

Formby Civic News

The Newsletter of the Formby Civic Society



August 2006

Summer Activities



Left, The Open Air Art Exhibition, Chapel Lane.

Right; Rifle Range. orchids



Below; Members being introduced to a young Natterjack Toad.



Natterjack toadlet



Right; The Formby Lifeboat Station
Visit Sunday 16th July

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A Police Initiative in Formby - by Ray Derricott.

In the middle of June I received a phone call from the Police. Immediately I tried to think when, recently, I had broken the Law. What had I done? Nothing came to mind. The caller immediately put my mind to rest.

The call came from Inspector Pauline Trubshaw who is in charge of the Formby policing activity. I was being asked to a "multi-agency meeting" about problems of behavioural problems and disturbances that had recently occurred in the area and to consider problems of congestion and access to the National Trust property on busy and holiday times. The meeting took place at Formby Library on 23 June.

The meeting was chaired by a Superintendent(?) from Liverpool. Also present were the local Sergeant and other local policemen. Two members of the Transport Police were also there and the two quad-bike constables who cover happenings on the coast. Technical Services, Tourism and the person responsible for coastal issues represented Sefton. Councillors Ibbs and Griffiths were also present. Andrew Brookbank and Chief Warden David Williams represented the National Trust. The fire Service was also present. I was the only

'civilian' present. I had expected more local residents to be there. I had also expected the Parish Council to be represented.

The discussion was wide but informed. It was clear that communication between agencies could be improved. It was good to see the problems of congestion in Formby being rehearsed in front of Technical Services who seem to advise their colleagues in Planning that area has few problems. The Police outlined their plan to restrict parking on both sides of Victoria Road during a weekend. They also planned to have a highly visible presence to check on alcohol and people who intended to light a barbecue. They were also checking the displacement effect of restricting parking in one area.

"It will be difficult to police a 'non-alcohol' area in the NT property but on busy weekends a police presence will be provided."

The meeting proposed to form three sub-groups. One will focus on Disturbances, one on parking and congestion and the other on coastal and tourism issues. It is also intended to set up a residents group.

At a further meeting on 10th July the

problems of congestion and parking on the approach to the NT were discussed. The agreement to provide double yellow lines from Harrington Road to Freshfield Station on the South side of Victoria Road would take time to establish. In the meantime this section of Victoria Road will be temporarily 'coned'. Traffic leaving the NT property will be directed down Harrington Road.

As can be seen from the photograph on busy weekends with no coning in Victoria Road, Harrington Road is often parked on both sides from the junction with Victoria Road to and beyond the shops. Technical services have agreed to monitor the displacement effect on Harrington Road. The Railway police will continue to provide an obvious presence on trains to and from Freshfield. Traffic cannot be directed to Lifeboat Road because the surface of the parking area is badly rutted and needs re-surfacing.

It will be difficult to police a 'non-alcohol' area in the NT property but on busy weekends a police presence will be provided. It has to be remembered that Formby cannot expect to monopolise police time for these matters.

A residents group is to be set up to provide local feed-back and help in other ways to tackle the problems



(Left) Increasing irritation! The volume of traffic aiming for Victoria Road is becoming an increasing problem for local residents. This is a typical weekend sight in the 'over-spill' Harrington Road.

“This is what makes Formby Special!”

...by Parish Councillor Dru Haydon

Formby is a place of opportunity. It has areas of outstanding natural beauty and organisations providing talks and walks so we can learn and understand the need to support and protect it and so fully appreciate it.

Sadly our village has suffered from planning mistakes but as it becomes daily more attractive and vibrant we now have the chance to preserve, protect and enhance what we have now. Working together we can do it!

There are many organisations dedicated to giving our youngsters the opportunity to grow and develop into

happy, healthy and caring adults. They can take part in football, tennis, hockey, cricket and the performing arts. Many skills are learnt through the numerous beaver, cubs and scout groups but in Formby we have problems, not all caused by incomers. Traffic causes serious problems around our excellent schools and on roads leading to the beach which makes it impossible at peak times for emergency vehicles to gain access. There are enough people who care about

Formby; together we can work and plan and pool our ideas to make Formby an even better place to live

.(Below) Increasing parking problems in The Village Centre.



Thoughts on Tourism by Alan Burton.

Sefton's "Natural Coast Tourism Marketing Plan" was issued in February 2006.

As a marketing plan it covers current visitor profiles identified by survey work in some detail which is very helpful. The stated objective is to increase visitor spending but the bad news is that the majority of visits lasted around two hours and the people lived within easy travelling distance so could manage without food or accommodation.

When compared to competitors such as the Wirral Country Park the need for new facilities was identified such as signs, disabled access, cycle paths, toilets, food and drink, interpretation information and parking. Apparently 70% of our visitors come by car and 17% are very local and walk leaving only 13% by other means. £40,000 of our money was identified to be spent entirely on marketing promotions and visitor surveys during 2006 / 2007 but nothing on infrastructure.

All of this leaves several questions unanswered as far as Formby is concerned.:-1) Why have the people of Formby not been involved in the debate about

“Why have the people of Formby not been involved in the debate about planning green tourism?”

planning green tourism? Do they want it and what would be the impact on the local residents. National Trust parking on Victoria Road is a major problem as their existing car park is inadequate and being submerged by sand as the coast erodes. Parking in Kirklake Road and St Lukes Church Road is also a problem. The Lifeboat Road car park is in a poor state and the access road would need to be widened if traffic was to increase significantly.

2) How would the proposed extra income be generated? In the last paragraph the report calls itself a

business plan but it only deals with basic publicity. Unless people can be persuaded to stay for a full day or better still overnight(s) I can not see how Sefton would get a return on even the £40,000 proposed to be spent on publicity never mind any infrastructure costs. Additional day trippers who walk along the coast and then go home are not going to raise much revenue and have a negative impact on residents due to extra traffic in residential areas.

3) Sefton should draw up a proper business plan which identifies the target markets, the specific sources of revenue that could be raised and the full costs of supplying the market including the infrastructure. They then need to get the backing of the local people before putting any plans into action. Incidentally the one hundred Anthony Gormley "Iron-men" are mentioned as an attraction but with the average visit lasting perhaps 30 to 60 minutes with negligible local spending are they cost effective and of financial benefit to Sefton?

COMMUNITY PAYBACK by David Willis

Here's a thought. Perhaps Formby residents could have their say over how offenders pay back the community. FCS members might have some bright ideas for work that convicted criminals could carry out in this area.

This scheme known as Community payback was launched in July 2005. Communities already benefit from over 5 million hours of compulsory unpaid work every year in England and Wales - but this work often goes un-noticed. That is why residents are being encouraged to join forces and help make their community a better place to live by becoming actively involved in the selection of unpaid work projects. These

projects involve work which would otherwise not be carried out, and combine both hard work and learning new skills. The campaign is reaching out to all parts of the community, with faith groups, businesses, voluntary groups and local authorities nominating projects they would like to see developed through community orders. Once the work has been completed it will be branded with the Community Payback logo, to show where offenders have positively contributed to improving their own neighbourhoods.

Examples of work carried out so far include painting and decorating (e.g. work at schools, churches, youth

centres and community buildings), environmental (Including fencing, grass cutting and weeding, the creation of gardens, conservation work for the National Trust and re-vamping of land at churches, community buildings and children's play areas) as well as general community work such as helping serve lunches to pensioners and keeping disabled access routes free from leaves and litter.

If you have any suggestions for Unpaid Work projects in Merseyside, or know of any project that could benefit by providing work for offenders serving Community Orders, the Probation Service are interested.

Things that go 'Bump' in the night!



The new Burbo Bank windfarm, here seen through the heat haze of a simmering summer morning and visible from the beach at Formby, has been identified as the source of mysterious night noises which have disturbed members during recent hot summer nights.

Bjarne Haxgart, the Site Manager, for Seascope Energy, currently constructing the windfarm of 25 wind turbines is to speak to the Society on Friday **27th October**.

Red Squirrel Virus Alert

Fiona Robertson, Red Squirrel Conservation Officer, recently confirmed a case of a red squirrel with squirrel pox virus. This squirrel was taken by a member of the public in Ainsdale to the National Trust Property alive; it was then taken to Leahurst Animal Unit where it died. The post mortem results confirmed squirrel pox.

Members of the public are asked to report sightings of sick or injured reds and any greys but not take suspect squirrels to the National Trust Offices or centre within the refuge area as this may add to bio-security problems.

They also ask that we stop feeding reds and/or clean domestic feeders twice daily to help limit spread of infection.

If Members would like to help in the spread of information, they are invited to help deliver traps and/or pick up sick squirrels but please note that whilst infection from 'airborne germs' is not likely, there is the possibility of an infected animal escaping from flimsy boxes etc. It will be much better they we take down full particulars and get someone out to the affected animal.

Telephone Numbers are Fiona Robertson (Lancashire and Merseyside Wildlife Trust) 0151 3769; National Trust (Formby) 01704 878591

Planning Matters by Ray Derricott; Amenities Report, July 2006

As I reported in May, Dr Desmond Brennan has joined me in reviewing Planning and Amenities for the Society. We both agree that we should operate as a nucleus of a sub-group which, we hope, might be joined by a small number of Society members.

We have had a short discussion about evolving a way of working. Desmond and I will need to hold a short meeting probably weekly to plan our common approach to proposals that might have a community effect.

I have come to put too much reliance on electronic communication with the Planning Office. Desmond convinces me that communication by letter is more effective!

Our current concerns are: Proposals to erect brick or wooden walls/fences in front of properties. A proposal in Green Lane is the latest example. The Planners seem to have given up on this issue at Victoria Road where two-meter walls are the vogue. This is likely to spread across Formby especially in areas that are deemed to be of 'character'.

Byrnes & Sons have moved to the corner opposite the Grapes. They

have fitted security grilles over their windows that are out of character with the area.

Recent high winds have produced the usual concerns about the safety of the horse chestnuts in the Village. Judicious pruning will probably cure the problem of falling branches. *I cannot find any firm evidence that the trees will be felled.*

The Parish Council, under the Chairmanship of Mike Coles, is working on a Village Plan. The Society has a file on this and we have been invited to be fully consulted.

“Recent events have convinced us of the advantages of working with the Parish Council”

Recent events have convinced us of the advantages of working with the Parish Council. We now propose to send copies of our letters to the Planning Department to the Clerk of the Parish Council.

We hope that the Society will not only support the way we propose to work but take an active interest in all planning matters.

FORMBY COTTAGES



The Old School which gives 'School Lane' its name is just one of the old Formby buildings to be looked at during this special meeting.

“A New look at Formby’s Old Cottages” is to be the subject of a meeting of the History Group to be held next January. For this special occasion we will arrange a display of the unique collection of thirty or more ceramic model cottages made by Mr A. Reeves and presented to the Society some 25 years ago. Some of these have been exhibited in the Society Museum in Duke Street Library in the past. All are accurate scale models of the original buildings some of which have subsequently been demolished. Others survive as Grade 2 Listed Buildings but this has not always prevented changes, sometimes quite extreme. We are in the process of updating our records and this promises to be an interesting exercise.

KEEPING IN TOUCH by David Willis

This newsletter drops onto your doorstep every 3 months. In between, though, there's often a lot of activity affecting the Society: building developments we think could adversely affect the area, events held by other groups that might interest our members, changes to legislation, Civic Trust breaking news and invitations to training events. This is a

flavour of the information that flow in to the Society which, at the moment, is passed on to committee members through an E-mail and post arrangement, and which may get reported to members in the following edition of the Newsletter. We think many members would like to know more, and even get more involved. We think that an E-mail

database of members would enable us to keep you up to date faster and offer you the opportunity to take part in a range of activities, that we can't do at the moment. If you'd like to 'see how it goes' - and you can remove your details at any time - please send an E-mail to secretary@formbycivicsociety

HOUSE BUILDING - by David Willis

Members may know that in recent months the Society has renewed (after a lapse of several years) its affiliation to the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). We have several interests in common including, for example, concerns over the effects of house building within our village.

CPRE recently reported on new Government proposals on the provision of new housing, which could lead to thousands of acres of countryside vanishing under the bulldozer. A particular problem for Formby could be that planning requirements could be made a slave to market demand.

A consultation paper "Planning for Housing Provision" aims to make the planning system respond rapidly to demand in what are termed 'housing growth areas'. The housing market, for example, will become a dominant factor in deciding on new housing numbers for each region: this will depend on whether the regional spatial strategy designates the area as being for 'low', 'high' or 'managed' growth. Until now, the state of the housing market has not been a dominant consideration in deciding housing numbers; population projections have been the main factor, together with environmental constraints and the need for new services and trans-



port links. There is doubt that sufficient weight will be given to environmental factors, resulting in

"A particular problem for Formby could be that planning requirements could be made a slave to market demand"

'greenfield' land being released if developers say they are unable to develop 'brownfield' land. The effects for Formby may depend on whether we fall into a 'high', 'managed' or 'low' growth area. The

threat to greenfield land arises because the main indicator of high demand is high prices. Prices are often high in areas where the countryside is well protected, because those very constraints make these areas desirable. Possibly it could lead to more pressure to develop existing housing stock in areas such as Freshfield?

The Government has published draft planning policy statement on housing (PPS 3). The Society will review the document and keep an eye on developments. Watch this space.

Photo; Green-belt land for sale!

Formby Hall Dovecote Heritage Open Day.

This one days event is to be held on **Saturday 9th September** between **11am – 4pm.**

Activities **will include an interpretive display explaining the role and significance of the dovecote in earlier times. Also relating to the history of Formby Hall.**

Car Parking will be on **Southport Old Road. The approach to the dovecote which is situated close to the Hall is**

via the drive. There may be some uneven ground, but otherwise otherwise no known access problems but there are not toilet arrangements. And none of the adjacent Hall Grounds will be open to the public on this occasion as some work is going on.

There will be no special arrangements for children and it will not be possible to admit children **under 12.** There is to be no entry charge but **pre-booking is essential,)**

We hope to use the project to record more information about the Dovecote, which is a Grade 2 Listed building in its own right. Volunteer stewards will include Alan Burton, David Willis, Dru Haydon, Reg and Barbara Yorke.

Please use the booking form enclosed or for further information phone Dr or Mrs Reg Yorke on 01704 872187

Any Famous Sandgrinders? By John Turner



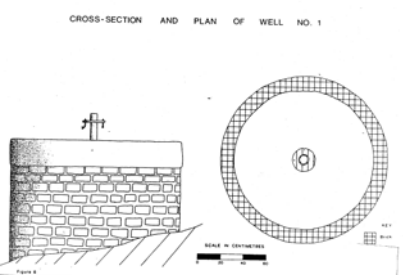
(Left) Dr Robert Minnitt, the son of the Revd. Robert Minnitt, the inventor of 'Gas and Air' analgesia is in the DNB but not born here.

The New Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (nDNB) was published on 23rd September 2004, as a 60-volume printed edition and in an electronic form available on-line. The latter is available at Formby's

Public Library (Duke Street) and the librarian will help you to log-on if you wish to consult it. The Oxford DNB contains biographical notes on over 50,000 people. Since 2005, the electronic version has been added-to and revised constantly and this will continue indefinitely. As a matter of interest I recently searched the DNB for the name Formby. There was only thirty or so references and almost all of these were to either George Formby himself (**George Hoy Booth**, born Wigan, 1904) or people associated with him! Sir John Moores (1896-1993) and Father James Nugent (1822-1905) both died in Formby but only Sir Charles King-

ston Webster (1886-1961), a historian, was born in Formby (at Ryeground Lane). I find it difficult to believe that he was the only person of distinction or interest, born in Formby, worthy of inclusion in the Oxford DNB. Perhaps Civic Society members can suggest people with Formby roots, dead or alive, who they think are worthy of inclusion in the regularly updated version. The standard lengths for biographical entries are 300 words and (exceptionally) 700 words. The Editor of the Newsletter would be happy to receive suggested entries or even just names for consideration.

Formby Wells. By Barbara Yorke



The Lifeboat Station Well; Surveyed and drawn by Anna Wilson

We gather that Formby Golf Club is in the process of improving its water supply from its own modern well system. Originally, every household obtained its water from local domestic wells dug into the sand, not necessarily very deeply as the water-table or "ream," as it was called locally, was only one to two metres below ground level.; in winter even less! Formby thus differed from many other areas where general water supplies were often taken from local streams or rivers and frequently highly contaminated. After filtering through our sandy subsoil most Formby wells seem to have originally produced water of adequate quality.

The first of a series of cholera epidemics broke out in England in 1831

and on 22 May 1832 it was officially announced that cholera had reached Liverpool. Speaking from the pulpit of St. Peter's Church the following Sunday the Rev. Richard Formby warned of the possibility of the spread of the dreaded disease to "our own hitherto most favoured Chapelry." He exhorted the congregation "to adopt all means of prevention within their powers" and "hold no communication with persons who wander from their homes covered with dirt and filth who mix with idle characters in disorderly and noisome scenes." He recommended the greatest degree of cleanliness as the best possible antidote against infection and to "abstain from all excess and avoid the use of ardent spirits." Formby cholera victims were to be speedily removed to a "neat house in an airy situation" where they were to receive "watchful assiduous care and adequate medical assistance". In the event, although over 1,500 victims died in Liverpool, the expected outbreak did not occur in Formby.

The Southport Waterworks was formed in 1852 and by 1856 had completed a piped supply to Southport. The first Main to Formby was

constructed about 1881/2. the source being two deep wells bored in sandstone. 180 ft. deep in Ormskirk. Progress was however slow. In 1890 Richard Formby was fined 20 shillings and costs at the instigation of the Ormskirk Rural Sanitary Authority for permitting a new farm-house in Ravensmeols Lane, of which he was the owner, to be occupied without a certificate from the authority "testifying to the wholesome quality of the water supplied to the inmates," In 1897 it was reported that one tenth of Formby houses were still without a mains supply. Water from four shallow wells was found to be polluted.

Although now mainly covered and only used for watering the garden during dry summers some of the original Formby domestic wells must still survive. It would be interesting to know of their existence. For those few members whose homes were in existence before 1848, we will be able to tell you where your well should be found as they were then all marked on the six inch Ordnance Survey Map of which we have a copy in our archives.

The Newsletter of the Formby Civic Society

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Art Group Report by Barbara Mossop

The recent Open Air Art Exhibition attracted a lot of interest from shoppers and was enjoyed by members of the Society who exhibited about one hundred paintings. However we were unable to match last year's exceptionally successful show, with Sales being down.

As so many members are going to be on holiday during August and September, I suggest that those who are available join the Society's Summer Nature Walk, on 25th August, the visit to Halifax on 5th September and the visit the Formby Hall Dovecote on 9th September, taking their sketch pads with them. In October we will be visiting the Liver Sketching Club to tackle Life Drawing. There are a lot of exhibitions in November and we will visit one or two of these but dates are not yet to hand.

Future Programme

Friday 25 August, 2 p.m., **SUMMER NATURE WALK**, Freshfield Dune Heath. *An afternoon walk to learn more about Formby's latest Nature Reserve which is now open to the public. The walk will be led by Fiona Robertson of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and should coincide with the heather in full bloom. Meet at Mary Bowler's Riding School, Brewery Lane, Formby for a 2 p.m. start. We will learn more about the Trust's plans for managing the site and how the Society can support this work. For further information on any of the walks please contact John Houston on 01704 870455 (evenings).*

Tuesday 5th September. **SUMMER OUTING** to Halifax, Shibden Hall and Halifax Town Hall. For details and Booking Form, see insert.

Saturday 9th September, **HERITAGE OPEN DAY**; *Formby Hall Dovecote*. (See details above).

General Meetings Programme; All at 8pm at Ravenmeols Community Centre.

Friday 22nd Sept. "*The Grosvenor Liverpool Paradise Project*"; **Cindy Dowling**, Project Information Centre Manager.

Friday 27th Oct. "*The Burbo Offshore Windfarm*"; **Bjarne Haxgart**, Site Manager.

Friday 24th Nov. "*The Liverpool Merchant Identity*" Dr Adrian Jarvis, former Curator of Port History at the Merseyside Maritime Museum.

History Group Programme.; All at 8pm at Ravenmeols Community Centre.

Thursday 12th Oct. "*The Botanic Gardens Museum*"; Elizabeth Royles.

Thursday 9th Nov. "*Lancashire Halls*" David Brazendale.

Thursday 14th December; "*The Rathbone Family - from Welfare to Politics*"; *Brenda Murray*.

Art Group

Diary; August and September –see details of Nature Walk, Visit to Halifax and to Formby hall above.

October; Visit to Liver Sketching Club, Liverpool/ Please let me know if you wish to attend as I will need to know numbers. We will go to Liverpool by train.

November Visits to exhibitions. Please phone 873920 at end of October for details.
