



## Macmillan Afternoon Tea Dance



*Author, Judith Pike.*

The annual MacMillan Biggest Coffee Morning was held this year on 26<sup>th</sup> September and **Line Dancing 1** decided to hold an afternoon tea dance to raise money for the charity on that date. Unfortunately a fortnight before we were informed that the hall would be rewired that week and we decided to change the date to 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

The afternoon started badly. Pat and I arrived to find the hall locked as there had been a problem the previous evening when the new lights had failed. After attracting the attention of the electricians we were allowed in and they swiftly removed their tool boxes and ladders and we were able to organise the tables for the sale of tea and cakes and an area for a raffle. We did begin a little later than planned, but we danced (with 2 breaks for tea and cakes) for over two hours and we were only marginally distracted by the noise of drills and hammers banging in the background. I believe that everyone who attended had a good afternoon and we raised £240 for the MacMillan nurses.

Thanks to all who attended and those who couldn't but sent donations.



## Sail Away To Liverpool From Peru



**Author, Christine Hosie.**

Many will have read about the Peruvian Navy sailing ship named 'BP Union' which visited Liverpool in September. The **Cycle Group C** decided to see it for themselves, took the train to Sandhills and cycled to the Pier Head. The ride was special because Nic Dickson joined us for the first time since having major surgery so we enjoyed his unique company!

The photo with the group cannot do justice to the ship which was incredibly tall and dominated the skyline. An added bonus was that we could actually board the ship and meet some of the very friendly, smartly dressed crew. The atmosphere was excellent with panpipe music played on the ship and Peruvian goods on display. The weather was warm and sunny and crowds of people were lining up to take advantage of the tour. It all made for a very interesting and different morning bike ride.

## Worth The Effort

**Author, Christine Hosie and Keith Millington.**

**Walking Group 5** went to Hurst Green for an 8 mile walk along Longridge Fell. Peter, our walk leader, had arranged for some lovely weather, always a bonus! The walk climbed through fields and wooded areas, alongside streams, through rough moorland and heather until we reached the ridge near the trig point.

The group almost forgot about clambering over some of the dodgy stiles when we saw the views in all directions. They were glorious and we could see the Bowland fells, Welsh mountains, Fylde coast, Chipping valley and 2 out of the 3 Yorkshire peaks. The descent



took us via the forestry track to the grounds of Stonyhurst College and on to Millies Café for tea and cakes.

## **Parbold**



***Author, Annette Lempereur.***

**Walking Group 4** started a 5.5 mile walk from the Stocks Tavern in Parbold and used the 'Yours is the earth' cafe for a quick drink and facilities, can recommend it. We proceeded along the Leeds to Liverpool canal before heading off following Sprodley Brook to Fairy Glen. We then crossed the A5209 and headed up to High Moor before making our way back to the Stocks Tavern for a well earned lunch. The weather was kind to us and although we were missing a few members good conversations were had by all.



## **Birkenhead Priory**



***Author, Andy Dickinson, photographs, Andy Dickinson and Peter Broom.***

Members of the **History Trips group** visited Birkenhead Priory. After a short walk from Hamilton Square station drizzle gave way for a lovely sunny afternoon allowing some members of the group time for a picnic lunch before our guided tour started. Many thanks must go to our wonderful guide, Sam, who took us through the history of the Priory from 1150AD to the present day with her expert knowledge and tales from the past. She made the visit so interesting. The original Chapter House built in the 1150's, the oldest standing building on Merseyside, is a stunning building and is still used as a chapel. It has the most beautiful windows with the stain-glass which were installed in the 20th Century. One of the windows was even removed from the closed adjoining St Marys Church and placed in the chapel.

The Priory monks operated the first River Mersey ferry and looked after visitors including two visits from Edward 1<sup>st</sup> before being closed in 1536 after Henry V111's Dissolution of the monasteries. In the late 1890's Birkenhead Corporation acquired the site and restoration of the site began. Also on the site are the tower and west walls, with its cast iron windows, of St Mary's Church opened in 1821 and demolished in 1975. The more adventurous members of the group who climbed the 101 steps to the top of the tower were treated to marvellous views of both sides of the Mersey and the neighbouring Cammel Laird shipyards.



Above the ancient Chapter House is the Scriptorium which now houses the home of the Friends of training ship HMS Conway with its museum of fascinating artefacts and another beautiful stained-glass window.

If you've never been to the Priory, it is well worth a visit. It is free to enter but do check the opening times if you plan a visit. It really is a hidden gem and as it says on their leaflet it's a 'small place with a big history'!

## **The Old Dock Tour**



**Author and photographs: Andy Dickinson.**

Members of the **Local History Group 16** visited Liverpool to take the Old Dock Tour organised by the Maritime Museum. The tour would usually start at the museum but due to their building work the group convened at the Pump House. There we were greeted by our excellent guides Sophie and Simon.

Simon explained that the Old Dock was the world's first commercial enclosed dock. Engineered by Thomas Steers, it was opened in 1715 to overcome the problem of goods having to be taken from sailing ships across the sand and mud to the shoreline at low tide. The modern-day Strand marks where the shoreline was. It was a dangerous, time consuming and costly effort to get the goods ashore. The enclosed dock meant that ships could load and unload regardless of the tide.

Built at a cost of £12,000, the dock was built at the mouth of the 'Pool', a small inlet off the River Mersey. The building of the dock was the catalyst for the maritime development of Liverpool. More ships and goods came to Liverpool. Eventually, as ships grew in size Steers built the nearby Salthouse dock.

From the Pump House we walked across the Strand to the entrance to the old Dock itself. Before heading to the walkway to view the dock there are many information boards



showing many fascinating maps and photographs relating to the Dock and its importance. On the tour we were able to see the bedrock at the base of the dock and the stonework of the dock wall which rises 20 feet from the bed of the Pool. The side of the dock was actually curved to fit the hull of the moored ship. Sophie also explained how locals treated the dock as a sewer!

The Old Dock was closed in 1826 and the dock was filled in. Liverpool's original Custom House was built over the site of the dock in 1839 but suffered bomb damage in WW2 and was demolished in 1948.

The Old Dock was found in 2001 as Grosvenor, the developers of Liverpool One, were excavating the site. Thankfully they made the historic Old Dock accessible to visitors to learn about its importance in the development of Liverpool maritime history.

## **A Case at the Museum**



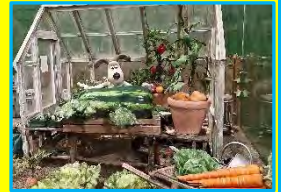
LH6 members enjoyed posing in Wallace's famous living room.

***Author, Elizabeth Goodwill.***



Playing drivers, **Local History Group 6** members sat up top on the X2 on its way to Preston for their visit to the Harris Museum. The museum has recently re-opened after a 4 year, £19m redevelopment and to mark the re-opening it welcomed the Oscar-winning animator and creator of Wallace & Gromit, Nick Park, back to his home town to celebrate Preston's cultural heritage.

The temporary exhibition celebrates invention and imagination as it recreates Wallace's living room, which is closely based on Park's grandmother's Preston home. Wallace, his familiar green knitted tank-top, along with Gromit have appeared for a staggering 35 years marking them as much loved national treasures. They have appeared in The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the London Olympics and had their own night at the Proms, becoming popular world-wide. More than being quintessentially English, Wallace is more specifically Northern. The exhibition explores Park's early life in Lancashire and the influence it had on creating his characters and films. It includes original sets and models along with storyboards, and early sketches from the archives.



Members enjoyed posing in Wallace's famous living room as well as the funny, fascinating and "totally cracking" experience and would highly recommend it to other groups.

## **Nicky Nook and Grizedale**



***Author, Christine Hosie and Marcia Thompson.***

Thanks to Joanne and George for leading **Walking Group 6** at Scorton and up Nicky Nook. It is an interesting name for a fell and is believed to be of Viking origin.

The weather was perfect for walking and we climbed steadily on tracks and paths through fields, wooded areas



and moorland. The autumn colours were lovely and spells of sunshine enhanced the views. After our picnic lunch we walked through Grizedale, a picturesque, peaceful valley with streams and a reservoir which had more water in it than it probably had a few weeks ago! According to United Utilities, it is storing 13% less water than this time last year. The wind picked up as we made the final ascent but the views from the trig point of the Lancashire coast and the hills to our east were worth the climb. Our descent, helped by a series of steps, was a lot quicker than going up. Well-deserved tea and cakes in the Applestree café were very welcome.

## **New Beginners Line Dancing Group**

***Author, Judith Pike.***

The first meeting will be 2pm on 8<sup>th</sup> January in Holy Trinity Parish Hall. For more information please contact the group leader at [judith.pike21@virginmedia.com](mailto:judith.pike21@virginmedia.com)

## **The Knickers Spy**

***Author, Helen Lewandowska.***

Bernard Nevin gave an interesting talk on Margery Booth known as "The Knickers Spy." Margery Booth is a forgotten English Opera Star from the 1930's but also acted as an undercover wartime spy. Born in Wigan before moving to Southport, Margery was as a young child with a notable singing talent and she eventually moved to London where she sang at the Royal Opera House. Marrying a rich German industrialist, she moved to Germany where she rose to acclaim in 1930's Berlin, singing at the Berlin Opera. Adolf Hitler became a personal fan, sending her roses after her performances, and dining with him one at least one occasion.

But she was secretly acting as a British Intelligence agent, passing on secrets under the noses of the feared Gestapo, discretely hidden in her underwear, hence known as the Knickers Spy, a title given to her by the post-war media.

Margery sang in POW camps for British prisoners to bolster their morale but fell under the suspicion of the Gestapo, she was arrested and tortured but later released. She managed to escape across Germany as the war came to an end and she gave evidence at post war trials where English collaborators such as Lord Haw Haw were charged with treason.

Her secretive life in pre-war Germany meant that she was unkindly viewed on her return to the UK and her bravery went unrewarded. This is a captivating, if little known account of a brave Lancashire lady.



## **It Is Nearly Time to Renew Your U3A Membership**

£9 per member

Annual subscriptions are due on 2nd January. To ensure that the insurance cover provided by our affiliation to the Third Age Trust is not compromised, all membership subscriptions should be paid by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at the latest. Formby u3a has to pay bank charges of 40p on each cheque we receive. If you have previously paid your membership fees by cheque, we would be grateful if you could arrange to pay your 2026 fees by Standing Order, Online Bank Transfer or in person by debit/ credit card.

### **How to renew your membership**

**a) Standing Orders:** Thank you to those members who have already set up a Standing Order for their membership fees. A Standing order mandate is available in the Formby u3a website under the membership tab or can be requested from the Membership Secretary by e-mailing [membership@formbyu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@formbyu3a.org.uk). Forms can be collected at the Christmas Concert and coffee morning in December. Please ensure that your membership number is on the mandate.

**b) Online Bank Transfer:** The reference or description field of the payment MUST contain your membership number followed by your surname and initial. If you do not know your membership number you should contact the Membership Secretary (as above). Payment should be made to the following Formby u3a bank account: - Account name: Formby u3a  
Sort code: 40 21 20    Account number: 41365878

**c) Debit card/credit card:** We are introducing payment by card this year. Payments can be made in person at the January and February Speakers Meetings and coffee mornings.

**d) Cheque Payment:** We ask that all other renewals should be by cheque. If paying by cheque please make your cheque payable to Formby u3a and write your membership number on the back. (If you do not know your membership number, please write your name and address instead.)

**Payment can be made By Post:** Cheques should be posted to: Membership Secretary, Formby u3a, PO Box 216, Liverpool L37 1XQ.

For 2026 we are going to email membership cards and you will be able to use this 'e card' just the same as previously. You can save the 'e card' to your phone or print it out if you prefer. Those members without an email will receive their card by post. If you prefer to receive a card then please contact me as shown below.

**PLEASE NOTE WE DO NOT ACCEPT CASH** as payment for your membership renewal.

If you do not intend to renew your membership for 2026, please inform the membership Secretary by email or ringing 01704 882903.

## **Newsletter Editorship**

***Author, Dave Goodwill, Newsletter Editor.***

After nearly 14 years as Newsletter Editor and producing almost 100 newsletters I have decided it is time to stand down and let someone else assume the role. I would like to thank all who have contributed articles over those years, as well as committee members, past and present, for their support. It has been a privilege to act as editor and to be able to report on the rich and diverse nature of the groups within Formby U3A. I have been grateful to the small and regular number of members who reported their groups' activities, enabling the promotion the positivity of the Third Age. The Newsletter has always aimed to report on the full breadth and range of members' interests represented by the 40 different interest groups Formby U3A contains but can only do this when members submit reports.

Formby U3A is fortunate to have well over 1,000 members. They are part of an organisation founded on the principal of a mutual self-help organisation. Having given 6 months' notice it is, therefore, disappointing that no member has, to my knowledge, yet come forward to take over the newseditor's role. Producing the newsletter has been immensely simplified, now using a MsWord template, and any member with basic word processing skills could create future newsletters four times per year. Anyone who feels able to help should contact the Chairman.

## **Newsletter Contributions**

Articles informing members of your group and its activities are always welcome.

If, 7 days after submitting an article, you have not received an acknowledgement, one of the e-mail systems failed, so please try again.

**When submitting Newsletter reports could authors please ensure all article have:**

- A title (not the group name/number) to reflect the activity (please feel free to be creative/attention grabbing).
- The author's name.
- The group name/number is included somewhere within the report.
- Photographs (no more than 3, please) relevant to the report, showing some or all members on the activity. Please ensure that all people shown in photographs are aware that photographs are being taken for inclusion in the Newsletter and may be shown on the Formby U3A website.
- Photos sent as one of the common picture format attachments (jpeg, png, tiff etc) to the report and not embedded in the text for the report. Please do not send photographs as a separate message as there is a risk they will not be identified as part

of the group's report, nor embed them within the writing but send as an attachment to the submission.

- Photos submitted must be members' own photos as copyright of third parties' photos remains with the owner and the Newsletter cannot publish such photos.
- Please send submission to the newsletter editor asap after the event occurred and, where possible, are not sent within the final few days before a deadline.

***Please remember, it is contributor's responsibility to check articles for grammar, spelling, punctuation etc, not the Newsletter Editor's.***

**Previous Newsletters:** are available at: [https://formbyu3a.org.uk/?page\\_id=331](https://formbyu3a.org.uk/?page_id=331)

### **Next (March '26) Newsletter**

The next Newsletter can be viewed found at: [https://formbyu3a.org.uk/?page\\_id=331](https://formbyu3a.org.uk/?page_id=331) from 1<sup>st</sup> of March. Paper copies can be collected at the monthly meeting & coffee morning.

## **Important: AGM for Formby U3A**

**11<sup>th</sup> March 2026,13:00**

***Author, Graham Higley, Formby U3A Secretary.***

***Please note this date for your diaries.***

Formby U3A has had problems in recruiting new Trustees over the last few years and we are coming to a stage when a number of Trustees will have to stand down. This may have implications for the viability of Formby U3A as a whole. We may have to make some critical amendments to the Formby U3A Constitution to ensure continuity.

We can only make these amendments if the meeting is quorate – which means at least 55 members attend. It is vital that you attend this meeting if you are able.

We are keen to encourage more of you to become Trustees. If you are interested in hearing more about running Formby U3A, please call me on 0780 126 1537 or email [secretary@formbyu3a.org.uk](mailto:secretary@formbyu3a.org.uk)



## New Members

Formby U3A is pleased to welcome the following new members.

Karen Atkins	Gerald Cook	Joss Crosbie
Annie Gorski	Jennifer Horner	Nora Maloney
Bill Russell	Carolyn Russell	Howard Smart
Lorna Smith	Anne Tayne	Jo Williamson
Pamela Young		

## Formby U3A Committee 2025-26

Chairman	Helen Lewandowska (2022 Co-opted)	07548 213496 chair@formbyu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Graham Higley (2023)	0780 1261537 secretary@formbyu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Sue Robertson (2023)	0749 5413860 treasurer@formbyu3a.org.uk
Membership Sec.	Christine Hosie (2022)	882903 membership@formbyu3a.org.uk
Group Secretary	Veronica Curtis (2025)	876469 groups@formbyu3a.org.uk
Officers	Andy Dickinson (2022)	643971 1stofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
	Sonia Greenyer (2025 Co-opted)	2ndofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
	Ian Robertson (2023)	07922424924 5thofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk

## Christmas Events

**Author, Helen Lewandowska.**

Our **Christmas Meal** at the Grapes in Formby is planned for **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December**. There will be a Michael Bubl  tribute act and Bingo as entertainment. if you have not already booked on and wish to do so please ring me on 07548213496.

On **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December** we are off on our **Christmas Outing** to Lytham Hall where we will view the decorated hall and enjoy afternoon tea before driving back through the Blackpool illuminations. There are a few places available if you are interested-please ring me on 07548213496.

### **French Group**

Is there anyone out there who can speak French and would be willing to lead our u3a French Group. I'm sure the group would appreciate any offers. If you can help please let me know on 07548213496 and I will speak to them.




## U3A CHRISTMAS CONCERT

WEDNESDAY 10TH OF DECEMBER

AT 2PM

HOLY TRINITY PARISH HALL



### PROGRAMME

2 PM FOLK GROUP

2-20 PM RECORDER GROUP

2-40 PM UKELE GROUP

3 PM SINGING FOR PLEASURE PRESENTATION

3-20 PM COMMUNITY SING A LONG



3-45 REFRESHMENTS



**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup>  
December  
7:30pm**



# CAROLS WITH BRASS

**Formby Choral Society  
and  
Liverpool Brass Band**

**Formby High School**

*Freshfield Road, Formby, L37 3HW*

**Tickets - £15**

**Under 19s free**

Available using the QR Code

☎ 07706 017221

or online: [www.trybooking.co.uk/89786](http://www.trybooking.co.uk/89786)





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**The Newsletter needs to be 12  
or 16 pages long to allow  
printed copies to be made.**

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## Monthly Meetings

Meetings are at 2.00 pm in Holy Trinity Parish Hall. **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.

**Future speakers:** If you have any suggestions of Speakers/talks that you think may be of interest to members, please email us at [speakers@formbyU3a.org.uk](mailto:speakers@formbyU3a.org.uk) or use the suggestion box at monthly meetings.

**10<sup>th</sup> Dec**                      **Christmas Show**, kindly hosted by our very own music groups again. Refreshments will be served at the concert.

**14<sup>th</sup> January**                      **Jean Finney.** Her revelations about nursery rhymes are jaw dropping! They tell of our very nasty English history, and it's definitely NOT for telling to children.

**11<sup>th</sup> February**                      **The Great American Songbook, Roger Browne.** Roger explores the fascinating lives of Gershwin, Kern, Porter, Rodgers, Berlin, Carmichael, Fats Waller and the greatest popular music of the twentieth century.

**11<sup>th</sup> March**                      **A Solo Walk across Africa, Fran Sandham.** Fran is a critically acclaimed author and former Rough Guide editor.

**8<sup>th</sup> April**                      **The Story of The Formby Lifeboat, Nic Dickson.** A lifeboat was on Formby Shore 250 years ago, the first in all the world. This illustrated talk covers the reasons for its establishment, its history and the lifeboatman who braved the seas and saved hundreds of lives.

**13<sup>th</sup> May**                      **The Co-op.** This light-hearted talk provides a look at some serious issues such as long-term care fees and how to protect your home and savings, inheritance tax, lasting power of attorney and of course the Toy Boy situation. It includes some top tips for things you should consider.

Please remember that from January onwards you need to show your **2026 Membership Card** at all events, including group activities.

**Coffee Morning** will be from **10:30 to 12:00** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, except August. They are held in the Workshop, Holy Trinity Church & offering free coffee, they give a chance to pick up information about other groups and meet your Committee.

*Paper copies printed by 'The Print Quarter'*