

# Formby Civic News



The Formby Civic Society Newsletter

Registered Charity No 516789



## Summer Outing to Hoghton Tower and Brockholes on July 18th



*Brockhole Visitor Centre*

We will first visit **Hoghton Tower**, the ancestral home of the de Hoghton family, where we will view the Banqueting Hall, Staterooms, Underground Passages, Dungeons and Dolls' House Collection and learn about the Tower's fascinating history and the role the house and family played in the history of Lancashire and further afield. The discovery trail around the gardens rewards visitors with magnificent views from the ramparts. You can follow in the footsteps of William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens and King James I! We have booked a guided tour of the house starting at 10.30am, which will take about one and a half hours, followed by a look round.

**Brockholes** is a new kind of nature reserve; owned by the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside opened in April 2011.

There is a lot to see and do there, as the Visitor Village is complete with a restaurant, shops and a welcome centre. You can also explore their hides and walking trails developed from a huge quarrying site to the vibrant nature reserve that it is today. Brockholes cost around £8.6 million. As a result of the huge investment and hard work of everyone involved, it has become a diverse nature reserve, playing host to a wide (and ever increasing) variety of wildlife.

Elite Coaches will pick us up from **Hillary Court at 9.00am on Thursday 18th July and then from outside the Grapes Hotel shortly thereafter.**

We will then travel to Hoghton Tower to arrive at 10.00am for coffee and biscuits. We then expect to depart about 12.30pm for the short drive to Brockholes. Lunch will be available in the visitor centre cafe. The area provides several opportunities for bird watching or just ambling around the lakes and alongside the River Ribble. Tea and cakes will also be available for those that wish to partake before the coach leaves at 4.00pm for the drive back to Formby. We should arrive back around 5.00pm. **David Poole.**

**NB. Places must be booked in advance using form enclosed.**

**The cost of the day will be £20—this will NOT include lunch at Brockholes.**

April 2013

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*Some of the Society's Founders*

This photo was taken at an early Committee Meeting, very probably in 1954. In the group are - back row, extreme left, Mr Pat O'Neil, a former Editor of The Formby Times and committee member, also Mr. Fred Beardwood, James McGregor, Bill Wallwork, Dr Tom Kelly (Chairman), Mr P. Bradshaw and Miss Thompson; front row, Mrs Gladys Bevan, Eileen Bowstead, Dr. J. Murphy, Brenda Lindsay, Mrs M. Wason and Mrs Lilian Rushton. Mr. O'Neil made contact after discovering our website and congratulates us on our progress.

## The Achievements of 60 Years

As our major activity we have since our formation run continuing annual programmes of meetings, open to the public, on both General, Civic and Local History subjects. In addition we have organised occasional special meetings on topics of local importance, several involving our MP. In our early days we had a number of special interest groups. Unfortunately over the years we have lost our Natural History Group. The Photographic Group which organised filming of the Queen Mother's visit to Harington Barracks split off and still exists but as an independent society. Our Art Group remained active until last year but, mainly due

to the competing activities of larger and single purpose groups, has also lapsed. Our Amenities Group has continued to exist in the form of an important sub-committee and has been a very important source of advice, particularly on Planning Matters. We have over the years closely monitored local Planning Applications and made many representations when necessary, often by personal contact with appropriate Council officers. Some controversial Planning Applications have required a great deal of time and effort and have occasionally involved organising public meetings. We do however get consulted on important

local issues, carefully monitoring and when necessary commenting on all planning applications. We try to make our views and activities cogent and recognised.

Feeling strongly that Formby would benefit from the re-creation of a Parish Council, we successfully campaigned for this in 2001, presenting a petition signed by over 2,000 residents culminating in an election from which today's Parish Council was formed.

Over the years we have conducted much historical and environmental research, written and published

several local history books, the last of which *'Formby, Then and Now'* appeared in time for Christmas, last November. Past activities also include researching, and publishing a guide to a Formby 'Town Trail', and a number of exhibitions relating to local history and the coast.

Contact with the world outside Formby has been much facilitated by a well-designed and visited Website - [www.formbycivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.formbycivicsociety.org.uk) This acts as a showcase for our extensive archive of local historical photographs and sketches, all of which have been digitally scanned, made publicly accessible and copies can be purchased from our Flickr website. More than 347,955 images have been viewed since June 2010.

Other events we can be proud of include our celebration of the Millenium with a two day re-discovery of our Parish Boundary, with over 100 participants and since then our annual participation in either Heritage Open Day or The Festival of British Archaeology. Currently we are lead partners in a Heritage Lottery funded three year project to research,

create and publicise several new Coastal Heritage Trails, now in its final year. This year we hope to celebrate our 60th Anniversary by launching an additional 'stand-alone' website to provide information, trail guides etc. for the Heritage Trails.

Our target is to improve our present membership. (About 150 members);

- By regularly offering new and stimulating events and information relating to Formby, its past and its natural environment;
- By active involvement in lively and challenging issues;
- By being 'Community Champions';
- By keeping abreast of local developments and when necessary taking appropriate action.

We try to keep in touch with the media but with the loss of the Formby Times local office this is not now as easy as previously. Local media are now less interested than they have ever been in the past so

perhaps we need to appoint a 'Press Secretary'?

Our current 'Membership Leaflet' and other printed material is being updated and after a long gap our Newsletter is now, with this issue, resurrected in a new format and with a new Editor.

We enjoy good and continuing networking with both Parish and Sefton Borough Councillors and officials, particularly in relation to Planning and Coastal Management. We also have close connections with managers of the two local National Nature Reserves, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, the National Trust, Formby Point Reserve and Altcar Rifle Range. We are affiliated with Sefton CVS from whom we have recently received several complete sets of display panels on permanent loan.

We will be using these for our next Civic Day exhibition in Chapel Lane on 22nd June, which will be on Ravenmeols. - the coastal area of Formby which is least known but perhaps the most attractive.

by Dr Reg Yorke

## Recollections of an Almost Founder Member by Pat McGregor

In 1953 Queen Elizabeth II was crowned, the Inaugural Meeting of the Formby Society was held and James and I became engaged. As is usual with young people we were more interested in Wedding plans & setting up home in Ravenmeols Lane than going to public meetings. However at the Society AGM in April 1955 James joined the Committee and so began a long association with the Society.

Looking back I realise what outstanding people the Founding Members were, including Tom Kelly, who as head of Liverpool University's Extramural Department persuaded some excellent speakers to speak at our meetings, his wife Edith who edited "Viking Village". This book edited from research by a group of the Society tells of the history and development of Formby & its Flora

& Fauna and was published in 1973.

There was Gladys Bevan, leader of the Natural History Group who could identify by sight or sound every bird that visited Formby, Muriel Sibley who came to Formby in 1948 and at once started to photograph and draw the fast disappearing old houses and thatched cottages. Muriel gave her drawings & slides to the Society and they are valuable archive material, Lillian Rushton who embroidered the Formby Tapestry and Brenda Lindsay who, while in her 20s, was our first Secretary.

It is interesting to recall that in the early days the age range of members was much wider than today and the "oldies" were in their 60s!

In the early days we had close links with the Formby Urban District Council and

the winter programme opened with a meeting with councillors and their officials in the Council Chamber. The provision of a Christmas tree, first in the Park and then in the Village, followed a suggestion from the Society.

Over the years the venue for meetings has moved from above the Gas Show Room in Chapel Lane to the Library in Duke St and now to the Ravenmeols Community Centre.

When the Society was first formed there were Groups for History, Natural History & Art. At some time in the 60 years the following groups have also existed - Photography, French, Gardening, Music, Writing, and Walking & Coach Outings; short holidays in interesting places were also arranged. These activities are now provided by the U3A and the Southport

and Formby National Trust and we do not need to provide them. One of the aims as stated in the original constitution was to “safeguard Formby’s natural amenities” and this we still do as planning applications are scrutinised by the Amenities Secretary and we have assisted in

the provision of new trails in the dunes. As Jack Gore’s recent research on the Cold War bunker shows there is still more to discover about Formby and as Reg and Barbara’s recent book shows new ways of presenting it.

Like the Queen after 60 years the Formby Civic Society is still going strong. Long may it continue!

## Wildlife Notes by Dr Phil Smith



*Devil’s Hole North Basin March 2013*

After several “drought” years, this winter was characterised by the highest sand-dune water-table in 40 years. The wettest year on record in England resulted in “Lake District” conditions, the Devil’s Hole at Ravenmeols resembling a swimming pool, while the extensive dune slacks at Ainsdale Sandhills Local Nature Reserve and elsewhere epitomised E.R. Beattie’s mid-19th century description:

“After the autumn rains little lakes, locally called slacks, were formed; sometimes slack after slack, separated from each other by narrow bars of sand, stretched in a long chain for great distances, each one reflecting the yellow slopes of the dunes and the blue sky above. And then as night approached they were none the less beautiful, as standing

on some hill and looking seaward one beheld a long line of hills dark and purple, their serrated edges sharply cut against the sunset sky of amber and gold and shimmering tender greens and opalescent greys and blues, all repeated in the still waters of the miniature lakes.”

Both the Devil’s Hole and the Ainsdale slacks were featured in the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership’s winter events programme, my guided walks being well attended by large, enthusiastic groups. The Sefton Coast has over a third of all the dune slacks in England, representing a key wildlife habitat and supporting some of our rarest animals and plants. Apart from drought, the main threat to them is scrub-invasion, especially by Sea Buckthorn which was introduced here in the 1890s.

Attempts to control it by volunteers and Sefton’s Coast and Countryside staff resulted in slacks at Ainsdale, Birkdale and Hightown sand-dunes being cleared during the winter. A start was also made on removing young birch and pine from the Montagu Road triangle, a dune-heath site at Freshfield where colourful stands of heather are rapidly disappearing under scrub.

Wetland work for the Landscape Partnership Scheme included digging new scrapes for Natterjack Toads at Ainsdale Sandhills and Hightown. These will be particularly useful in a drier year but with so much open water in the dunes we are hoping for a bumper breeding season in 2013.

One side-effect of the high water-table was unprecedented flooding and closure of the coastal road at Birkdale. I helped to supervise the digging out of ditches in such a way

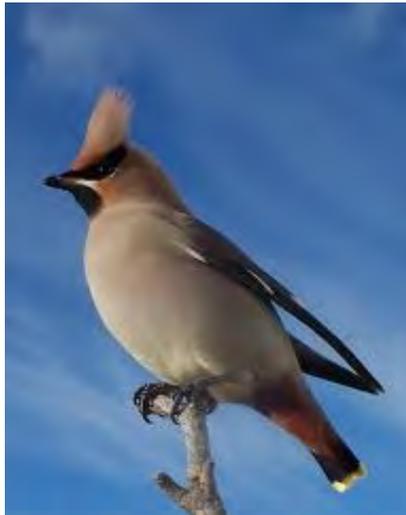


*Hightown Mitigation Scrape*

that damage to wildlife habitats was minimised. Also crucial was to locate a deeply submerged drain pipe that had become blocked. Luckily, I knew roughly where it was and Council staff found it by probing with a surveying pole. Its clearance and other engineering work enabled the road to be opened again in late February.

Another flood-defence project is the Lunt Meadows scheme on the River Alt where a large wetland is being created to store water when the need arises and also provide a habitat for wildlife. During excavations, a nationally important prehistoric settlement was found, this featuring in a BBC television programme. Some of the Mesolithic hunter-gatherers that used this site may also have created the famous Formby footprints, plenty of which could be seen in hardened silts on the National Trust shore at Formby Point.

As usual, enormous flocks of Pink-footed Geese roamed the mosslands, while our shores



*Waxwing*

hosted tens of thousands of arctic-breeding waders, these forming spectacular high-tide roosts on the beaches.

Among other ornithological highlights were influxes of Waxwings. These colourful Scandinavian visitors arrived in Formby in November, flocks of up to 60 being seen, feeding mainly on Rowan berries, for a few days. A month later, I rushed down to Seaforth to catch up with

another flock of over 40 Waxwings feeding on ornamental trees around a car-park.

An unexpected winter visitor to Marshside was a Spoonbill, while great flocks of Wigeon and Black-tailed Godwits were more normal fare on the RSPB nature reserve. A Great White Egret made an occasional visit, joining the usual scatter of Little Egrets.

A Bittern spent most of February on Birkdale Sandhills slacks but the approach of spring was heralded by Avocets arriving at Martin Mere on 16th and Marshside on 27th February. Even more remarkable, however, was a Swallow reported at Ainsdale and Birkdale on 28th. If confirmed, this will be the earliest of this species ever seen in Lancashire and North Merseyside, the previous record being 5th March 1918.



## **ASPARAGUS FEAST**

**Friday May 31st 7pm**

**The RAFA Club, Victoria Road Freshfield**

Organised jointly with the National Trust

**Music from the Jill Fielding Group**

Stories and Memories of Asparagus-growing and Thomas Fresh

**Enjoy Fresh Asparagus at its Best!**

**Tickets available from Reg Yorke.**



## Proposed Ravenmeols Heritage Trails by Dr Reg Yorke

After approximately 2 years preliminary research by the Formby Civic Society on the history and topography of 'Ravenmeols Hills', we now need to consider the best means of communicating relevant useful and interesting information regarding the proposed trails to members of the public.

Having led a number of guided walks we have also experimented with several printed trail guides.



*Devil's Hole—Guided walk*

Informal feed-back has been encouraging, but we are not satisfied that present means of communication are in any way sufficient. Whilst the provision of interpretive panels and waymarks would certainly help, we feel we should attempt something more.

We obviously need to provide maps of locations of interest

together with relevant historical and other information. We need to indicate recommended routes ('trails') and we should endeavour to offer trails of varying length and interest value.

We have given a fair amount of thought to the possible use of newer techniques already being used successfully in other Heritage areas. After a fair amount of thought and discussion we now feel that the most appropriate approach is by establishing a new freestanding website, possibly to be named [www.ravenmeols.org.uk](http://www.ravenmeols.org.uk) (a search of the Internet shows that no similar site at present exists).

This website would have a balanced content of information regarding landscape topography, history, wildlife, and sites of interest (with images). Much information could be provided aurally. This could include accounts of life in the area in the past recorded by people who will have lived or worked here.

'Images' will include maps upon which trails and 'sat-nav' locations of places of interest would be indicated.

The possible establishment of this

website was not considered when the Ravenmeols Heritage Trails project was originally conceived and no provision was made in the original funding for such a development.

The Formby Civic Society feels however that such a scheme would fit in well with the purposes of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Community Fund in so far as it would **help get local people involved with the coast, encourage access, develop new stories of the coast, explore aspects of coastal heritage and increase understanding and appreciation of the coast within existing visitor groups.**

This project is being run by the Formby Civic Society and complements the present provisions of the landscape partnership scheme to aid public education and knowledge of the coast.

Practical use of this website would not only be by means of the use of desktop computers but we also hope to provide MP3 audio-guides which can be downloaded and then used on the trails.

## Civic Day 2013 by Dr Reg Yorke

The Formby Civic Society are using Civic Day to provide a virtual High Street Shop Window to showcase the work we have been doing in the last two years to investigate the background of the failed late 19th/early 20th Century attempt to create a new resort "to rival Southport". Instead of becoming a property

based money-winner, this site was successfully used in its 'dying days' prior to WW2 by no less than seven philanthropic organisations to provide sea-side holidays for poor children and families from Liverpool, Bootle, Manchester and Salford and during the Spanish Civil War even children from the Basque

provinces. This has been almost forgotten except by the children now elderly) who still have delightful memories of 'Formby-by-the-Sea'.

Because of its important geographical location overlooking the approaches to the Port of Liverpool, it subsequently took on important defence roles

In WW2 and the 'Cold War'. One former Holiday Home became a Radar Station. A tall sand dune was used not only as an observation post but during the 'Cold War' accommodated a (for a long time secret) Nuclear Attack Radiation Monitoring Post; but the expected railway loop-line and station never materialised. Only a few houses remain and the area is now a much valued Nature Reserve.



*Ravenmeols Cold War Bunker*

## Amenities Report by Jeremy Tickle

Since the beginning of the year (April 2012) we have reviewed more than 110 planning applications relating to Formby.

We responded to the proposed development at **Firwood in Alexandra Road**. The Society accepts that it is likely to proceed but have made representations about impact on wildlife, openness and sustainability. The application is for a rather grand building (see Sefton's application number S/2012/2049) to be built on the site of a former house, now long gone. The grounds of the former property are overgrown and most people who wander across them on their way to the beach are totally unaware that they are in fact trespassing. The local residents support the application as they prefer to see the grounds reinstated and hope for an upgrade to the private road which serves the proposed development and their properties.

The proposed development in the **Green Belt off Liverpool Road** has generated a considerable amount of interest and opposition

both within the Society and outside. Any meetings have been extremely well attended and the local MP has been engaged. The final proposals are not yet known and once the detail is available, a representation will be drafted as the Society's position is to oppose the proposal as it currently stands. This proposal is more than likely to be opposed by several other groups.

The state of Formby's few remaining cottages continues to cause concern. Whilst a planning application has been received for 1 Southport Old Road, little progress appears to have been made in the restoration and renovation of this essential historical part of Formby. Indeed the cottage now appears to be up for sale again and no efforts have been made even to attempt to preserve what little of the original remains.

The two cottages in Gores Lane and Timms Lane are also in danger of being allowed to deteriorate. Mike McComb was the owner of both but it is believed that he no longer owns the Timms Lane

cottage and it is apparent that some remedial work has begun at 53 Gores Lane, the most apparent being renewed guttering to help ensure the building is at least watertight. We have been assured that this work should be completed by April this year. Enquiries as to the new owner of the Timms Lane cottage are underway.

Barrett's cottage at the junction of Elbow Lane and Duke Street is now the subject of a planning application for its demolition and a pair of semi detached houses being erected in its place. This cottage has long been in a state of disrepair and it remains to be seen if Sefton ascribe it any form of historical significance in the hope that it can be saved and restored.

The Society prepared a detailed response to the **Sefton Library Closure Report** and to the **Growth & Infrastructure Bill**.

## Footpaths and Rights of Way by Ray Derricott



*Ravenmeols Beach Access*

I attend the Sefton Rights of Way Committee and am able to monitor proposed developments of rights of ways (ROW) across the Borough. The members of the committee represent walkers, cyclists, land owners and tenant farmers. In recent years it has been good to have the presence of Formby Parish Councillors at the committee meetings. The committee is chaired by Brian Goodwin from the Planning Department. The Sefton ROW Committee reports to the Merseyside Local Access Forum. The latter is a statutory group and was set up through the CROW Act of 2000. The Merseyside Committee was one of the first to be set up after the Act. ROW Officers come from all five local councils plus representative officers from Runcorn and Halton and East Cheshire. MLAF is thought to be a good example of cooperation between local authorities in producing an integrated definitive map of ROW in the area.

The last meeting of the Sefton committee reported on the following items relating specifically to Formby.

The footpath linking *Lonsdale Road*

new head of Formby High School and the governors have agreed, in principle, to the dedicating of some land adjacent to the gutter to the widening and making more secure of the left bank of the gutter. The use of the 50 square metres of school land will have to be referred to the Secretary of State. This potential project will need planning permission and will rely on funds being available. There is no intention to open the path to horse riders. This is one of the many issues brought to the ROW group that depends on the availability of money and agreement between different levels of government.

*St Jerome's* have a project to line up a path to help make safe the way of pupils and others walking to school. The precise plan has not yet been sent to the planners.

The Formby Civic Society has made a proposal that the *Lunts Lane* path should become a recognized public right of way. This seems to be a low priority for the council and no progress has been made with the application.

Progress has been made in relation to the *Hightown to Formby Cycle Route*. There is to be a new bridge

to *Rosemary Lane* has been surfaced and safety barriers have been erected at each end of the path.

There is an intention to widen *Long Lane* and improve the drainage ditch (Dobbs Gutter). The

built over the Alt Estuary. The first phase work on the Andrews Lane to Hoggs Hill stretch has been completed. The second section has been hindered by flooding and the blocking of a land drain. The damage will be repaired in the near future.

At the February meeting of MLAF a report was presented on the progress of the completion of the Trans-Pennine Trail which links Sefton and Scarborough. The local authority for Scarborough has already placed a sign celebrating the starting point of the Trail. There is no evidence of any sign in Sefton.

The administrative business linked with the Trail is being undertaken by the Barnsley authority. Regular meetings of the trail consultation committee are held. Sefton is represented on the committee by two Borough Councillors. Views were expressed by members of MLAF that they were concerned by the non-attendance of the Sefton Members at these meetings. A letter about this situation is being sent to the Councillors.

The objective of MLAF is to provide a well-signed and well-kept regional ROW system that will eventually provide data to form a new definitive map of the region. The present map was produced in the 1960s. In the present economic situation ROW issues have fallen into a low local priority. There is a shortage of funds and staffing to carry out the work effectively and efficiently.

If any member of the Society has any questions related to ROW please contact me.

## The NPPF is one year old. How is it working? By Des Brennan.



*Greenbelt farmland on the Altcar side of the Parish boundary, on which developers now wish to build.*

The National Planning Policy Framework was published on 27 March 2012. Its 49 pages of policy replaces the well over 1000 pages of detailed policy documents which hitherto had formed the basis of development control decisions by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). There have now been sufficient appeals to The Planning Inspectorate, call-ins by the Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government, and decisions of the High Court on Judicial Review for it to be clear what is the overriding factor influencing the granting of planning permissions in the area of housing development since the publication of the NPPF.

It is that, if a LPA is unable to demonstrate the availability of at least 5.25 or 6 years of land supply for housing development (5YHLS rule; the longer period applies to any LPA which is judged to have a poor reputation for delivery of new housing), its Local Development Plan (LDP) is considered to be out of date and it then follows that *there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development*. As a consequence, provided the basic planning requirements relating to

design, layout, access, traffic, drainage, etc. are met, planning permission must be granted, even though the development would normally have been refused on the grounds that it is incompatible with the LDP, and no matter how intense the local

opposition to the development. When a developer with planning permission has been unable to build within the 5+ years because of depressed market conditions, or is judged to be incapable of doing so for whatever reason, the site involved is removed from the 5YHLS rule, finds that the shortfall increases as more planning permissions are granted, thus exacerbating their predicament. Currently, there are stalled planning permissions for over 400,000 homes in England. Very many people (of whom I am one) believe that sites with planning permission for housing development should be unconditionally included in the estimation of the 5YHLS.

Because of this situation, there has been a spate of planning applications for the development of choice greenfield sites specifically designated in the LDP *as not for residential development*. It is not just that precious greenfield sites are being lost for ever that is so harmful, it is also that the houses which are being built in this way are at the very high value end of the market, while the main body of the market remains depressed because of the lack of finance, and the homes much needed by ordinary people

are not getting built.

David Wilson Homes North West and Barrett Homes are wishing to build up to 300 homes on the green belt site adjacent to the south east residential area of Formby whose main boundaries are the bypass and Liverpool Road. These developers have made it clear that, if the LPA refuses their planning application (which is yet to be made), they are confident they can win on appeal to The Planning Inspectorate by exploiting the 5YHLS rule. However, to do so, they should remember that they will need first to have solved a number of problematic conventional planning issues for a difficult site.

Surveys show that most people believe that brownfield sites should be developed in preference to greenfield sites. However, while the NPPF encourages the reuse of previously developed land and permits LPAs to consider the case for setting a locally appropriate target for the use of brownfield land, it does not *require* preference to be given to the development of brownfield land. Indeed, the Secretary of State for planning has stated explicitly that the policy prior to the NPPF, whereby there was a sequential approach to the development of land with brownfield having first priority, is no longer applicable. So a policy which sought to preserve greenfield sites and at the same time to encourage urban regeneration is no longer applicable.

For these reasons (and others which cannot be covered in this short article), in my view the answer to the question posed in the title is "Not at all well".

## History Group Report by Dr Reg Yorke

We continue to gather interesting information for the Ravenmeols project, now in its last year. During the last few weeks we have received accounts and photographs from a brother and sister now living in Canada who both spent very happy childhood holidays at Stella Maris under the auspices of a Salford philanthropic organisation. One of their memories is of (happily) waving to HMS Thetis as it passed Formby Point on its tragic fatal diving trials off Anglesey on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1939.

Stuart Evans, the well known expert on the Arts and Crafts movement, has been in touch and is coming to re-visit the 'listed' Sandhills Cottage and fill us in on its renowned Architect, A.H. Mackmurdo.

We have been informed informally that an application for

funding of a 'stand-alone' interpretive web-site for the Ravenmeols Heritage Trails would probably be successful. Noel and I have given a lot of thought to this and prepared a draft application.

I have also discussed in some detail our approach to on-site interpretation with Andrew Brockbank who is organising a parallel Asparagus Heritage Trail on the N.T. Property, Victoria Road. He is using a fair amount of historical information originally published by ourselves. Not surprisingly there are close similarities of both sites but if anything I now feel that Ravenmeols has just as much interest, even if its Asparagus cultivation is a thing of the past. Nevertheless the advice that the N.T. are obtaining could provide some useful ideas for us working

with a much smaller budget and without similar professional 'interpretive' help.

We are planning events for the Festival of British Archaeology in July and Heritage Open Day in September. I have now given a number of PowerPoint presentations on Ravenmeols Heritage and 'Formby-by-the-Sea' to a number of very different groups including the History Group of the Liverpool Athenaeum Club and the general reaction has been quite rewarding, even at this early stage.

Finally the programme of History Group Meetings for the rest of this year is now organised and will appear in the Newsletter and on the website. This will include a field-trip to the Lunt Meadows Stone-age archaeological excavation led by Ron Cowell.



*Working on the Lunt Meadows site*

## **Formby Civic Society Finances by Jack Gore**

As we approach the end of our financial year, once again we are faced with a surplus of expenditure over income, due in the most part to rising fixed costs. Nevertheless, we have substantial reserves and at this stage, I do not anticipate having to raise the subscription.

The Society has this year been the recipient of generous donations from Dr Reg and Mrs Barbara Yorke in respect of the royalty payments on their two recently published books – ‘Formby and Freshfield through Time’ and ‘Formby then and Now’ (both available from local booksellers) and this has helped to augment our income further.

We have a total membership of 179 and we continue to attract new members, the majority of applications coming through our website.

## **John Houston**

It was with considerable regret that at the recent committee meeting we accepted John's resignation. As he now lives in West Lancashire he is no longer able to attend meetings. He has not severed all ties with us and will continue to be involved with us on occasions.

John has been a key figure in the life of the society and has made a valued contribution to our development. He has been involved from the start of the Sefton Coast development .and is fully committed to all aspects of the conservation of the whole area. John has published many papers on various aspects of his work. He is now involved in research. We wish him every success in his academic life, and, thank him for the time spent with us and for his wise council. We will miss you, John.

## **Notes from our Chair, Dru Haydon, on Meetings Reorganisation**

Last year we arranged to have all our meetings held in the smaller room at the Community Centre. This has been a successful move. The committee, with the support of a small sample of members at a recent meeting, agreed that the present summer and winter programme with fortnightly meetings should be replaced by the following.

This coming year 2013 -2014, after the AGM in April, from May onwards there will be one meeting a month, on the second Thursday over ten months. There will be no meetings in July and August, at which time there will be outings and visits. Five meetings will be General and five meetings will be History. This means that members will not have to brave the wind and weather of the winter months so often. We hope that this meets with general approval.

*For FCS Meetings and Events Programme, May-December 2013, please see overleaf - page 12.*

# Events Programme – May-December 2013

- Monday  
15th April                    **FCS Annual Dinner at ‘Quo Vadis’, Chapel Lane**, 7pm for 7-30pm. Guest of Honour, Dr David Massey, Merseyside Civic Society. (Details and booking form already sent)
- Thursday  
25th April                    **Annual General Meeting.** (Agenda, etc. enclosed)
- Thursday  
9th May                        **Sefton – “The Golfing Centre of Europe”;** Talk by Harry Foster.
- Wednesday  
15th May                      **Visit to Lunt Meadows Neolithic Settlement Excavation;** led by Ron Cowell, *Curator of Prehistoric Archaeology, National Museums Liverpool.* ( **Pre-booking necessary, see form enclosed**).
- Friday  
31st May, 7.30pm            **‘An Asparagus Feast’;** At the RAFA Club Victoria Road, Freshfield. A joint event with the National Trust. To celebrate and consume local Asparagus with music from Jill Fielding. Includes an ‘asparagus-related entertainment. **(See details enclosed).**
- Thursday  
13th June                      **‘Celebration of 60th anniversary’, Details to be arranged**
- Saturday  
22nd June                     **‘Ravenmeols Heritage’;** Chapel Lane. (10am- 4pm) A display to celebrate Civic Day. **(Details to be arranged).**
- Thursday  
17th July                      **Coach-trip to Hoghton Tower and Brockholes,** (Lancashire Wildlife Trust); To be led by David and Glennis Poole. **(See details on front page, pre-booking essential).**
- Sunday  
28th July                      **Guided visit to Ravenmeols Nuclear Monitoring Post;** (Festival of British Archaeology), to be led by Jack Gore and Reg Yorke. **(Details to be announced.)**
- Thursday  
12th September             **“My Work as a Local History Detective”;** Talk by Steve Halliwell.
- Sunday  
15th September             **Ravenmeols Heritage Trails; Heritage Open Day - Guided Walks.** **(Details to be announced later).**
- Thursday  
10th October                **‘A Missionary in Bangladesh’;** Talk by Valerie Hamilton
- Thursday  
14th November              **‘Classical Liverpool - An Inside Story’;** Talk by Hugh Hollinghurst.
- Thursday  
12th December             **‘Fact or fabrication?’;** Talk by Pauline Mulford

## Officers of the Society

### Chairman

Mrs Dru Haydon, 35 Stanley Rd,  
L37 7AN, Tel.872740

### Hon Treasurer

Mr Jack Gore, 9 Beech Drive,  
L37 1NN, Tel 871411

### History Group Secretary

Dr Reginald Yorke, 3 Wicks Lane  
L37 3JE; Tel 872187

### Vice-Chairman

Mr Ray Derricott,  
17 Harington Rd, L37 1NT, 876661

### Amenities Secretary

Mr Jeremy Tickle, 26 L.pool Rd.  
L37 4BW, Tel. 870564

### Membership and Distribution

Mr Tony Bonney, 25 Gorse Way,  
L37 1PA Tel.872862

### Hon Secretary

Dr Reginald Yorke, 3 Wicks Lane  
L37 3JE; Tel 872187

### Committee Members

Mrs Jean Beer  
(Minutes Secretary)  
Mr Noel Blundell, Mr Colin Cooke

### Winter Programme Secretary

Mrs Dru Haydon, 35 Stanley Rd,  
L37 7AN, Tel.872740