

Formby Civic News

The Formby Civic Society Newsletter



May 2006

Society to organize Formby Hall Heritage Event.



Formby Hall Dovecote, as seen through the trees.

On September 9th, as a contribution to Heritage Open Days, the Society, (with thanks to Mr Mike McComb), is to allow visitors to visit the Formby Hall Dovecote, a well preserved listed building, which very few have ever seen. Dove Cotes in this area are few and far between. The only other one is at Parbold at Ashworth Hall, which according to the West Lancs Conservation Officer, is in need of a little restoration. Some members will however, remember visiting the Dovecote at Lytham Hall.

The keeping of Pigeons is a very old custom, introduced to Britain after the Norman conquest. Pigeon meat was an important part of the diet during the winter months, during and after the Middle Ages. In Norman times, The Nobility, Monasteries, Lords of the Manor and even Parish Priests were permitted to keep a dovecote for Meat, feathers, and also the rich manure they produced. This latter was particularly good for hops and barley but was very strong and had to be used with care.

Dovecotes come in many structural forms and sizes. Most have double thickness walls with built-in nesting boxes. Pigeons mate for life and are highly prolific, producing an average of 2 chicks ('squabs') up to six times a year for seven years. The nesting holes in the walls are L-shaped to left or right and three are recommended for the use of each pair of birds.

To assist the collection of birds and eggs, most dovecotes, including Formby Hall dovecote were fitted with a 'potence', - a central stout wooden structure with a wooden upright pole pivoted above and below and fitted with a ladder. Dovecotes are always built near a supply of clean water. In France, even today, you may see numbers of attractive dovecotes of varying shape and size in rural areas but even in France few are actively used as they were in the past to provide a ready source of "fast-food" not only for daily use but perhaps especially when there was a sudden influx of hungry guests during the winter months!

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Barracuda Threat to Village!

How you can respond—see report page 8

Make your views known!

Challenges for nature conservation on the Sefton Coast, by John Houston,

Representatives of the Civic Society have been taking part in a series of discussions on the development of revised policies for nature conservation on the coast. This is being led by the Sefton Coast Partnership and work will continue over the coming year to develop a strategy and delivery plan.

The background to the work came out of discussions with Sefton Council and English Nature, following the Council's recorded opposition to further felling at Ainsdale. Both sides agreed that such projects have to be seen in the context of the coast as a whole rather than on a site-by-site basis.

In 1999 a nature conservation strategy was prepared to explain the then new designation of European site (a Special Area of Conservation) for the sand dunes. This strategy will now be updated and expanded to cover all coastal land, so it includes international, national and local interest.

Public involvement in developing the strategy started at the annual Forum of the Sefton Coast Partnership in February this year. Delegates, including the Civic Society, were invited to send in written comments and to take part in a series of discussion groups. A first round of 'working groups' in April focused on aspects of coastal change, water resources, habitats and species and how we draw everything together at the landscape level.

Discussion has focused on a set of six principles;

1. Taking a coastwide approach: any large scale projects by landowners should be seen in the context of the whole coast
2. Recognising climate change and preparing to be adaptable: climate change will have a potential impact and some habitats may-



change

3. Accepting natural processes: living with both the erosion at Formby Point and the build up of sand at Southport
4. Supporting the continuity of man-

“There are problems for nature which have to be addressed collectively and across the whole coast”

agement: through woodland work and through actions such as grazing on dunes and heaths

5. Considering that sometimes there is a need for habitat restoration: but such projects need to be carefully planned and clearly explained
6. Supporting more community involvement: currently open for good ideas!

Why do we need another strategy? To many people the coast just looks after itself with natural processes sculpting what we see. This is true to a point but, with so many different l

andowners, each with different priorities and demands on the natural environment, there is a danger that the landscape and habitats will become more fragmented.

There are problems for nature which have to be addressed collectively and across the whole coast. Dunes and heaths are semi-natural habitats in that they have been formed through centuries of interaction with people. This is very much people as part of nature, not apart from it, and one of the principles of the new strategy.

Without some intervention it is clear that these habitats will turn first to scrub and then to woodland. However much we value the woodlands of the coast it is important to balance this with the open character and natural value of our open habitats.

There are some problem species as well, which have to be controlled by cutting, or better, through grazing. Species such as White Poplar, Balsam Poplar and Sea Buckthorn if left unchecked would spread across most of the dune system.

Most worrying perhaps are the insidious threats to the dune habitats caused by a build up of nitrogen from atmospheric pollution. This nutrient-,,,,,,,(Continued next page)

challenges for nature conservation; (Continued)

rich rainfall has the same effect as Knock on effects on the special species of bare sand such as the Northern Dune Tiger Beetle, Sand Lizard and several bees and wasps. The strategy will seek ways to counter these problems through actions such as grazing and also through recognising the importance of bare sand as a habitat.

The steady process of developing the strategy will give the Civic Society and the other civic societies along the coast plenty of time to help develop new structures for communication and involvement with local communities. Already the discussions have identified communication and information as crucial aspects of the work of the Sefton Coast Partnership.

More information can be found on www.seftoncoast.org.uk under the nature conservation pages

This Article is by John Houston, Biodiversity Project Officer, Sefton Coast Partnership



SEFTON COAST
PARTNERSHIP

A new Natural Environment/ Wildlife Conservation Group?

It has been suggested that we consider re-establishing a new special interest Group. This would aim to support and create interest in important aspects of our very special coastal and mossland environment and would continue the work of the Society's Natural History Group which fell into abeyance following the death of Gladys Bevan. some years ago.

This Group would arrange a programme of meetings and visits to places of wildlife interest on the coast and elsewhere and particularly encourage observation and recording. We have good links with the National Trust and English Nature as well as Sefton Coast and Countryside; also with the local Golf Clubs and Altcar Rifle Range. The group would take an interest in Sefton Coast Partnership Conservation activities. We believe the re-establishment of the group would be of great value and might even be able to assist in a voluntary capacity in practical activities, such as the recent transfer of common frogs and toads from Ainsdale to a large and suitable pond on Formby Hall Golf Club, in order to ease pressure on Natterjack Toad breeding at Ainsdale.

In reviewing the Society's role and activities it now seems the right time to re-form this Group, under the title of '*Natural Environment/Conservation Group*'. This would have great relevance with the implementation of the *Sefton Coast Partnership –Nature Conservation Strategy and Biodiversity Delivery Plan* with its welcome invitation to Civic Societies to play a role as 'stake-holders' in the protection and maintenance of unique coastal habitats and species. We hope that this group would be of special interest to younger members. The York Civic Society has very successfully recruited a sizable 'Young Member' group who take a very active and practical interest in the ancient 'built environment' of the City. We hope here on our dune coast to form an equally lively and active group focussing on our natural environment. We will say more about this in the next Newsletter but in the meantime please let us know what you think.

Some recent Enquiries. (mainly via e-mail).

Information requested about a former headmaster of Holmwood school. (Historical Research).

To help identify a strange Coat of Arms on Bootle Town Hall, (from the author of a proposed history of the Town Hall). *This query forwarded to the Lancs. Local History Federation quickly produced the answer – the original and somewhat unorthodox Blackpool Coat of arms.*

The Formby Lifeboat and the Aindows (family history).

Great Altcar - to identify a 19th Cent published history; from ex-resident.

The Aindow family and Bang Braides Farm; (family history)

"Formby Four Crosses" – Where was it? (Referred to in a Flanders and Swan song)!

"Joseph Formby, born 1805, died between 1861 and 1871. Was a fisherman, married a Mary and lived in Lifeboat House". (family history)

Information requested on "The history behind the Asparagus fields in Formby seems to illustrate that human waste was once used locally as a form of fertiliser" (for an architectural Dissertation)

Lancashire Mosslands and Drainage; (Research Project)

'The Cottage', Duke Street, Photo or drawing requested. (family connction).

"To provide our views on Tourism to a party of foreign students" (via Southport College)

Re: Photos of Vaughan House and Bishops Court, (request from old pupil.)

Information on Shaftsbury House, Private Mental Hospital, Wanted by daughter of former inmate.

Chairman's report 2006; by R. A. Yorke

In commencing my Annual Report I would normally review Society **activities** during the last twelve months but in so far as I did this quite fully in the February issue of the Society Newsletter, I hope you will excuse me if I do not repeat the entire exercise now. There are however some important **issues** which I would like to mention.

Planning.

Monitoring Planning Applications and trends is one of the most important responsibilities of any Civic Society and increasingly a more difficult one. This is an area of concern we share with our fellow Civic Societies along the Coast. In this, through our Amenities Secretary, we deal with a hard pressed and technically based Local Authority Department with whom communications are often difficult but the public generally understand and value our efforts on their behalf and we thank Ray Derricott for his untiring work. The decisions of the Planning Officers are based, not only on the UDP but other Sefton Council and NW Region policies which are sometimes rather vague and I am sorry to say not always very transparent. This is entirely the case with the present Barracuda application for a new Pub in Browns Lane which has now gone to appeal. It is good that we are now joined in our attempts to get the right decisions for our community by an active Formby Parish Council with whom we are very pleased to work closely.

The feeling that in some cases important things are happening 'behind the scenes' was illustrated by the sudden and unprecedented release for sale of about 500 acres of prime farm land on the edge of Formby and within the Green Belt by the Leverhulme (Altcar) Estate. This served to remind us that Green Belt protection from commercial development will in the fairly near future come up for review and possible change. It is for this reason that we are now together with CPRE keeping a watchful eye

on the situation. Instead of well kept Green Belt farm land we could in the future be surrounded by untended scrub, fly-tipping and poor quality building!

Strategy.

It is important that as a Society we occasionally review our objectives and strategies for attaining them. We have recently established a small Committee Sub-Group to do this. To date this sub-group has only met once but will help to provide useful 'compass-bearings' to aid our forward progress. Our principle objectives remain of course those stated in our Constitution but it is useful to gauge how successful we have been in achieving these. It seems that helping safe-guard our natural amenities, encouraging local history and the upkeep of archives and library are the areas in which we are most successful. Lowest is "promoting higher standards of architecture"; perhaps this is a lost cause and should be replaced by a more general expression of interest in the quality of our built environment?

"We are however uncertain about the desire of Sefton Council's Tourism Department to attract more visitors to the now officially branded 'Sefton Natural Coast'."

Membership.

The membership of the Society remains reasonably stable but it is realised that we should try to attract younger members. This is a topic about which we have asked the Civic Trust for advice and we hope that Ian Harvey, the Trust's Development Officer for the NW will attend our next Committee Meeting on 10th May to advise us how this topic has been approached by other societies and the Trust itself. Ideas already suggested include involvement in the creation of a small urban green space or involvement in the creation of some form of historic or other Trail. In actual fact we are already working on

plans for a community-orientated 'Asparagus Trail'

New Special Interest Group.

In reviewing the Society's role and activities it now seems the right time to re-form the former 'Natural History Group', under the title of 'Natural Environment/Conservation Group'. We understand the potential relevance of this at the present time with the implementation of the **Sefton Coast Partnership – Nature Conservation Strategy and Biodiversity Delivery Plan** with its welcome invitation to Civic Societies to play a role as 'stake-holders' in the protection and maintenance of unique coastal habitats and species. We will be able to say more about this in the next Newsletter.

Coastal and Wildlife Issues.

Include the development of better facilities for visitors to the coast; (and also residents); in the form of an eco-friendly Visitor/Field Studies Centre at either Lifeboat Road or Victoria Road. We are however uncertain about the desire of Sefton Council's Tourism Department to attract more visitors to the now officially branded 'Sefton Natural Coast'. (**Sefton Natural Coast Tourism Marketing Plan**). Visitors to the National Trust property alone seem now to have risen from the formerly recorded 350,000 per year and soon may be reaching half a million per year! The question is how sustainable is this if the attractiveness and wild-life of the coast are to be safe-guarded? We need re-assurances on the visitor carrying capacity of the coast and its infrastructure. This is very much in mind when we remember that over five million people live within an hours drive-time of Formby Point! The £40,00 increase in the 'marketing' of the coast already agreed may be good for Southport but is it equally good for Formby and the 'Natural Coast'?

In consultation with other Civic Societies along the Sefton Coast this Society recently agreed to support

Treasurer's Annual Report 2006; by Mike Belshaw

The accounts are once again in two parts, firstly the Millennium Fund Account, and then the accounts for the normal activities of the Society. There has been no change in the Millennium Account other than the addition of £189 building society interest; the balance in the Account is to pay for the publication of both the Millennium Walk booklet and the 2004 Coastal Conference proceedings. The Society has had a successful financial year, ending with an increased surplus of £1,568. While expenditure was greater, largely due to printing of the Formby (Sibley) notelets and to the upgrading of the website to take pictures, income also increased somewhat faster than expected. Sales of the notelets have exceeded expectations and have already produced a surplus

of some £200 over the cost of printing. Sales of Sibley prints have risen, and the Art Exhibition returned to form with sales of around £1,000. The summer visit produced a larger surplus than anticipated, while the charge to visitors at Society meetings, raised to £2 from £1 last year, has doubled income from this source. Subscription income rose following last year's increase, and I am pleased to record that the loss of members as a result has been minimal. Gift Aid has now probably peaked, but I am grateful to the many members who have 'gift-aided' their subscriptions. In order to maintain the Current Account balance at a prudent level, £1,000 has been transferred into an interest-paying Bonus Saver Account with the NatWest Bank. In addition, £500 has been added to the building society reserves. During the forthcoming year I am sure your committee will be con-

sidering how best to make use of the Society's healthy financial position. Further development of the website has already been discussed, as has the possibility of new projection equipment for meetings. Equally, it seems probable that the cost of accommodation hire will rise, and we may need to offer higher expenses to maintain the quality of our guest speakers. I would again remind members of the Inland Revenue's charities donation scheme introduced for self-assessment returns. It is now possible to nominate any tax repayments as a donation to the Society, quoting the allocated unique reference code YAH46KG - this is listed on the Inland Revenue website under the name of the Society. This arrangement is in addition to the valuable Gift Aid scheme, which continues as before for those members paying Income Tax. Finally, I am grateful to our auditor John Kershaw, for an efficient audit of the accounts.

Art Group Annual Report by Barbara Mossop

Activities available to Art Group members during the past year included visits to exhibitions in Ribchester, Parbold and Burton in the Wirral. Some members also joined an art group from Southport to go by coach to the large National Art Fair at the NEC Birmingham, where they were able to watch demonstration and also purchase art materials. We went out sketching locally on one or two occasions to Wright's Nurseries and – a new venue – the asparagus fields, where staff explained how the plants looked at various times of the year and how they were harvested. We hope to go back again this year, but a bit earlier as a lot of the asparagus had already been cut when we visited. The Open Air Exhibition was a great success. We had decided to run it as a committee and all those involved had their own duties. The day was fine, we had plenty of helpers and, for the first time, a separate Formby Civic Society table dealing specifically with general Society matters, membership and the sale of Muriel Sibley notelets. We had about 100 paintings and decorated irons on view; the commission from sales brought in £100 for the Society. Many thanks to all who helped in any way. Our annual New Year get-together was held once more at Lydiate Hall Farm. We enjoyed each other's company as well as the food; Diary note: this year's exhibition is due to take place on Saturday 24 June, in the village. We hope to see you there!

Chairman's report (continued).

.....Continued from p4

Sefton Coast and Countryside Service's attempts to persuade local dog-owners not to allow their pets to foul dune footpaths.

Apart from on our streets this is a serious problem, particularly in Formby, adjacent to Lifeboat Road and Victoria Road Car Parks. The Sefton 'Coastal Code' requires owners to "Clean up after your dog" but many owners simply ignore this.

Community Centre.

The closure of Holy Trinity School during the course of the year inevitably lead to speculation regarding the future of its modern and well-maintained building. The Society made attempts to discover any proposed plans for the future of the building and jointly with the Parish Council arranged a meeting, chaired by Claire Curtis-Thomas MP, to establish the level of interest in the community in a feasibility study to examine its potential suitability as a Community Centre. The outcome showed clear support for a feasibility study but unfortunately we are still awaiting the all-important views of the Church of England Diocese.

Communications

The efficiency of our efforts has I think developed considerably with the availability of e-mail and 'broadband' communication. Even enquiries regarding historical matters are now arriving by this route more than more traditional ones. The Secretary is thinking of developing an e-mail membership address list but at present it is not known how many members would be interested in using this method of communication. We hope to find out.

Our Web-site is now a readily available shop-window to Society activities for many outside our geographical area. We have been grateful during the year for yet more assistance in improving its functionality to our 'Web-master', Sam Gerrard. We can

now for instance readily add images and captions to our text.

This will. I am sure be used more and more as we go on to develop the site. We know that the site is used by outsiders but get little feed-back from our own members. In particular little comment or suggestions on content. I am proposing that we include a questionnaire to members to elicit their views on this and related issues in the next Newsletter.

Asparagus Project.

Last May we organised a very successful and innovative 'Asparagus Feast' at the Freshfield Hotel. This event was intended to be a forerunner to the Project and consisted of a historical introduction, followed by some illustrative asparagus 'readings' from different authors spread over almost two thousand years from Pliny the Elder to the present day. We then enjoyed two classical asparagus dishes with musical entertainment provided by the Jill Fielding Band. Finally we heard a specially composed asparagus poem written by the daughter of a former local aspara-

"Our Web-site is now a readily available shop-window to Society activities for many outside our geographical area."

gus worker. The evening made £100 profit which was then donated to the National Trust 'Coastline Campaign'. The actual Asparagus project described in Coastlines magazine last August has been slow in planning and because of changes at the Countryside Agency we are now told that the previously hoped for Heritage Initiative Award will not be available.

Formby Lifeboat Station

As a contribution to National Archaeology Week, 2006 we have agreed to organise two site visits to the remains of Formby Lifeboat Station, Lifeboat Road, Formby Point, on Sunday, 16 July and Sunday 23 July, 2.30-

4.30pm These occasions will be suitable for 10 years upwards. Participants will meet at the car park on Lifeboat Road,

The two site visits will provide opportunities to inspect what remains of the life-boat house, consider the significance of its establishment in the late 18th Century and possibly view a selected photo display reflecting its history. Interested members are invited either to help or simply join the visit, (Please let us know if you would like to do either).

Heritage Open Days.

Unfortunately it was not possible to organise the proposed event based on the Formby Hall dovecote, last year as hoped but with the kind permission of Mr Mike McComb, this is now to be planned to be held this September. (7th – 10th September 2006). Barbara has already provided an introduction to this at the History Group Member's Evening. We would now like to set up a small group to help research the dovecote, help with organisation and finally assist with the event itself. (No previous experience in pigeon handling needed!). Once again, please contact Barbara or myself if you might be interested.

Boundary Walk Publication.

You will be pleased to know that preparation of this is slowly proceeding, only held back by the fact that so much else is going on! The actual format of the publication has now been more clearly defined and the process of putting it together is proceeding smoothly

Thanks to Committee and Officers

I would now like to thank members of the Committee and Officers for their sustained and diligent input to the successful running of the Society during the last year.....

Finally it is my pleasure to (somewhat belatedly) honour two very important previous officers of,Continued next page, col 1)

AMENITIES SECRETARY'S REPORT by Ray Derricott

The year has been dominated by opposition to a proposal to open a public house when Byrnes move out of their current premises.

As I write the situation remains complex. In summary the position is as follows:-Barracuda had discussed the proposal with Council Planning Officers as early as March 2005. The actual proposal was submitted in December 2005 and was validated by the Planning Department. The interested parties, as deemed by the planners, were given until 4 January 2006 to make their comments. The Christmas and New Year closure and delay in post meant that most people received their letters between 15 and 19 December. Some parties were not consulted including the Civic Society.

The Planning Committee postponed consideration of the proposal at their meeting of 11 January. The Society's objections were sent on 29 December. Desmond Brennan, now a member of the Society, set up a petition opposing the proposal. On 3 February the Society organised a public meeting to discuss the proposal. He presented a detailed critique of the proposal. The petition now contained over 1700 signatures. Barracuda made an objection of the delay in receiving a decision.

On 15 February the Planning Committee met and discussed the proposal. Desmond Brennan presented his objections to the proposal. The Deputy Planning Officer recommended its acceptance indicating that the Council Officers saw no planning reasons for turning down the proposal. A site visit was made by the Committee.

The advice they were given was that there were no parking problems, the pub could be serviced with supplies at the rear of the premises. The proximity to the Swimming Pool and congestion at the junction with Rosemary Lane were not seen as problems. Noise and cooking smells were also seen to be no problem. A vote of the committee approved the

“interested community groups and individuals have found an effective way of collaborating on planning issues”.

proposal. Anticipating a positive decision Barracuda withdrew the objection. On 15 March the Planning Committee met. As a petitioner Alan Roberts presented his views to the committee. Councillor Platt also spoke of his opposition. By now more of the committee had found time to read

Desmond Brennan's critique. Members of the Committee perceived this to be new evidence. The committee rejected the proposal. Barracuda appealed to the national planning inspectorate for a hearing or an inquiry. On 12 April the Planning Committee met. Alan Roberts asked for a full open inquiry at which all concerned would be able to question and be questioned. The committee went into camera to take a position on this. We learned that the inquiry will be by written evidence from all parties. An Inspector will be appointed and from that date all parties have to submit evidence within six weeks. The inquiry will probably take place in late May or June. There is one positive outcome of the Brows Lane case. The Civic Society, the Parish Council and the Pool Project and interested community groups and individuals have found an effective way of collaborating on planning issues. Other issues; Wicks Lane Path is now being put on the definitive footpath map and legal documents are being prepared to affirm this. The Society has the best set of old maps of the area and Dr Yorke has helped in plotting the course of the footpath. In collaboration with Mr Eude, the Tree Protection Officer, the Society continues to monitor the preservation of Formby's trees. The Society also continues to attempt to keep satellite phone masts out of dense residential areas and public

Chairman's report (continued).

Thanks to Committee and Officers

(Continued).....

the Society, Joy and Peter West. Joy was Hon Secretary from 1977 - 1981. She then became very active (with Peter Lucas) in the setting up and organisation of the Society Museum in Duke St. Library. She was Museum Secretary from 1983 -1989. Peter was Hon Treasurer for a full period of office and was instrumental

in obtaining use of our first Store Room. Both Joy and Peter have done a lot to keep the Society going over the years in many ways including hosting garden parties. They are still both strongly interested and supportive members. The Committee now have much pleasure in recognising their contribution by awarding them both Honorary Life Membership of the Society.

R. A. Yorke.

New Vice-Chairman.

At the AGM held on 28th April all the current Officers were re-elected, with the exception of Alan Burton who is standing down as Vice Chair for personal reasons. His place is to be taken by Dr John Turner who was returned unanimously.

Dr Desmond Brennan was elected to the Committee. There are still vacancies on the Committee for those with a real interest in our activities.

The Barracuda Affair (latest); by Ray Derricott

As I indicated in my report to the AGM in April the Barracuda Group has appealed against Sefton's refusal to give planning permission for a change of use of the premises now occupied by Byrnes at 44-46 Brows Lane. Barracuda were proposing to extend the premises at the rear and change the frontage of the building and open a public house. An Inspector has now been appointed and interested parties are asked to submit three copies of their views to the Inspector in Bristol by 19 June 2006 at the latest. On behalf of the Society I shall be submitting our support for the refusal of the proposal. The Parish Council, the Formby Pool Project and Dr Desmond Brennan will also be making submissions supporting the Council's refusal. We are encouraging other groups and individuals to make their views clear to the Inspector. The three meetings of Sefton Planning Committee were well attended by concerned Formby residents. Over those three meetings we saw a recommendation for acceptance by the Sefton Planning Officers overturned by logical and strongly argued petitions by Desmond Brennan and Alan Roberts supported by local Councillors and Parish Councillors. The Planning Officers are now in the position of having to argue against their previous judgements about the proposal. The basis of their arguments are now as indicated.

'The proposed use would be contrary to Policy MID6 of the deposit Unitary Development Plan in that it would cause harm to the character of the area and would cause harm to residential amenity by virtue of noise and disturbance particularly at night bearing in mind the proximity of residential properties.

'The proposed use would dilute the retail experience leading to a loss of vitality and viability of the town centre contrary to Policy R5 of the deposit version of the Unitary Development Plan''.

After considering all submissions the Inspector will make a site visit. It will be noted that the Planners' line of argument does not mention constant congestion at that part of the village and the problems of servicing the rear of the building for supplying the premises and collecting rubbish. An estimate of the time to be taken by the appeal suggests that we will have a decision sometime in July. Copies of all documents submitted for the appeal will be available for reference at the Planning Office at 9-11 East-

bank Street, Southport. The case officer is Mrs A Fortune (051 934 2202) who is available on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. She will indicate when the documents are available to the public. A free document *Guide to Taking Part in Planning Appeals* is available from the Planning Office (934 3596).

The ups and downs of the Barracuda Affair has demonstrated the effectiveness of the collaboration of several community groups and individuals working towards a common goal. Whether we win or lose, we should take our lessons from this.

Other planning matters. I am pleased to be joined by Desmond Brennan in working on future planning matters for the Society. We would also like to involve any other members of the Society who wish to join us and attend occasional meetings on planning. We do not see this as a heavy commitment for members but it helps us to know what you thinking about continuity and change in Formby. Contact us directly or through our efficient Secretary David Willis.

WRITE TO:-

Ref: APP/M4320/A106/20 139901NWF Mrs S Parkin, The Planning Inspectorate,3/18A Temple Quay House, 2 The Square Temple Quay Bristol

Art Group Report by Barbara Mossop

The Group Committee met recently and arranged our summer programme.

The Open air Art Exhibition takes place in the Village on Saturday 24th June. Entry forms are enclosed with this Newsletter. We are having a full day's painting on Sunday 2nd July when we will visit the Boatyard, Tarleton in the morning and another local venue, possibly Rufford Old Hall or Bank Hall, Bretherton. Please let me know if you are going to attend.

We are hoping to revisit the Asparagus Farm. They don't cut the crop every day. If the day we have picked is not suitable we will paint in the Pinewoods instead and go to the farm on another day. Ince Blundell is entering a 'Village in Bloom' competition and we hope to record this in paint in July. We do not meet as a group in August but if you would like to sketch or go to an exhibition with one or two members, at short notice please contact me on 873920

History Group Annual Report. By Barbara Yorke MBE



History Group members enjoy looking through the Numerous Scrap-books kept by former members of the Society.

During the year we held seven (usually well attended) meetings. Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, several listed speakers have recently had to cancel at short notice but we have always managed to find a replacement.

Audrey Coney started the season with an interesting talk about Martin Mere. David Brazendale had to postpone his talk on Lancashire Halls but Mr M. Brian of the Liverpool Historic Society kindly stepped into the breach at short notice with an interesting account of Bishop J. C. Ryle, the first (C of E) Bishop of Liverpool. Harry Foster's talk on the Golf Courses of Sefton, drew in some very interested visitors. The talk on The Botanic Gardens Museum, cancelled because of sudden illness, was replaced at short notice by a presentation on 'Sefton's Coastal Heritage' by the Chairman.

Our evening with our Scrapbooks was as usual a useful occasion for members to look at just a little of our archive material and prompted at least one member to continue her study, later producing an interesting

contribution to Member's Evening. In February, Alan Waplinton, who has recently produced an attractive little booklet on St Luke's Church, gave us an account of the history of the present day church and a little about its ancient predecessor.

During Member's Evening Dylis Firn gave a short account of George Norway, a 19th author and Formby resident. Little is known about this writer but members listened to little known descriptions of Formby life in the late 19th Century with great interest. Other original contributions were on the 'Formby Hall Dovecote' (Barbara Yorke) and 'Greyhound History' (Ray Derricott). Greyhound breeding was formerly an important aspect of life in Formby. Member's evening is always a popular and interesting evening and the twenty-minute contributions have sometimes been followed later by 'full-scale' versions during a subsequent programme.

The Dovecote account was intended to provide an introduction to the Formby Hall Dovecote Heritage Open Day event planned for next September, for which volunteer interest and help is now being sought.

This will be the first occasion for many years that this Listed Building has been open to the public and in addition to the building itself we hope to mount a display illustrating the history and use of this structure in former times.

It is good to report that five members have offered help to sort out and help improve the indexing of our archives. We are grateful for this. The actual start on this work has been slightly delayed but can now soon go ahead, helped by a recent grant of £300 from the Formby Parish Council. This will be used to purchase suitable storage boxes and envelopes. We continue to get many interesting queries on many different aspects of local history. Many of these are received from people whose searches started on the internet and via our website. Some examples of enquiries received in the last few months are appended. In most of these cases we were able to provide some helpful information. This illustrates the way our archives are regularly and routinely used. We quite often also receive inquiries passed on from the Sefton Library services. From time to time the archives are also used in a more systematic way to gather information relating to a particular theme or historical research. We are always pleased to assist and it is good that our role in keeping local history alive is now recognised by the Parish Council. The Group has not been responsible for any new publications during the year but has been gratified by the fact that its recently updated and re-published "Discovering Formby" has now sold out. The need for a further revised edition is now being considered along with the possible production of a 'Formby History Walks' publication. We are pleased that the Formby Photographic Group have reissued their 'Formby Project' (originally made in the early 1980's) as a DVD, as it contains much interesting local history interest; we look forward to the possibility of helping bring this up to date.

The Formby Civic Society Newsletter

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Formby Lifeboat Station site is to be visited during National Archaeology Week.

Summer Programme

Wednesday 24 May, 7.00 pm, SUMMER NATURE WALK, Altcar Rifle Range; (details inside).

12th June, 'ASPARAGUS TRAIL' WALK; 7pm Meet at Victoria Road , National Trust Car-park.

Saturday 24th June, OPEN-AIR ART EXHIBITION, CHAPEL LANE.

Wednesday 12 July, 7.00 pm, SUMMER NATURE WALK, Ainsdale Sand Dunes NNR .(details inside).

Sunday, 16 July, 2.30-4.30pm, OLD LIFEBOAT STATION site visit.* Meet Lifeboat Rd. Car park.

Sunday 23 July, 2.30-4.30pm, OLD LIFEBOAT STATION site visit.* Meet Lifeboat Rd. Car park.

Friday 25 August, 2 p.m., SUMMER NATURE WALK, Freshfield Dune Heath. (details inside).

Saturday 9th September, (time to be arranged), HERITAGE OPEN DAY; *Formby Hall Dovecote.*

(September); A coach trip to a place of interest. (Details in next Newsletter).

*** A National Archaeology Week activity).**

Art Group; (details Barbara Mossop).

Tues 30th May 10.30am; *Larkhill Asparagus Farm*, Larkhill Lane,

Sat. 24th June *Open Air Art Exhibition* in the Village. (Details on entry form).

Sunday 2 July; *The Boatyard, Tarleton.* Meet 10.30 am at the Boat-yard Becconsall Lane.

Tues 26th July, 10. 30am Painting the *Village in Bloom, Ince Blundell.* Meet at Lady Green Garden Centre.