp found, for example at Tarbock, Knowsley.

Lunt holds traces of two relatively substantial Mesolithic buildings on land that had been buried for thousands of years. Radio-carbon dating from burnt timbers from one of them has given a date of about 5,800 BC. There are only about half a dozen or so other similar structures known in Britain for the whole of this hunter-gatherer period covering roughly 5,000 years from the end of the Ice Age to the adoption of farming in Britain after 4,000 BC.

The Lunt buildings measure between 4m and 6m across. It appears the site was occupied and re-occupied over many generations, although more work is needed before it is known whether the occupation at Lunt was semi-permanent, or was based on short seasonal stays with people repeatedly coming back and using, or rebuilding what they found after the previous abandonment. What is rare about the buildings at Lunt is that they appear to be part of a more well organised settlement. The buildings make use of small sand ridges and banks as part of the entrances and wall circuits. One feature that has to be fully excavated, is a fairly substantial four metre long sand bank that appears to link the structures together.

It is unknown when the site was abandoned but it appears to have been flooded by

about 7,500 years ago when it became too wet to continue living there. After having been at the bottom of a shallow lake for several hundred years the site was then inundated by the sea as the estuary of the River Alt spread almost as far as Sefton village. Deep deposits nearer the R Alt, therefore, sealed the site and protected it from ploughing and drainage, which is how it remained as an “undiscovered” site of such importance for so long.

Especial thanks go to Ron Cowell, Emeritus Curator of Prehistoric Archaeology, Museum of Liverpool and Sam from Lancashire Wildlife Trust for a highly informative tour which we would highly recommend to others.

The Little Theatre, Southport



Author, John Adamson.

Members of **Local History Group 7** recently visited the Little Theatre, Southport. The visit was organised by Linda and Brian Lawton. We travelled by train to Southport, and walked to the Little Theatre, where we were given coffee and biscuits. After a brief introduction we were divided into groups of eight so allowing people to be shown around the theatre by one of their volunteers. We visited the costume storage rooms, lighting room, sound control gantry, the auditorium and stage area, backstage dressing rooms, and the furniture and artifacts store. We also visited the room on the third floor of the building, where they do most of their rehearsals. We learnt how actors were selected for plays, how the lighting and sound systems worked, the roles of the stage manager, the actors promptor, musicians and other ancillary volunteers, all of whom work together to produce very professional plays for the theatre.

Because the theatre is a charity and a non-profit organisation, they ask for a small donation for the visit. The theatre is a member of a small number of “Little Theatres”

that are situated in a number of locations across the country. They are also very keen to attract new volunteers who would like to join the Little Theatre Company to help with one of the many activities that are undertaken to produce a show.

The visit was extremely interesting, enlightening and enjoyed by all. I think that everybody on the visit now appreciates how much effort is put in to produce the high standard of productions seen at the Little Theatre, in Southport.

Canasta



Author, Rosamund Turner.

Canasta Group 5 is a friendly bunch who don't take life too seriously, but we could do with additional members to join us. We meet at 2 pm at Hillary Court, Freshfield Road, Formby on the first and third Wednesday of each month and play continues until about 4.30 pm. Canasta, if you are not aware, is a card game which keeps the mind active but is far less complicated than Bridge with each game lasting approximately half an hour. Our leader, Kathleen Schofield, is the master of ceremonies and has run many Canasta groups in the past, so many individuals have benefited from her excellent tuition and we would all be more than happy to accept new members who are total beginners. If you think this may be of interest to you and you'd like to give it a try, please contact Ros Turner on 461356.

September's Quiz

Author, Steve Whitefield, Quiz Group.

- 1) Who is the patron saint of music?
- 2) Who became Prime Minister after Alexander Douglas-Home?
- 3) What was the name of the land where Gulliver met the Little People?
- 4) How long is there between rounds in boxing?
- 5) What substance is used to make pencil lead?

- 6) Who is on the back of a £20 note?
- 7) Which author created "The Saint"?
- 8) What is Britain's largest freshwater fish?
- 9) Which European capital's name translates as Merchant Harbour?
- 10) What is the common name for the Central Criminal Court of England and Wales?
- 11) What name is given to a flock of geese flying in a V formation?
- 12) Wolframite is a principal ore of which metal, known for its use in light-bulb filaments?
- 13) Which sign of the zodiac is named from Latin for goat-horned?
- 14) Which of the Queen's children was born on 15 August 1950?
- 15) Which is the hardest bone in the human body?
- 16) Pete Duel played Hannibal Hayes and Ben Murphy played Jed 'Kid' Curry in which buddy cowboy series?
- 17) In what field was Terence Donovan famous?
- 18) Doris Lessing won a Nobel prize in 2007 in which category?
- 19) To what does the chemical element symbol 'Cu' refer?
- 20) Cartoonist Reg Smythe created which cartoon character which has featured in the Daily

The Wirral



Author Andy Dickinson.

Walking Group 4 recently enjoyed a lovely walk on the Wirral with a nice lunch at the Cottage Loaf afterwards. Our thanks go to Gwyn who has led the group for many years. Annette has just taken over and we wish her good luck in her new role.

Catalyst Museum

Author, Andy Dickinson.

Members of the **Science Group** headed off to the Catalyst Museum in Widnes, the only museum dedicated to the Chemical Industry in the UK. After morning coffee on



arrival, we were treated to an interesting talk on the 'Science of Chocolate' given by museum Trustee Dr Diana Leith. After lunch members were given a taste of the original chilli hot chocolate – it received mixed reviews! The group was given a tour of the museum which highlighted the history of the chemical industry in the area including the origins of ICI. Particularly impressive is the viewing gallery which gives a 360 degree view of the surrounding area including the Mersey Gateway Bridge. Fully self-funded this museum has galleries that make science interesting and accessible to all ages. Well worth a visit!



Percy French

Author, Andy Dickinson.

Local History Group 16 were treated to a fascinating talk at Formby Library about Percy French and his links with Formby by John Phillips of the Formby Civic Society with musical accompaniment from local Formby resident, Ian Clarke. Percy French was a well-known Irish songwriter and entertainer who performed around Ireland and these shores in the late 1800's and



early 1900's. He is perhaps best known for writing the song The Mountains of Mourne which was performed with two more of his songs by Ian Clarke. He is buried in St Luke's Churchyard and has a Blue Plaque on Wicks Lane. His cousin, also from Ireland, was the first vicar of Holy Trinity. He lived at the house in Wicks Lane where French died having fallen ill on his travels. Percy French performed at local fairs in Formby and helped raise money for Holy Trinity Church. For more information I recommend visiting the Formby Civic Society Website and reading John's article.

Message from the Chairman,

Helen Lewandowska

Coffee Mornings have been well supported which is much appreciated. Of particular interest was our May coffee morning when Liverpool University attended to do health checks. As can be



seen from the photos below we had people queuing from start to finish. I have received emails from members saying how much they valued this event which is great.

Our first **outing** for a long time took place on 18th July, when 37 people enjoyed a wet trip to Llandudno. Despite the weather a group of us managed a trip up the Orme, a walk along the front and a lovely lunch. Some people came on their own so we agreed to have a small group for these people to go round together. We all had an enjoyable trip.

We are just in the process of organising our next trip to Harewood House and the Harrogate Christmas Market for



5th December. The cost will be £35, which will include entry to the house. People interested will need to sign up and pay cash at coffee mornings or Speaker meetings. If this is not possible please make alternative arrangements with the Chair, Helen. Suggestions for trips are always welcome. We have already received one for next year to RHS Bridgewater Gardens. We hope to do a theatre trip in October.

We have a number of new groups starting including Yoga on Tuesday's and Thursdays, Wild Water Swimming , Running, Beer Appreciation and another Spanish group. If interested in any of these groups, please get in touch.

Standing Orders: If you have paid your subscription by cheque or bank transfer please consider paying your renewal by Standing Order. Every cheque costs us 40p in bank charges. Standing Order Forms are available from the Membership Secretary and on the Formby u3a website. Standing Orders can be set up in the bank branch or if you use online banking. Bank details are available from the membership section of the website and from the membership secretary. If you decide to use a Standing order for your next renewal please use your surname and membership number as the payment reference.

September Quiz Answers

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Saint Cecilia | 11) Skein |
| 2) Harold Wilson | 12) Tungsten |
| 3) Lilliput | 13) Capricorn |
| 4) One Minute | 14) Princess Anne |
| 5) Graphite | 15) Jawbone |
| 6) JMW Turner | 16) Alias Smith and Jones |
| 7) Leslie Charteris | 17) Photography |
| 8) Pike | 18) Literature |
| 9) Copenhagen | 19) Copper |
| 10) The Old Bailey | 20) Andy Capp |

Third Age Trust

Author, Evan Bale, Secretary.

Some members may not be aware that Formby U3a is part of a larger, national organisation, the Third Age Trust. This organisation, affectionately referred to as TAT, provides support and services to U3a's across the country and operates under a board of trustees, much the same as ourselves. Elections for trustees are approaching and there is a vacancy for a member to represent the North West.

Whilst we would very much welcome new Committee members in Formby, you may be attracted to the bigger stage and representing the North West may be something that is of interest to you. If so, and you want to know more about the role of a Board Trustee, contact governance@u3a.org.uk and one of the Board Officers, or a current Trustee will be happy to have a chat.

Minton Tile Experience

Author, Paula Parker.



Local History Group 16 recently enjoyed a visit to St George's Hall, Liverpool to undertake the Minton Tile Experience. It was a rare opportunity to see and walk on (protective foot wear provided) the 30,000 beautifully hand-crafted tiles which were on show for the first time in 4 years. The tiles are usually hidden under a wooden floor for its preservation and have been since 1860. The wooden floor took 3 days to be lifted and a further 2 days to clean. The tiles have only been revealed 10 times since the Hall reopened in 2007. The experience also included visiting parts of The History Whisperer tour in the cells and court room. Some of our group ended up in court but I am happy to say they were released without charge.



Southport Offshore Rescue Trust

Author, Paula Parker.



Local History Group 16 followed the example of Local History Group 6 and visited the relatively new Southport Offshore Rescue Trust station. We were all thoroughly amazed by the work they do and their commitment to this voluntary service. We had a very interesting talk and were shown

around the station in small groups. In keeping with the theme we finished the evening with a drink in The Lifeboat pub in Formby.



Welcome To Our New Members

Formby U3A is pleased to welcome the following new members.

Lesley Allars	Michael Alley	Janet Basu
Andrea Butcher	Neil Cuthbertson	Robert Dover
David Dutton	Denise Dutton	Patricia Harris
Clare Henderson	Marie Hill	Stephen Hirst
Ursula Ingham	Pam Kumari	Wayne Lang
Patricia Lewis	Eric Owen	Kerry Parkinson
Anthony Pawson	Maryanne Rathe	Brenda Ridings
Derek Robert	Susan Robert	Mary Smyth
Anne Spence	Ron Stephens	Peter Stoney
Andrew Swift	Grace Sze	Ian Walsh
David Whittle	Paul Williams	Colin Wynne

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
	David Skelton (2023)		3rdofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
	Martyn Rodmell (2021)	621835	4thofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk

Monthly Meetings

Martyn 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.

Wed 13th Sept: Ken Pye - Beers, Bars and Boozers; Liverpool Pubs and the people who have drank in them.

Wed 11th Oct: Bernard Smith -Touching the World; Bernard and his blind partner's motorcycle trip around the world.

Wed 8th November: Carolyn Kirby - Victorian Scientists and Scandals; research underlying her book 'the conviction of Cora Burns' which will focus on three controversial Victorians: Arthur Munby, W.T. Stead and Francis Galton.

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

Did You Know?

Formby U3A Committee is always delighted to publish articles informing members of group activities. There are over 40 different activities available to members and not just the 5 activities reported in this month's edition. It would be good to let members know about some of the different things that they could do and your groups report would be greatly appreciated so that the Newsletter reflects the diversity of what Formby U3A is about.

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 (December) Newsletter is midday, Thursday, 23rd November at the latest.