

## Welcome Back!



Formby U3A Walking Group 6 at Sefton Meadows as lockdown lifted

### ***From the Committee.***

Welcome to our first printed Newsletter since last Christmas.

We hope you have kept well over the last 18 months and are looking forward to things returning to normal. A big thank you to those Groups who kept going by various means e.g. Zoom and meeting when allowed. Thank you to those who mastered Zoom to attend monthly meetings. We intend to start face to face monthly meetings in September and hope to see you there.

We are starting a recruitment drive for new members so please spread the word about Formby u3a and its activities. We intend to organise an Open Day in Holy Trinity Hall on Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> and hope that prospective members will drop in to see what we can offer. The Recruitment Team will be contacting groups to show case their talents/activities at the Open Day. Please contact [3rdofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk](mailto:3rdofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk) if you would like your group to be involved.

## **Special Welcome Back Get Together** **Thursday, September 9<sup>th</sup> from 2pm to 4pm**

This will be in **the main Holy Trinity Hall** so there is plenty of space and replaces the normal coffee morning. Please come along to enjoy a cup of tea, collect a Newsletter, book or jigsaw and catch up with friends. The Committee will be there to discuss

membership of Groups and setting up new Groups. Group Leaders and new members are particularly encouraged to come along. ***If you are parking at the church please see “Car Parking” on the back page for important new steps and remember to enter your car registration on the electronic pad each time you park.***

## Formby U3A Is For All

Formby U3A and its groups are open to both men and women. Although Formby U3A has fewer male members than female ones, men are welcome in all groups. Unfortunately photographs printed in the Newsletter sometimes exclusively show women. This can create the wrong impression that groups and/or the organisation is not for men. It would be greatly appreciated if group leaders could send photographs showing the diversity of their groups.

## Walking Group 6



Members in St James Gardens, on their Riverside, Parks & Chinatown Walk

**Author, Bill Farr.**

**Walking Group 6** has changed the week it meets for its regular walks. The group still meets on Thursdays, but these are now the first Thursday of each month.

Members resumed walks after the partial lifting of restrictions. Recent walks have been in the local area so that members are able to make their own way to each start. As some members hadn't walked much during lockdowns, walks were initially easier than usual. The first walk on resumption totalled 5 miles, starting at Birkdale Common, next to Royal Birkdale and went over the Birkdale Dunes, along the “Velvet Trail” to the beach at Ainsdale, then returned via the wetlands behind “The Sands” and over the dunes to Ainsdale Local Nature Reserve. As the walk followed a busy weekend members helped collect some of the rubbish that had been left behind,

fortunately finding a bin with space. Subsequent walks have increased distance. A walk around Sefton, the Cheshire Loop Line and the Canal totalled 8½ miles; one starting from Brunswick passed along the riverside to Festival Gardens, through Priory Woods, to Sefton Park, Princes Park, Princes Avenue, St James Gardens and China Town. The latter proved it was possible to even add height whilst staying local as it achieved 255 feet of ascent along 8.7 miles through mostly “green” Liverpool and revealed route ways previously unknown.

Under normal circumstances members share cars and journey costs, leaving Formby at 8:30am. Driving to the start point mostly takes no more than 1½ hrs. Normal walks are at a reasonable pace to enjoy the scenery and approx. 8-9 miles in length with 1,200 feet ascent.

The group currently has vacancies and if you would like to join, please contact Bill Farr, the group leader. Further details can be found on the Formby U3A website, groups section.

## Local History Group 6

*Author, Irene Morgan.*



**Local History Group 6** resumed monthly meetings in June. At present, visit are restricted to the immediate area accessible by public transport and car, so that members can choose how they travel to a group visit.

Whilst many members have previously taken **Mersey Ferry** sailings, they decided that it was a simple visit to organise and one which could be amended at the last minute, if necessary. As it was, Birkenhead Priory, which was our intended destination, had still not re-opened after its “temporary” closure in Lockdown 1. We sailed on The Snowdrop (formerly The Mountwood) still with its First World War “Razzle Dazzle” camouflage livery.

Ferries have operated on the Mersey since at least the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, when the monks from Birkenhead Priory used to charge a small fare to row passengers across the river from the slipway today known as Monks Ferry. The only suitable landing point for the ferry on the Liverpool shore was in the Pool, near the site of the present Merseyside Police headquarters. In 1317, a royal licence was issued, granting permission to the Priory to build lodging houses for men crossing the river at Woodside.

Until the establishment of the Mersey Railway, the ferries were the only means of crossing the river and so routes were heavily used. All of the ferry routes were initially owned by private interests, the Woodside ferry coming under the ownership of Birkenhead Corporation with ferry services at Seacombe, Egremont and New Brighton coming into the ownership of Wallasey Local Board.

During WWI the "Iris" and "Daffodil" were used as troop ships in the naval raid on Zeebrugge, Belgium as they had a shallow draft, allowing them to skim over the mines floating beneath the surface. They were also robust enough to approach the heavily defended mole curling into the North Sea. As a result of this, King George V allowed the vessels to use the word "*Royal*" in their name.

The opening of the railway tunnels saw the ferry service suffer a slight fall in passenger numbers, but it was the advent of the road tunnels that resulted in their significant decline. The opening of Queensway tunnel in 1934, saw the ferry service from Seacombe lose two million passengers as people started to use the tunnel rather than the ferry. Kingsway road tunnel's opening in 1971 further encouraged the decline in passenger numbers to only 4,000-5,000 a day, from a peak of 44,000 per day. After much public protest the ferry was retained for sentimental reasons rather than on economic grounds.

Bus services deregulation and the removal of restrictions which had prevented regular bus services through the Mersey Tunnels resulted in many routes which had previously finished at the Birkenhead Woodside bus/ferry terminal extending their journey into Liverpool. This was another blow to the ferries and the service had to be re-focussed away from commuter traffic to tourist needs.

Local History Group 6 meet alternate Mondays & Wednesdays and currently has a limited number of vacancies. Please contact the group leader. Details can be found on the Formby U3A website, groups section.

## **Formby Card Making Group**

***Author, Ann Knowles.***

The Card Making Group formed in August 2018 and for the first 18 months met very happily once a month at Formby Fire Station, to make all kinds of celebration cards and other paper craft projects.

Early in 2020, when it became apparent that it was no longer an option to meet in person, the Group decided that the card making must continue and looked to technology to provide a solution. The project packs that the members use each



Preparing our cards for Christmas

month were put together as usual, and distributed through a collection box system outside a member's house. A WhatsApp Group was formed and those members who were 'technologically lacking' were supported and helped by those with a little more 'expertise'.

The group leader made several videos explaining how the card projects should be put together and on our normal meeting date all members gathered in front of their laptops, tablets and phones in eager anticipation of a creative challenge. During the course of the afternoon the videos were sent to members one by one. Members could post back to the group pictures of their progress and ask for help if they needed it. There was also some chatter and fun and usually a small raffle was organised.

As the card makers started to miss face to face contact with others, one of the members began to organise a monthly zoom meeting for the group, just for a chat, and we all got to grips with which buttons to push! More recently, with the arrival of better weather and permission to meet outside, the group has met 'in the flesh' twice in the gardens at the rear of Formby Library.



Sharing ideas and some yummy cakes

The group is now 12 strong (10 plus 2 reserves) and is looking forward to restarting its meetings at the Fire Station over the next couple of months. We are all very grateful for the support that members of the group have given each other during

some difficult times. Although our group is full at the moment, the Group Leader, Ann Knowles, is happy to hear from anybody who wants to join the reserve list or to offer support and advice to anyone who would like to start another card making group. Her e-mail is [theknowlesfamily1@gmail.com](mailto:theknowlesfamily1@gmail.com) or phone on 872333.

## St James Gardens



**Author, Elizabeth Goodwill.**

St James Gardens, designated by Historic England as a Grade I Historic Park, proved to be a hidden gem for **Local History Group 6's** most recent visit. The visit was led by one of the group's members.

Once outside the city where 2 windmills were located until the 1820s, the site was first excavated as a stone quarry in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The resulting chasm stretched from the top of present day Rodney St. to Parliament St. with the quarries characteristic red sandstone providing the building material for some of old Liverpool's finest buildings, including the Town Hall and the Docks. Liverpool's only running spring, in the east wall, was discovered while work on the quarry was progressing. A local surgeon, James Worthington, wrote of the medicinal virtues of this water, especially for: *"loss of appetite, nervous disorders, lowness of spirit, headache is proceeding from crudities of the stomach, Ricketts and weak eyes"* and until recently a Doctor from the nearby Rodney Street used to visit the spring for a drink every day.

By 1825 the useful stone from the quarry had been exhausted. At the same time, it was becoming difficult to prepare new graves without disturbing other corpses at Low Hill Cemetery, Everton. Liverpool Council decided that one way to cope with the huge scar created by the quarry was to use the space as a cemetery, along the same lines of the Pere-la-Chaise, Paris, the first municipal and garden cemetery in Paris. Public subscriptions raised nearly £20,000 and the young architect John Foster was



Liverpool's only spring

employed to design the area. The cemetery predates the Cathedral to which it does not belong. Cemetery burials continued until July 1936, when, after 57,774 burials, the cemetery was considered full.

The cemetery today has two entrances, with no modern access from Hope Street, although the original design transformed the quarry's east wall into a

sequence of broad ramps, or walkways. The ramps led down to the main burial ground itself, laid out with winding paths and lined with trees. Horse drawn hearses would come down the walkways bringing the great and small of old Liverpool to their final resting place; the rich having their catacombs and vaults, whilst the poor were buried in pits, with a thin layer of soil on top at the end of the day, ready for the next day's poor! 101 catacombs were cut into the soft rock wall, although most of were never used, even though they could be purchased for as little as £4.00.

Foster designed the windowless Oratory to stand on the high ground at the north end of the cemetery. It is described as "*a mostly perfect recreation of a classic temple,*" with the interior small enough to be lit by a skylight in the roof, leaving the side walls free of window openings in a truly Greek manner. It contained simple pews and a lectern to accommodate funeral services before burials took place in the cemetery and was also used as a kind of cenotaph for housing monuments to the deceased.

Once abandoned, the cemetery fell into a state of disrepair. During the late 1960's it was decided that action was needed and a plan to turn St James Cemetery into a public garden was proposed. This involved clearing the vast majority of the gravestones and creating an open space, with the work completed in 1972. Some huge memorials remain to those buried there, but many burials had no marker as most people could not afford even the simplest of stones and even for those who could afford stones, many were moved when the gardens were redeveloped.

Members knew of the bravery of Noel Chevasse, VC, but the group visited the memorial to the lesser known Sgt. Arthur Richardson, also a VC holder. Awarded the VC at the age of 27, he died aged 59, working as a track layer for Liverpool tramway. Having his namesake in the group, members also visited the memorial to Capt. William Harrison, Captain of the Brunel's great iron ship, The Great Eastern. The ship was dogged by misfortune; its launch taking three months; it had to wait 2 years for its maiden voyage, which was to New York, rather than its intended destination, Australia; it carried about 230 passengers for the maiden voyage when she could hold almost 4,000; the vessel finishing its life in the Mersey as a floating advertising for Lewis's department store!

Amongst the memorials to the famous, the group visited those to William Huskisson and Sir William Brown, the latter being immortalised in the street named after him. Brown's connection with Liverpool began in 1810 when he realised that Liverpool, as



Members at the Huskisson Memorial

the port of entry for American exports, was the "place to be." Gradually he moved from linen, in to cotton, then merchandising before making his fortune in merchant banking. He helped to establish the Bank of Liverpool. He met the £40,000 cost of William Brown Library which was described as "a gift to the inhabitants of Liverpool."

Members visited several simpler memorials, including one to Kitty Wilkinson, commonly known as the "Saint of the Slums." Kitty emigrated Ireland as a child. She married a sailor who, soon afterwards, was lost at sea. She took in washing to be put through the mangle in her own wash-house to earn a little money; married a young Tom Wilkinson, a hospitable man, their home taking on the status of an orphanage. Her fame comes following the 1832 cholera outbreak (there were

reportedly 10 outbreaks between 1832 and 1840). Kitty, tapping her customary fervour and fearlessness, and possessing the only boiler in the street, offered its use to her neighbours to wash affected clothes and bed-linen. She eventually fitted her cellar as a wash-house, with the additional intention of using it as disinfecting room for the clothes from the cholera homes. Kitty managed it so well that not one her workers became infected. Her work gave rise to the concept of public wash-houses. Following the cholera epidemic, there were many motherless children who were neglected and living rough. Kitty took in 20 of them every morning, read stories to them and taught them hymns in her bedroom. They enjoyed themselves so much that Kitty was forced to hire a room and employ another woman to teach them. Kitty survived Tom by 12 years, to die at the age of 73, a great age in a time when people did not live far beyond their 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.

After the visit many members having pre-booked entry tickets enjoyed lunch in the Cathedral and visiting the Peace Doves installation.

## Bridge Groups

**Author, Nikki Harrison, Bridge Co-ordinator.**

We have around 20 bridge groups in Formby U3A. Most are groups of 4 to 8 meeting in their own houses on rotation, with some larger groups playing in a pub room or alternative venue, where you usually play with different people each time. Some play contract bridge, rubber bridge, Chicago, or a common description is social bridge!

Some of these groups may not start back up after lockdown and if any members need any assistance in joining or reforming a group I am available to help.



If new members, before approaching group leaders, would like more information about the existing groups than is available on the website, please contact me for this and to discuss which groups with vacancies might suit them. Alternately I am happy to try and put new members in touch with others who have or may approach me as Bridge Co-ordinator. I can be contacted by e-mail, [nikki@nikki101077.plus.com](mailto:nikki@nikki101077.plus.com) or by 'phone 871308.

If there is a demand we have a beginners and/or improvers group(s), which welcome individuals who wish to learn bridge and those who for one reason or another have not played for quite a while and would like to brush up their skills.

## Group News

### ***Pam Ashton, Groups Secretary.***

There are now over 90 groups operating in Formby U3A. Many Group Leaders have kept in touch with their members through the pandemic, others have not. We are very grateful to all Group Leaders for their work over the years whether they will be continuing or not. It is possible that we are at a stage of the pandemic where we will be able to carry on with our activities now, particularly as almost all Formby U3A members will be fully vaccinated. We hope that all groups will now re-open in September putting in place all the safety measures that they feel are appropriate. The Government has handed over to us the responsibility for staying safe so groups and group leaders must decide how they wish to do this.

A few groups have unfortunately folded during the pandemic. If you feel this has left a gap for you personally please get in touch with the Groups Secretary. A review of groups is now being held to ensure that all our information is up to date. Please do respond to the letter that has been sent to you.

Two meetings for group leaders were held by Zoom in 2021 and some good discussions were held. Thank you to those who attended. As the Government had not permitted opening up and meetings of more than 6 people inside the face to face meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> June could not go ahead. We have now planned to bring group leaders together for a face to face meet up on 17<sup>th</sup> September. This is partly to say thank you for all your work and it will be good to meet you all properly.

**Special Announcements:** Formby U3A Committee has decided that a few sessions with a **specialist tutor** may be paid for out of our funds where this is appropriate. Whilst the ethos of the U3A is mutual learning it is not always possible for groups to be expert from the start. An example of this is Pilates where a tutor is unlikely to come "from the ranks".

There has been some interest in a **Metal Detecting Group**. We are seeking an "expert" to help with the regulations and other issues involved in such a group. If you are also interested in joining this group please contact the Groups Secretary.

**A new group for book lovers** is being set up by two of our male members who wish you to know that "men can also join a book club!" **Book club 4** will meet at

11am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in the month at the Bay Horse for around one or one and a half hours. It is aiming to be a mixed group welcoming men and women. Please contact the Groups Secretary initially for further information.

The Groups Secretary is willing to set up another **walking group** if there is demand. This group will walk around 5 miles one Wednesday morning per month. The walks will start off as local walks with either a sandwich at the end or a café stop. Another co-leader is necessary so if you feel able to volunteer to share the work and wish to walk 5 miles please contact the Groups Secretary. Every source of local walks will be mined, including any suggestions members have!

More good news! Although the **UNO** group is full Audrey Silvester is willing to help establish a new group if there is demand for it and if someone is willing to take the lead. Please contact the Groups Secretary initially.

**Family History Group 3** is now the only group researching family history. Group members have learned a great deal from one another over the years and now have a great deal of expertise between them. Several of the members are happy to help support any new group that is set up. The group has a couple of vacancies so please contact the Groups Secretary if you are interested.

Finally, you may have wished to join one of our extremely popular **Local History** Groups but have been unable to get a place. You are not alone, so I intend to try and meet with the Local History group leaders to see if there is a need to set up a new group. If this happens we will also need a few members of existing groups to help with support for the new group. This does not need to be group leaders as many members have a great deal of experience and have a great deal to offer.

**Vacancies:** **Canasta** groups 4 and 5, Floral Art plus **Mahjong** are keen to welcome new members.

### **Formby U3A Committee 2021-22**

Chairman	Frances Taylor (2017)	577205	chairman@formbyu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Evan Bale (2020)		secretary@formbyu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Anne Rodmell (2019)	621835	treasurer@formbyu3a.org.uk
Membership Sec.	Christine McIlraith (2018)	874787	membership@formbyu3a.org.uk
Group Secretary	Pam Ashton (2020)		groups@formbyu3a.org.uk
Officers	Christine Kennedy (2020)	577774	1stofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
	Nikki Harrison (2021)	871308	2ndofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
	Jane Bienias (2020)		3rdofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
	Sheila Wise (2020)		5thofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk
Accessibility Officer	Ann Knowles (2019)	872333	6thofficer@formbyu3a.org.uk

*\* year appointed to the Committee*

## New Members

Formby U3A is pleased to welcome the following new members.

Shirley Anders	Susan Birdsall	Douglas Bridson
Barbara Bushell	Noreen Evans	Janet Everett
Jon Everett	Jill Fielding	Pauline Fleming
Albert Hitchcock	Elaine Honigmann	Jane Kennaugh
Rod Langman	David Lattimore	Shirley Lattimore
Sue Leslie	Virginia McCombe	Claire Mckay
Jacqueline McMillan	Margaret Mullen	Michael O'Donnell
Les Page	Catherine Palmer	Helen Perry
John Prenton	Linda Pritchard	Sylvia Richardson
David Rimmer	Jeanette Rimmer	Lynda Rodgers
Martyn Rodmell	Jane Shaw	Patricia Shaw
Anne Skelton	Mark Skelton	JulieTarr
Anne Teasdale	Jackie Whitefield	Steve Whitefield
David Willis	Liz Wright	

## Newsletter Contributions

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

Please send contributions to the Editor, e-mail: [newseditor@formbyu3a.org.uk](mailto: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.

Contributors' names should be given.

**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 ensure that all people shown in photographs are aware that photographs are being taken for inclusion in the Newsletter.

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

**The deadline for articles for the next Newsletter is midday Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September at the latest.**

## Speaker Meetings

**Christine Kennedy, Speaker Organiser.**

It will be so good to be able to return to “in person” meetings again in September after such a long absence. The autumn meetings, as previously, will be held in The **Holy Trinity Parish Hall** from **2.00pm** on the second Wednesday of the month.

**Step-free alternative access:** To avoid the halls’ front steps, an entrance at the rear of the building can be accessed by following the footpath to the left of the main doors.

**Car Parking:** Please be aware of the new parking system at Holy Trinity. You need to ***enter your car registration number on the electronic pad in the foyer each time you park***. There is no charge, but if you fail to comply you will almost certainly receive a heavy fine. If you are not sure what to do there will be someone on hand to help. We look forward to welcoming everyone back.

**September 8<sup>th</sup>:** We start off our meetings with a visit from **Dave Joy** who will be talking about **The Liverpool Cow Keepers**. This is a talk based on his family history and promises to be both entertaining and informative.

**October 13<sup>th</sup>:** Matthew and Becky are a brother and sister partnership based in Formby who make handmade soaps and body care products. They will talk about and demonstrate how they make **Tigermuffin Soaps**.

**November 10<sup>th</sup>:** **Paul Atherton** will talk about **The True History behind Viking Voices**. Paul is an historical author with a particular interest in the Cuerdale hoard, found close to where he lives.

**December 8<sup>th</sup>:** **Wendy Williamson** will entertain us with her **Sing me Merseyside** show.

**Please remember to bring your current **ORANGE** membership card to all events, including monthly talks and group activities.**

**Coffee Mornings:** The first regular Formby U3A Coffee Morning will be **Thursday October 14<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 -12:00 in the Workshop**. For September, please note the change in time from the normal Coffee Morning. As we were not able to book the Hall in the morning, the September coffee event will be replaced by a **Welcome Back Meeting on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September, running from 2pm to 4pm** in the Hall. Please come along to enjoy a cup of tea, collect a Newsletter, and catch up with friends. The Hall should give us plenty of space. The Committee will be there to discuss membership of Groups and setting up new Groups and Group Leaders and new members are particularly encouraged to come along.

**The next Newsletter is due** to be distributed by e-mail and be on the website early next month. Paper copies can be collected at the monthly meeting & coffee morning.