

Fracking



The recent meeting of the **Science Group** had the biggest attendance of the year when Jamie Scorgie, a 3rd year Geology undergraduate at Liverpool University, gave us a talk on the science of Fracking with particular emphasis on the geology of the Formby area.

Over 40 members of the group and a few partners who were also U3A members were present and we nearly ran out of chairs in the Holy Trinity Tennis Club Pavilion. Jamie is a member of the Tennis Club and offered to prepare a talk to the Science Group on the subject "Frack or Fiction: Is fracking the solution to our future energy needs?"

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We were reminded that the Formby Shallow Oilfield produced 10 barrels of oil per day for 26 years from 1939 to 1965 before being abandoned. This oil was discovered because it seeped to the surface, as the oil was near the surface in sandstone just below clay deposits.

Jamie debunked a number of myths, saying that the fracking technique is not new. It has been used commercially for 65 years and has

*Happy New Year
to all our members from
your Committee*

even been carried out in the gas fields off our coastline in the Irish Sea. However, he stated that while Fracking could extend the lifespan of fossil fuels, each well would only last for around 20 years so it was only a short term benefit. In the longer term we still need to rely on sustainable green energy sources. In his view the biggest disadvantage of gas wells is the unplanned release of unburnt methane gas either during drilling and production or from 'capped' wells where production has ceased. Methane gas is 84% more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. So his conclusion was that fracking was not a solution to our future energy needs but just a short term stop gap while we develop other sources of energy such as tidal or wave power.

A number of questions were put to Jamie which he answered before being thanked for his very interesting presentation.

Jim Crawford

Williamson Tunnels

Although **Local History Group 14** is well known, we had not expected Liverpool Echo reporters to be on hand recording our visit to Williamson Tunnels. Some thought it was connected to Irene Lambert celebrating (yet another!) big birthday, but actually it was the Echo commemorating the end of 20 years dedicated hard work by the volunteers who have finally cleared a large area of the underground tunnels and caverns. The time includes years of protracted negotiations with Liverpool City Council before a lease was granted and permission was given to begin removing tonnes of rubble. These tunnels are now a registered charity existing on donations. There are over 1,000 members, 27 diggers (eldest 74; youngest 17) who meet Wednesdays and Sundays to carry out the unending restoration work.

Joseph Williamson, 1769-1840, was a wealthy eccentric philanthropist who built this folly to provide employment for soldiers returning from the Napoleonic Wars. Work, which began in 1806, ended and was forgotten when he died. It was re-discovered in 1990 during re-development of the Paddington area. It had become a dumping ground and the tunnels had become buried under rubble.

It is difficult to appreciate all that has been achieved in a relatively short time, 4 years, when you view the vast, now empty cavern that had been filled to the brim with debris which was man-handled along a human chain before enough space was cleared to erect a hoist, speeding up the process to reach the surface. 159 skips have, so far, been filled. Our guide, Tom, proudly indicated many of the professional features present in the architecture and brickwork, unusual considering the tunnels were never going to have any practical use, or be seen by the public. The enthusiasm and dedication of the volunteers impressed local business owners. The Bear's Paw Public House offered practical facilities over the years. When it closed, the Liberty Living Students accommodation continued this assistance. However, owing to some changes in ownership, plans had to be shelved, re-negotiated and taking more time before permission was given to start work. The company had allowed a small part of

their car park to be used as the entrance to the tunnels and space for the skip.

Shortly after our visit, Bay TV filmed a well-earned celebration marking the 20 year anniversary. Relatives of two of the co-founders who sadly died this year formally emptied the final 2 buckets of rubble in what was an emotional event recognising the tenacity and physical efforts of all volunteers in overcoming all the obstacles.

During our visit we learned a member of our group, Laurence Downey, is Secretary of a very old organisation, West Derby Wastelands Charity from which Joseph Williamson bought his land and may, in time, make a donation to the Friends.

We very much enjoyed our visit and if you can manage steps and stairs, uneven ground, avoid puddles from water seeping through sandstone and own some shabbyish clothes, then go for it! It's unusual, maybe unique and a quirky part of Liverpool's history. The enthusiasm of the volunteers was infectious. The visit takes over 1½ hours but there is a Chinese restaurant nearby and we enjoyed this too

Colette O'Neill

Bartle Hall Celebration



We were celebrating because since October 2011, Ann Blackman has organised 63 coach trips, including this one, for the Formby U3A **Outings Group**. This is quite an achievement, as it is an outing almost every month and before I write any more, I



would like to thank Ann and her team of helpers for arranging all these lovely days out.

We have travelled North, South, East and West to destinations far and wide. Some were as far away as Keswick in

Cumbria, Whitby in Yorkshire, Buxton in Derbyshire and Caernarfon in Wales. Some have been much more local, to National Trust properties in our area, including Speke Hall and Dunham Massey, and the cities of Liverpool and Manchester, but all have been very enjoyable and very well organised. On most of them, the weather has been good! How Ann organises the weather, I'm not quite sure! I have heard she has a well-used prayer mat!



The November trip was no exception to Ann's excellent organisation.

The day began with not one, but two coaches leaving Cross Green at 9am for Barton Grange Garden Centre near Preston. If ever a Garden Centre had the 'wow factor', this is the

one, with amazing Christmas displays, a Farm Shop, a Cook Shop, fabulous food and great gifts. Barton Grange is full of festive ideas and inspiration and the last Monday in November was a good time to visit. We avoided the weekend crowds and many people took this opportunity to purchase some early Christmas gifts and goodies to eat (or drink) over the festive season. We also had plenty of time for coffee in the café.



At lunch time, we boarded the coach for the short journey to Bartle Hall. It is an elegant country mansion, dating from the 15th century, set in 16 acres of beautiful landscaped gardens. The present owners purchased the hall in

1991 and have converted it to a country house hotel, full of charm and character and it is often used for weddings. The staff welcomed us on arrival with a drink and we selected our tables, which were beautifully set with crisp white linen table-cloths and napkins and Christmas crackers. Ann had put two quiz sheets on each table to answer while we awaited our delicious two course lunch, followed by coffee and mince pies. She had also organised a free raffle and presented 'Table Prizes' to the winners of the two quizzes.

We were then introduced to Judith Hibbert, singer, actress and very talented after-dinner speaker, who had travelled from Belper in Derbyshire to entertain us. She certainly made the afternoon a memorable occasion. She paid tribute to some of England's greatest stars including Julie Andrews, Joyce Grenfell and Gracie Fields. After songs from films of the 60's and 70's, including 'The Sound of Music' and 'My Fair Lady', she acted an amusing sketch from her favourite film 'Brief Encounter'.



(Some people will remember visiting Carnforth Station with Ann earlier this year). Judith ended with an amusing tribute to Victoria Wood and sang 'Let's Do It'.

What a fantastic outing this was! Thank you again Ann and your team of helpers for arranging these lovely days out.

Jean Higson, photos David Skelton

Oh Yes It Is!



Formby U3A Cinderella cast. (L to R) Ray Derricott (Baron Spentup); Cliff Garside (Dandini); Alan Gibson (Marigold an ugly sister); Terry Simmons (Dahlia the other ugly sister); Susan Birchall (Fairy Godmother); Dudley Lidiard (Prince Charming); Sue Dickson (Cinderella); Andrew Hoare (Buttons); Joyce Simmons (Grab) and Sheena Eden (Snatch) the brokers men. A full write up will appear in next month's issue.

Welcome To December's New Members

Barbara Cahill	David Cahill
Annie Hoyle	David Smith
Barbara Taylor	

Outings Group

Outings are only open to all paid up members of the U3A. All we ask is that you have the ability to get on and off the coach independently. We cannot be responsible for providing assistance. The coach can accommodate mobility aids which are kept in the luggage compartment on the bus.

Owing to increased demand, we cannot reserve tickets: **Tickets will be allocated on a first come and paid for – first served basis.** A separate cheque is required for each outing and **it is essential that members include their telephone number with each booking.** Several cheques have been received with no information and I have struggled to identify what they are for. If no contact details are provided, I am unable to contact people when outings are fully booked.

Bookings and information are available at U3A monthly meetings, or coffee mornings. Alternatively please send a stamp addressed envelope to:
Ann Blackman, 9 River Close, Formby, Liverpool L37 6DJ, enclosing a separate cheque for each outing made out to **Formby U3A Outings Group**, having your name, address and telephone number **on the back.**

Wednesday, February 22nd, Cabaret, Briar's Hall. Tickets £22.00 each includes return coach, 3 course meal with coffee or tea and an afternoon of entertainment. Depart Cross Green 11:00am.

Ann Blackman, Tel: 871127

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Formby U3A will be held on Wednesday, 8th March 2017 in Holy Trinity Parish Hall at 2:00pm.

All members of the Committee (Trustees) are required to stand for re-election. The posts are: Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Groups Secretary plus six Committee Members.

There is a vacancy for a Vice Chairman and possibly some Committee Members, but all other Officers and Members are seeking re-election.

A Nomination Form for any of these positions is printed below, or can be obtained from the Secretary at the Wednesday and Thursday meetings. Completed forms should be returned to the Secretary by 31st January 2017.

It would be appreciated if any Motions, proposed and seconded, for consideration by the AGM could also be returned to the Secretary by 31st January 2017.

FORMBY U3A

Nomination Form for the 2017/18 Formby U3A Committee

Nominee:

For the office of:

Proposed by:

Signature of proposer:

Seconded by:

Signature of seconder:

I agree to be nominated for the above office.

Signature of nominee:

Nomination Forms should be returned to:

Jack Ashworth, Secretary Formby U3A, 6 Trap Hill, Formby L37 2LU, e-mail: secretary@formbyu3a.org.uk

by 31st January 2017, at the latest.

Draft Minutes of the 2016 AGM

Held in the Holy Trinity Hall on the 9th March 2016

Apologies for Absence: Mr & Mrs Manning - Fox, Mr & Mrs Blundell

Minutes of 2015 AGM: Having been circulated in the Newsletter and at the meeting, these were approved nem con and were signed by Andrew Hoare as Chairman.

Matters arising from the minutes: There were no matters arising.

2015 Annual Report: This was approved nem con.

Treasurer's Report : Circulated at the meeting. In the absence of the Treasurer the Chairman related his comments on the report. The year went very much as expected, with no Ballot Costs involved. It was gratifying to see that members have taken some notice of the request to pay only by cheque or standing order. That trend is continuing this year. The balance at year end was £14,204.34, some £2,500 up on last year. Membership was up three! Budget - Apart from colour printing the Newsletter which will probably add c. £800 to the printing costs, he does not foresee any great variance from last year. He could see no need to alter the subs from the present £9 per annum. The meeting accepted his report and the proposition that Alan Thomas continue as Auditor.

Election of Officers and Committee Members:

One nomination had been received for each of the positions, and this was noted by the meeting. The following will therefore serve for next year:

Chairman:	Glyn Pike
Vice Chairman	David Bosworth
Secretary	Jack Ashworth
Treasurer	David Manning-Fox
Membership Secretary	Ann Gunstone
Groups Secretary	Mary Coleman
Committee Members	Sue Birchall, Ann Blackman, Linda Howard, Rosemary Thomas, Sara Beaumont, Valerie Tibbetts

The Chairman, thanked two retiring members of the committee, Alan Speakman and Dudley Lidiard, for their work over the years. Following an invitation by the Chair, the new committee introduced themselves to the Meeting. The new Chairman then noted that Chairman Andrew was also leaving the committee after long service, particularly during the disaffiliation discussions. He made a presentation of a Scroll setting out the amount of work Andrew had done.

Any Other Business The committee was asked to investigate an improvement in Speakers on a Wednesday; the hearing loop in the hall, paid for by U3A, was not

working; and the lighting on the stage was poor, Group Leaders may wish to buy equipment. The committee will take note.

Chairman's Report

The year 2015 has been a year of consolidation following the granting our Registered Charity status, with Charity Number 1161157, in February 2015. The final document, to comply with our responsibilities as a Registered Charity, was agreed unanimously by the Trustees i.e. the committee at their meeting in October 2015. This document included several previous documents issued to incorporate Group Finances but was expanded to cover additional items to set down Trustee Procedures and Grievances Procedures for Formby U3A. This document has been called Standing Orders. None of the changes proposed have significantly affected the ways we operate as a committee or of our Group activities.

Another important change that has occurred during the year is the changing our financial year so that it will run from 1st January to 31st December each year. This will make it easier for members to recognise that a new calendar year means that subscriptions are due and must be paid by the end of February each year. This should ensure that insurance cover from the Third Age Trust for all our activities, especially group activities, is not compromised. The best way to prevent this happening is to pay subscriptions by a Standing Order: as an incentive, it has been decided that those members paying by Standing Order will be entitled to have their membership cards delivered to them by post, if that becomes necessary.

There was always a possibility that there would be a fall in membership numbers when we became a Registered Charity but I am pleased to say this has not happened. In fact, numbers have slightly increased from 1264 to 1267 during the year 2015 and there has recently been a significant increase in the number of new members. There are currently 128 active groups, with 10 new groups starting up and 2 have restarted. Our financial position is strong as can be seen from the Annual Financial Report which has been presented to the meeting. Monthly meetings have been well attended of late and the workshop has been overwhelmed on several occasions – standing room only! Group Leaders and New members meetings have been held during the year and thanks to the inspiration of Nic Dickson and others the Christmas Concert has been heralded as one of the best we have had.

Now I would like to turn to thanking and recognising, on your behalf, the many individuals who have been instrumental in making Formby U3A the vibrant organisation it has become over approximately the last 25 years. In no particular order of preference, I would like to mention and recognise all the dedication of the existing committee members, Glyn Pike, Alan Speakman, David Manning-Fox, Dudley Lidiard, Mary Coleman, Susan Birchall, David Bosworth, Ann Blackman, Linda Howard and Rosemary Thomas. A special mention should be made of Alan and

Dudley who have made important and significant contributions over many years and are leaving the committee because their terms of office have been completed. This, of course, applies to myself as I shall have to leave having completed six years as Treasurer and Chairman. Fortunately, with your approval in a few minutes, we will be able to fill all the committee positions for this coming year. The new committee members are Jack Ashworth, as Secretary, Ann Gunstone, as Membership Secretary, and Val Tibbitts and Sara Beaumont as committee members. I wish to thank the new committee members for volunteering to help us during the coming year and, hopefully, in future years.

Again this year I want to recognise the hard work and dedication of the Group Leaders and their assistants who have arranged many trips, venues, meetings, walks, ambles, cycling etc. and made it another successful year. On your behalf, I would like to offer them a very sincere 'thank you': we would be lost without you. Particular mention should be made of the dedication and efforts of Ann Blackman and David Irving who organise the Outings and Music and Theatre groups which operate across the whole of our U3A. Then there are the members behind the scenes who keep Formby U3A show on the road: David Goodwill, who edits our invaluable newsletter, Len Croft, our Data Manager, Tim Chrimes, our sound engineer, Alan Thomas as Auditor and last but not least Noel Blundell, our website manager, who keeps our website constantly up to date. In addition, there are all the reliable helpers who make the monthly Thursday coffee mornings run smoothly and be such a relaxing occasion. Without these individuals, and the Group Leaders, Formby U3A would cease to function and to be the well oiled organisation it has become.

Finally, without wishing to be presume too much, I wish Glyn and the new committee my best wishes for a successful and, more importantly, an enjoyable term of office during the coming year and that you and all the other members will give them their full support as you have given to me in my years of office. Thank you all so much.

I think I have said all I wanted to say and so I shall end this report by saying thank you all for your attendance here today. Again a sincere 'Thank you' to you all for your help and support to Formby U3A.

If there are any questions, I shall do my best to answer them.

*Andrew Hoare,
Chairman Formby U3A*

Group News

You should show your blue 2017 membership cards when you attend group meetings. All groups are for current, paid up members, so please remember your 2017 subscription was due on January 1st, £9 per annum. Any members who did not renew their subscriptions by 28th February will be removed from membership lists and should not attend any U3A activities or groups.



Beginners Spanish Group: We need a few more names to start this Group.

Darts Group: The new group has started and meets at the Bay Horse every fortnight on Wednesdays at 2.30pm. Contact Sheena Eden on 876335 or sheena@oceanassociates.co.uk for more details.



Family History Group 3: meets monthly on the 4th Monday at St Peter's Parish Hall from 10 'til 12 There is currently one vacancy. Contact David Poole on 872284.

Floral Art Group 1: The group, which meets in the afternoon of the 2nd Wednesday of the month has 3 vacancies. Please contact Pauline Hall on 879820 for more details.



Fun on your Computer: This new group will teach you to enjoy playing games etc. on your tablets, PCs and Playstations and learn more of the fun side of your Computer. Contact the Groups Secretary.

Golf: There are vacancies in the golf groups for any wannabee golfers. Please contact the Groups Secretary.

Guitar Group: We hope to start this new group soon. Please contact the Groups Secretary.



Painting Group: This group, run by Dot Owen, has changed premises to St Peters Hall. The Group meets on the 1st and 2nd Tuesday of the month at 2:00pm to 4:00pm. Dot would welcome new members, tel. 879332, or e-mail: davidowen@sky.com

The full list of group vacancies is on the website. Contact group leaders if you are interested.

To all Group Leaders

Please remember to let the Group's Secretary know if you have any vacancies in your group.

Linda McAuley, Groups Secretary

Tel: 871890 or e-mail: groups@formbyu3a.org.uk

It's Time To Renew Your U3A Membership ***(Yes; just £9)!***

Annual subscriptions are due on 2nd January. In order 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 28th February.

How to renew your membership:

Standing Orders

If you have already set up a Standing Order to be paid during February, there is no need to alter it to January. If your current Standing Order is payable after the end of February, please arrange for it to be paid in January. If you wish to set up a new Standing Order, please complete the Form printed in this Newsletter and send it to your own bank for processing **or** use the details to set up a Standing Order using on-line banking. Membership Cards will be posted to those paying by Standing Order.

Cheques:

We ask that all other renewals should be by cheque only, as there is too much potential for error in handling cash. Please make your cheque payable to **Formby U3A** and write your membership number (as on your current membership card) on the back. (If you do not know your membership number, please write your name and address instead).

Where? When? Payment can be made at the Wednesday afternoon meetings in Holy Trinity Parish Hall (11th January and 8th February); or at the Thursday coffee mornings in Holy Trinity Workshop (12th January and 9th February).

By Post Cheques may be sent direct to the Hon. Treasurer:

Please remember to enclose a stamped addressed envelope to receive your Membership Card.

Collecting your 2017 U3A card

If you have a Standing Order in place, your new 2017 Membership Card will be posted out once your subscription has been received from your bank.

If you pay by cheque at the Monthly Meeting or Coffee Morning, you can collect your Card at the same time.

If you pay by post, your 2017 card will be available for collection at the Monthly Meeting or Coffee Morning following receipt of your payment, unless you included a stamped addressed envelope with your payment.

Please remember that from January onwards, you will need your 2017 Membership Card at all events, including group activities.

Standing Order Mandate

Your Bank details:

Name of your bank:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Sort Code: -- Account Number:

Instructions to your bank

Please make payments as follows to: **Formby U3A**

Sort Code: **40 - 21 - 20** Account Number: **41365878**

Reference: (Your U3A number and your surname, e.g. 9999 JONES; or if for 2 people 9998; 9999 JONES)

Amount: £..... Date of Payment: **Immediately**
£9 per person

Frequency: **Annually on 2nd January until further notice**

Signed: Date:

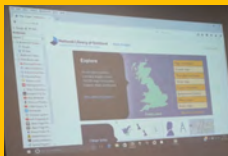
Please sign and date this mandate before sending it to your Bank.

Lost Relatives



Family History Group 3 has been going for 11 years under the leadership of David and Glennis Poole. It currently meets on the 4th Monday of each month in St Peter's Church Hall and is well attended. Each meeting begins with David and Glennis updating us with news and information that they have spotted, or sought out which will help us research our family histories. The second half of the meeting comprises all our news, or sometimes our problems. We often help one another by supplying another lead to follow or another way of researching something. This is of particular benefit to those new to Family History.

Group members have made very interesting discoveries over the years. These include one member finding a lost sister; another a relative in a sanatorium in France; a murderer in the family and a previously unknown branch of the family in South Africa.



One advantage of St Peter's Hall is that it has internet access and a projector which means we can follow up questions and do searches on the internet. A couple of times each year we hold a workshop where one of the group, who has a great deal of experience with useful websites and how to use them, demonstrates how to find information using a laptop or helps members with specific pieces of elusive family history. At a recent workshop (see picture) we looked at the National Library of Scotland mapping on-line which is of the entire UK and with which it is possible to find old maps of an area and compare them with present day maps. This can be very useful to help to identify where ancestors lived.

The Group has also visited places of interest such as the Liverpool and Lancashire Archives and the World War 1 exhibition at Dunham Massey.

Family History research has changed markedly since the years when the only sources were in local archives and records had to be kept on paper charts. Now many records from all parts of the world are online and several members are finding relatives abroad and making contact with them. There are a number of programs

available to store the information electronically which saves paper but obviously needs good backup. It can help to share information and perhaps interest the next generation. Even so, visits to Archives are often still necessary to find the earlier and more unusual records.

Pam Ashton & Frances Taylor

Theatre and Music Group

(Events are open to all members of Formby U3A)

Here are some of the exciting, forthcoming events for Spring 2017. Details of others will follow soon.

Please pay for tickets when the initial booking is made. This enables us to ensure that you get the best possible deal, including transport to and from the event. If you are unable to attend the event, could you notify us as soon as possible. Dave Irving's phone number is always included at the bottom of this article.

Thurs. 2nd March, "Rhapsody", Liverpool

Philharmonic Hall, 7:30pm. Returning Hungarian guest conductor Gilbert Varga conducts Bartok's The Miraculous Mandarin live and uncensored. Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody sets things fizzing and Leeds international Piano Competition winner Louis Schwizgebel brings all his poetry and panache to Ravel's dreamy Piano Concerto. Finally take a trip to Mother Goose's enchanted garden: musical fairy tales for all ages. Tickets including transport £30, rear side stalls seats. **The coach will leave The Cross House bus stop at 6:15pm.**

Friday 19th May, "Elvis World Tour" Echo Arena Liverpool, 7:30pm. Direct from USA the world's most successful Elvis tribute artist, Shawn Klush, returns to the UK by popular demand, this time in the main arena with a show bigger, better than ever before. The show will include the original Elvis band members, "The Sweet Inspiration," who performed with the King as his backing vocalists on more than 1,000 shows from 1965 – 1977. Tickets, including transport cost £38 with **the coach leaving, The Cross House, bus stop at 6:15pm.**

Dave Irving can be contacted directly, if necessary tel: 630192.

Eileen Jones

Monthly Meetings

Are at 2:00 pm in Holy Trinity Parish Hall, the second Wednesday of each month

January 11th On the Record Angela Danby returns by popular demand to give part 2 of her earlier talk. (*You can enjoy part 2 without having heard part 1*)

February 8th Sing Me Merseyside Liverpool Community Choir, involves some audience participation and has proved very popular

March 8th AGM

Please remember to bring your current (2017 blue) membership card to all events, including group activities.

COFFEE MORNINGS are from 10:30 to 12:00 on Thursday, January 12th and each Thursday, the day after the monthly meeting, 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.

Formby U3A Committee, 2016/17

Chairman	Glyn Pike	0151 929 2996	chairman@formbyu3a.org.uk
Vice-Chairman	David Bosworth	0151 345 1347	vicechair@formbyu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Jack Ashworth	874847	secretary@formbyu3a.org.uk
Treasurer			treasurer@formbyu3a.org.uk
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Group Secretary	Linda McAuley	871890	groups@formbyu3a.org.uk
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	Linda Howard	570141	4thofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
	Rosemary Thomas	871376	5thofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
	Valerie Tibbitts	577985	6thofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk

To Help You

If you need to tell us that **you have changed your address, telephone number, or e-mail address** please contact datamanager@formbyu3a.org.uk or tel: 873597, remembering to include your full name and address, or membership number.

If you need **information about your membership card, or subscriptions** please contact treasurer@formbyu3a.org.uk

The next edition of the Newsletter is due to be sent by e-mail and be on the website early February. Paper copies can be collected at the monthly meeting & coffee morning.

Contributions are always welcomed. **The deadline for receiving articles is the penultimate Thursday of each month; midday Thursday, 19th January at the latest to:**

The Editor, Email: newseditor@formbyu3a.org.uk

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