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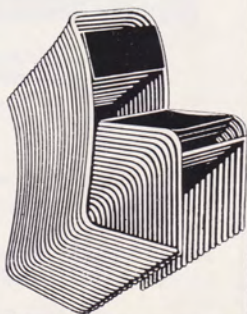
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FOREWORD

EVER growing in reputation as a fine residential town and holiday centre, Formby has much to offer. Its situation is ideal and to this Formby owes its famous health-giving properties. The town is bounded on the west by the sea, from which the breezes sweep in, fresh and clean after their journey across the Atlantic. Another great feature in the exceptional healthiness of Formby are the tall pine woods that ring the town.

The shore is protected by extensive sandhills, covered with a luxuriant growth of creeping willows and star grass. The latter is systematically planted according to an Act passed in the 18th century, to keep the sand from drifting away. These hills are a happy hunting ground for local botanists and such uncommon wild plants as the Wintergreen, *Pyrola rotundifolia*; Var, *maritima* are to be found. Game abounds and much of the land is strictly enclosed. In consequence only a few footpaths across the sandhills are open to the public.

The sandhills and dense pinewoods shelter Formby and its pleasant residential suburbs, Formby-by-the-Sea and Freshfield (which together form one urban district) from the strongest winds and the whole area is famous for its fine market produce. The land is flat and sandy, the fields criss-crossed by dykes, where rye, wheat and potatoes flourish. A feature of this district are the wide fields of asparagus—a well-known local speciality.



Photo : Valentine, Dundee

VICTORIA ROAD,
FRESHFIELD

An introduction to

FORMBY

FORMBY has a beauty all its own. There are grass lanes leading down to the shore, one with a brook running on one side, where the sweet blue forget-me-not blooms in sheltered corners, and the meadow sweet and marsh marigold, in their turn, adorn the waterside. On a summer day, to walk in these lanes and listen to the hum of countless insects, and to the song of the lark as he soars away into the blue vault of heaven is solitude and restfulness idealized.

The beech walk, which skirts the pine wood near St. Luke's Church, is a place of beauty in spring, when every branch is like lace ; and in the autumn, when the leaves are golden, it is an unforgettable picture. Here in this walk stands St. Luke's Church, remote and beautiful. Inside the church is preserved a rough stone font, recovered from a former church on the same site which was blown down about 180 years ago during a great storm. The old gravestones are found eight feet below the present level.

When the setting sun dips down in the sea it throws up rays illuminating sand-dune and pine wood with a wondrous glory. Bathed in rich red and gold, the tops of the pine trees stand out like helmeted sentinels, and fantastic shadows gather round the dunes.

Within the last few years the sea-shore at Formby and Freshfield has become the week-end resort of thousands of visitors. This glorious sea front is approached from Freshfield station along an avenue of trees, behind which lie beautifully kept villas, for about half a mile from the station along the road to the shore. For the remaining half-mile to the sea-shore the road on either side is bordered by dense pine woods, and it is no uncommon sight on a fine summer's day at the week-end to see motor cars from all over the county lined up from the shore along this road, whilst their owners are indulging in such delights as sea bathing, picnicking amongst the sandhills, shore golf and tennis. Large numbers of visitors also come by railway, the shore being approached from Formby Station by Kirklake Road and Lifeboat Road.

Formby Official Guide

“Formby Point” is a geographical configuration well marked on the map of England. The centre of the town is a mile and a half inland from the sea, with roadways and sandy lanes dotted with villa residences, stretching almost to the sea-shore. Situated thirteen miles from Liverpool, and seven miles from Southport, Formby has commercial and residential connections with one of the greatest mercantile ports in the world, and social connections with the most select and fashionable town in Lancashire.

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS. The principal road is that from Liverpool to Southport, from Alt Bridge northwards via the new by-pass through Formby and Ainsdale. The town is large and scattered over the central portion of the area. In recent years residential districts have grown up to the west of the railway ; this is largely due to the excellent railway facilities, the London Midland Region’s electrified line from Liverpool to Southport having stations at Formby and Freshfield.

THE VILLAGE CENTRE, FORMBY





Photo : Valentine, Dundee

BROWS LANE,
FORMBY



Photo : Valentine, Dundee

WAR MEMORIAL GARDEN,
FORMBY

FORMBY

Past and present

FORMBY'S place name has undergone several changes in the course of centuries; it appears as *Fornebi* in Domesday Book, in 1177 it was spelt *Fornebia*, and up till 1500 it was usually written *Forneby*. The present spelling first appeared in 1338 and had become common by the sixteenth century. *Forni* is quite a well-established personal or family name in the old Scandinavian tongue, and *by* denoted a village or homestead in most parts of England where Scandinavians settled. It is therefore fairly certain that Formby was at one time peopled by Scandinavian immigrants—the home of Forni's people.

There are traditions that troops for the suppression of the rebellion of 1715 were embarked at Formby for Scotland, and that early in the eighteenth century a proposal was made that docks should be constructed here rather than at Liverpool. The old roundhouse was pulled down about 1893, but remains of the stocks may still be seen. A stone cross with steps was erected in 1870 on the village green, which was then enclosed; the old cross and steps were re-erected in St. Luke's churchyard. The pedestal of another cross, called the Cop Cross, formerly stood west of the village.

Camden noticed the use of turf here for fire and candlelight, and the oily matter coming from it.

He also states that there was a small village named Alt Mouth near Formby, but this has disappeared, so that it is uncertain whether it was on the Raven Meols side of the river, or in Ince Blundell. In 1835 there was no dwelling here but a farm-house; a rabbit warren adjoined.

MANORS. In 1066 there were in Formby proper three manors held by three thegns, the land being assessed as four plough-lands and said to be worth 10s. beyond the customary rent. A quarter of Formby, or one plough, was after the Conquest granted to or retained by a family of thegns who also held Bootle and Woodplumpton. Richard, son of Roger, son of Ravenkil, died in 1200,

Formby Official Guide

when his lands were divided between his four daughters. One of these, Quenila, wife of Jordan de Thornhill, was tenant in 1212.

The lordship of Formby descended with the Walton family, to whom it had been granted in the 13th century, until 1489 when Roger Walton died, leaving daughters as heirs, after which it does not seem traceable. It had, however, been early granted out to several tenants ; partly to the Blundells whose share was given to the Norrises, descending with the West Derby Speke branches until 1543, when Sir William Norris exchanged it for other lands of Sir William Molyneaux of Sefton, the latter's son in 1561 selling part to Henry Halsall ; and part to a local family who assumed Formby as a surname and have retained their share of the manor, now called a quarter, to the present day.

It appears that Master Roger de Derby held seven oxgangs in Formby, five of Henry de Walton, and two of William de Lee, the latter in turn probably holding of the same Henry. To Hugh de Corona, son of Master Roger, Henry de Nottingham granted these seven oxgangs, "with the principal messuage and all his men, as well free as others, at a rent of 15s. 2d. a year and a pair of white gloves." This Hugh de Corona is no doubt the Hugh de Formby whose son Adam de Formby held seven oxgangs here in 1327. From that time only fragmentary notices are obtainable of the family, except in the sixteenth century, until the eighteenth century when Richard Formby was Lord of this part of Formby and also curate of the chapel. He died in 1832 and was succeeded by his son John Formby of Maghull Hall, whose son the Rev. Lonsdale Formby was, like his grandfather, lord of the manor and incumbent of the chapel ; Mr. Lonsdale Formby, his grandson, is the present lord of this portion of the manor.

In 1717, as "papists," John Poole of Great Crosby, Richard Rimmer and Nicholas Summer registered estates here.

Between 1205 and 1211 Henry de Lea granted licence to William Blundell of Ince to erect a mill on the Raven Meols side of the Alt, with the right to take eels at the sluice ; the mill was given to the monks of Whalley, who in 1329 agreed with Sir Richard de Hoghton and his wife Sibyl to pay a rent of a gilt spur, or 4d., and reserve the eel fishery to the lord of Raven Meols.

The Molyneux family of Melling had lands here in the first part of the seventeenth century ; and in 1744 William Molyneux of

Past and Present

Mossborough in Rainford named his "manor of Ravenmeols" in his will. In 1757 it was purchased from his daughter, Lady Blount, by John Formby of Formby, and has since descended with Formby.

Formerly the township must have been much larger. As it is, Formby Point is a prominent feature of the coastline, but the greater part of the hamlet of Raven Meols was long ago destroyed by the sea. About the beginning of the eighteenth century sand gradually overwhelmed the lands by the shore, thus changing the coast-line. The dark tilled soil of the ancient surface and the natural furrows made by the plough are occasionally found when clearing the ground of blown sand. From 1710 Formby leases contained a clause providing for the planting of star-grass, which became part of the service due to the lords of the manors ; afterwards, an Act was passed making the planting compulsory.

The township now forms a detached portion of the ancient parish Walton-on-the-Hill, and originally it included the civil parish of Ainsdale which is now part of the County Borough of Southport. It has an area of 7,308 acres and a population of 10,520.

“Ivy Bank”

ELSON ROAD

FORMBY

(Miss MacNamee)

FEATURES OF THE TOWN

Formby Hall, built seven or eight centuries ago, is one of the most picturesque old family mansions in Lancashire. The Formbys of Formby were originally Danes, who landed in Formby during the invasion of our coast by the Danish sea-raiders. The name is found in the Domesday Book compiled in 1086. The Formbys have lived at Formby Hall in a direct line from father to son since the year 1100, with only one break, when a cousin entered the line.

The Hall stands two miles inland, and almost within a stone's-throw of the old high road from Liverpool to Southport. It fronts a lake (near which is the old heronry), and faces a wide open stretch of country, but is sheltered from the coldest winds by a thick belt of woodland, under which in the spring are carpets of wild flowers. The interior of the Hall is extremely beautiful and possesses many interesting features, one being an old "powder closet." A winding staircase leads to the hawk room, where remained until about half a century ago the perches for the birds used in the ancient sport. King Henry VIII is said to have stayed at the Hall once to indulge in this royal pastime of falconry.

There are other ancient buildings in Formby. In the centre of the parish is an old house called the "Priest House," in Priest House Lane. Near St. Peter's Church some Elizabethan cottages are perfect examples of the domestic architecture of that illustrious age.

FORMBY HALL

Photo: G. Greenhalgh





ST. LUKE'S CHURCH

CHURCHES AND CHAPELS. The parochial chapel appears to have stood originally in Raven Meols, but the site of the modern St. Luke's Church with its ancient burial ground is now within the limits of Formby. Little is known of its history. In 1334 a settlement was made of a dispute as to the tithes of the fishery at Raven Meols between the rectors of Walton and Sefton. The patronage is attributed to the Halsalls in the sixteenth century and the Formbys in the seventeenth century. Its fate after the Reformation is not known. As it was far distant from the parish church and the people adhered to the old religion, it is probable that services were not held very regularly. In 1590 it was not mentioned, while about 1612 it was reported that only "a reading minister" served this chapel. The Commonwealth Surveyors of 1650 described the chapel as ancient and parochial, and recommended that the township be formed into one independent parish.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, the chief resident having conformed to the Established religion, and the old chapel having become almost overwhelmed by the sand and otherwise unfit for services, the church of St. Peter was, in 1736, erected upon a piece of waste land in a central position, some of the material of the old chapel being used. This church, enlarged in 1830, is a plain brick building, with a campanile containing one bell.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH



Formby Official Guide

St. Luke's Church was built in 1852-5 near the site of the ancient chapel ; a district was formed for it in 1888. Holy Trinity Church was erected in 1890 and a district was assigned in 1893.

Protestant Nonconformity appears to have been unknown in Formby until 1816, when the Rev. George Greatbach, a Congregational minister of Southport, preached here. No regular services were held by this denomination until 1881, when the Assembly Room was used ; a school chapel was opened two years later. The Methodists built a chapel in 1877 ; they have also a mission room.

As already stated, the greater part of the population adhered to the Roman Church at the Reformation, and so late as 1718 Bishop Gastrell found that a quarter of the inhabitants were still faithful. In 1767 the number of "papists" had increased to 363. The names of the priests have not been recorded before 1701, when Fr. Richard Foster, S.J., was here, his stipend being £16, of which £10 was given by the people. The Jesuits had charge of the chapel down to 1779, but secular priests also visited the place. After a short interval one of the latter, the Jesuit order having been suppressed, received charge here in 1784, and the succession is continuous from that time. A new chapel was built in 1798 on the old site. The church of Our Lady of Compassion was erected in 1864.

At Freshfield is St. Peter's College for Foreign Missions, begun in 1884, associated with the Mill Hill College founded by the late Cardinal Vaughan.

CURIOUS LOCAL PLACE-NAMES

There are many curious place-names in Formby. The "Wicky Dales" and "Clovenly Dales" are near the Ainsdale boundary. The banks forming the fences of the fields are called "cops." "Deansgate Lane", on the east side of the village, is sometimes called Danesgate Lane, being connected by local traditions with an incursion of the Danes. The "Whams" is an open space to the west of Formby Hall. "Watchut" or Watchyard Lane may be derived from wetshod. "Stingman's" or "Steeman's hook," by the Moss on the east, is supposed to be derived from the vipers which formerly infested the place. "Brank Farm" was so called from brank or buckwheat, which will grow on very poor land.



Photo: O. F. Bishop

ST. PETER'S CHURCH,
FORMBY



LIFEBOAT
HOUSE CAFE,
FORMBY

Photo:
Valentine, Dundee

THE PAVILION,
DUKE ST. PARK



FORMBY

For healthy holidays

BRIEF reference has already been made to the splendid qualities of the air of Formby, but to those who are in search of a place for a health-giving holiday the subject is one that will well bear amplification. Formby's prevailing winds are from the west and south-west, coming direct from the Welsh mountains over the Dee and the Mersey, bringing with them an energising atmosphere. The Great and Little Orme at Llandudno are often plainly visible from Formby's sea-shore, and on exceptionally clear days Snowdon itself looms large to the observant visitor. Westward is the sea ; north and south are thousands of acres planted with pines, whose odours mix with the sea air. The electric railway line running from Liverpool to Southport is bounded on both sides for mile after mile with the golf links of half a dozen clubs, while inland the country is wholly devoted to agriculture and fruit gardens, so that Formby's surroundings are ideal from a residential point of view.

Formby's climate is mild in winter and cool in summer ; the breezes across the water in summer never allow it to become hot and oppressive. Its subsoil consists, for the most part, of endless layers of clean blown sand.

Many people from Liverpool, Manchester, Bolton, etc., revel in their beautiful gardens here, and to nature-lovers the Formby flora is a deeply engrossing subject.

Formby enjoys a good deal of sunshine even in winter-time when the residential areas near the big industrial towns are enveloped in smoke palls. Because of the light nature of the soil, there are few days even in winter when gardening cannot be indulged in. Many residents enjoy the bright winter days in their gardens, putting them in order for the coming spring, so that the weary wait between the fall and the spring is hardly noticed and luxuriant displays of flowers, vegetables and fruit are assured.

SPORT AND AMUSEMENTS

There is plenty of scope for healthy outdoor recreation and good facilities for indoor amusements in Formby. The Formby Golf Links have a wide reputation, having often been visited by members

Formby Official Guide

of the Royal Family, as guests of the noble house of Derby, at Knowsley, and by the late Earl Balfour and other well-known lovers of the ancient game. The Formby Ladies' Golf Club adjoins, and each organization has a club-house, that of the former being a magnificent structure erected close to Freshfield railway station.

In the Park of about 12 acres in Duke Street there is an excellent public bowling green and a pitch-and-putt course alongside which stands a charming pavilion. The playing pitches are used by local clubs for cricket in summer and football in winter.

The Formby Cricket Club has a very beautifully situated ground. Here one may recline at ease on a Saturday afternoon in the summer and not only see good cricket, but delight in what must be amongst the prettiest and most secluded beauty spots that ever a cricket club had the good fortune to call its headquarters. There are several tennis clubs for ladies and gentlemen, bowling clubs, a well-supported association football club, and exceptional facilities for billiards. The facilities for bowls are associated with the Freshfield Bowling Club Limited, who boast a green and a pavilion, as also do the Catholic Club and the Holy Trinity Church Men's Club. There are likewise bowling greens and billiards pavilions at the Blundell Arms Hotel, Formby, and the Grapes Hotel, Freshfield, where clubs are established.

With regard to indoor amusement, not least in the entertainment life of Formby is the Embassy Cinema.

Amateur operatic and dramatic performances, and concerts and entertainments are held frequently throughout the winter.

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Photo: Valentine, Dundee

IN THE VILLAGE, FORMBY

Formby is also the centre of the coursing world for the north of England, being within a mile or so of the Waterloo Coursing Grounds, where Lord and Lady Sefton encourage the support of the leash by allowing the Sefton estate to be used for the Altcar Club, and the Waterloo coursing. Several notable owners kennel their dogs at Formby during the great greyhound tournaments. Aintree is only a few miles farther south, where the Grand National Steeplechase is run, and other races are run on the flat.



Photo: Valentine, Dundee

GORES LANE,
FORMBY

Around and about

FORMBY

ONE need never be dull in Formby. The stretches of shore under the shelter of the sandhills, and the sandy lanes and the grassy lanes, abound in interest. One can never visit the shore and stand near the Lifeboat House or on the Promenade but ships are passing. The greatest liners in the world and innumerable ships of all classes and from all countries pass up and down the Mersey to and from Liverpool landing-stage and docks. An endless and memorable procession.

About a mile inland stood an old lighthouse, which served, at all events, to show how the sea has receded in modern years from this southern end of the township. It was built between 1702 and 1728 originally as a landmark. It was much higher then, and the sea-mark stood about a quarter of a mile, or perhaps rather more, south-west from the promenade, on a point which has now been cut down by the sea. The tower of this lighthouse was afterwards reduced in height, and a lantern put in it for a short time in consequence of the changes in the channel, but it was not used for very long, and only intermittently after the Crosby Lighthouse was built. Formerly there was a second lighthouse, not far distant, but it was burnt down, and unhappily one of its occupants was burnt to death. Near by is Grange Farm, an ancient homestead which has been immortalized as the scene of a romantic story, in connection with the old days when slave-owners resided in Liverpool, and when *A Dangerous Conspirator* haunted this district during the Jacobean and Royalist disturbances.

The old market town of Ormskirk is eight miles away from Formby, and well worth a ride or drive to see its curious church, with both a tower and a spire, and some very ancient oak carving. Here are the tombs of the old Stanley family (Lady Derby, the famous Charlotte de la Tremouille, who in 1644 defended the now demolished mansion, Lathom House, against the Roundheads). Ormskirk market day is Thursday, at which time the town will be found of particular interest to tourists.

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Halsall Church, with its Crusader's Tomb, and Halsall's old Abbey, are only six miles distant from the site of the old Lathom House.

Southport is seven miles away. It is a fine town with two theatres and palatial cinemas. During the summer and autumn nights illuminations convert it into a veritable fairyland. The electric railway between Liverpool and Southport runs rapid trains every few minutes, from early morning until midnight, and cheap excursion tickets are issued.

Ince Blundell, a small village four miles from Formby, is well worth a visit. It has a fascinating old-world appearance, with its village cross, set high up, almost on the roadway itself. Ince Blundell Hall has belonged to the Blundells, the Lords of the Manor of Ince Blundell, ever since the Norman Conquest. It is a beautiful building, standing in large grounds, enclosed within a magnificent park, and surrounded by a brick wall which has stood the test of centuries. A remarkable feature of the Hall is the Parthenon erected at one side as an annexe. It is full of curios, objets d'art and statues, collected from all parts of the world. Frescoes of priceless value adorn some of the walls and there is a private chapel in the grounds for the use of the family.

To lovers of nature Ince Blundell is known for its woods, through which runs the main road. In summer hundreds of people come here from Liverpool to seek the leafy arcades, through which the sun shines down in slanting rays, making fantastic shadows on the ground, and here and there on dark green woodland pools. In the spring, when the woods are azure with bluebells, or carpeted with primroses, the scene on a sunny day is indescribably lovely.

The whole neighbourhood of Formby is a favourite resort both in summer and in winter. Snow rarely falls in the town itself, and when it does the sand is so warm and porous that, except on the metalled roads and tarmac footpaths, it melts quickly and is gone. But a fall of snow on the Ince Blundell trees and in the copses creates a scene from fairyland. People journey for miles to view the sight. The woods are bisected by the high-road for about a mile, and to drive or motor through them at night with trees illuminated by powerful head lamps is a delight. The trees suggest to the imaginative a vast cathedral with countless pillars and innumerable domes or minarets, the weird shapes of the shrubs and



Photo: County Photographic Supply Co.

THE PARISH CHURCH,
ORMSKIRK

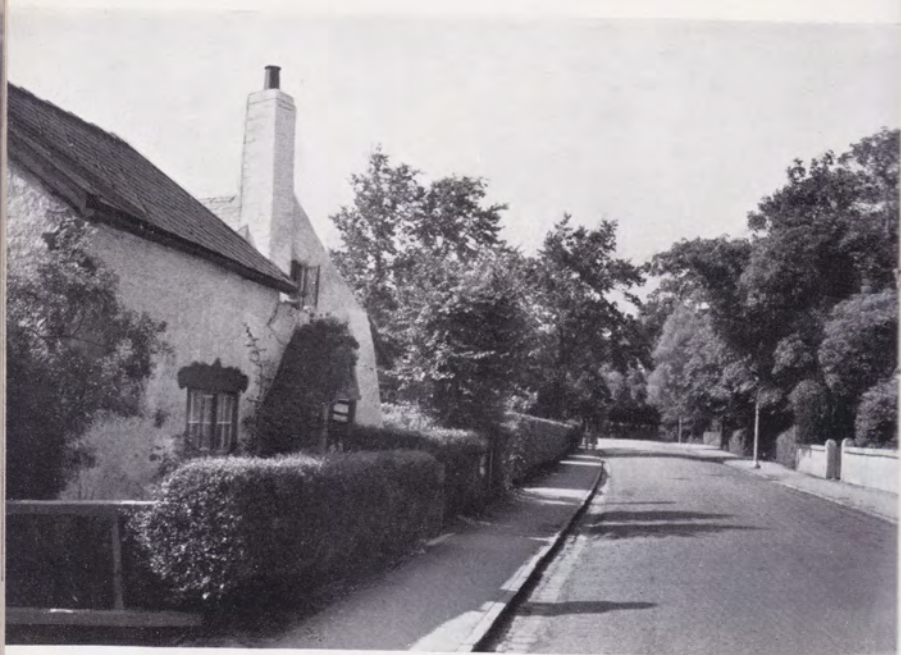


Photo: Valentine, Dundee

GREEN LANE,
FORMBY

Around and about

bowed-down bracken resembling a multitude of kneeling worshippers being ministered unto by an army of priests arrayed in spotless raiment, which reminds one that a strange and attractive ceremony is observed in the local Roman Catholic cemetery on All Souls' Day, when priests and people repair to the cemetery at midnight, to outline the graves with lighted candles, and pray for the repose of the souls of the departed.

Sefton is about six miles distant from Formby, and is much frequented by motorists and cyclists. The chief feature here is the church, dedicated to St. Helen. The original church dated from the early twelfth century, but the present building was erected by Anthony Molyneux, who was rector during the reign of Henry VIII. The living is in the hands of the Molyneux family, the present inheritor being the Earl of Sefton, who resides at Croxteth Hall. The interior of the church was formerly spoilt by the heavy gallery, but this was recently removed. Lovers of church architecture will admire the ancient and beautiful canopy and the old oak carving of the choir stalls. There are also some fine brasses.

Passing through the lych-gate, which moves circularly, and taking the road exactly opposite, the pedestrian finds himself (in about a quarter of an hour) at Thornton, where on the green the old stocks still stand, very carefully preserved.

Lydiat lies just off the main road, and is not therefore so much the resort of the motorist. From Formby the best way is to go across what is termed the Moss. There is now an excellent road all the way.

The agricultural village of Altcar is passed first. It has a beautiful little church, entirely of wood, built by the Earl of Sefton; texts are carved across the solid beams. Lydiat is about three miles farther on. Standing back from the road is Lydiat Hall, dating from the medieval period, and built at the happy termination of the Wars of the Roses. Three white and three red roses, carved over the porch, with one parti-coloured rose in the middle, commemorate the event.

About 400 yards south of the Hall is an old church, commonly known as Lydiat Abbey, where the priests who formerly administered to the spiritual needs of the parish are buried. The church is now in ruins.

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FACTS AND FIGURES

ACCOMMODATION : Bay Horse Hotel, Church Road ; Blundell Arms Hotel, Cross Green ; Freshfield Hotel, Massams Lane ; Grapes Hotel, Green Lane ; Railway Hotel, Duke Street ; Royal Hotel, Liverpool Road ; Beehive Café, Duke Street ; Burns' Café, Chapel Lane ; Lighthouse Café, Liverpool Road ; Norman's Café, Chapel Lane ; Orchard's Café, Church Road ; Pine Tree Café, The Shore, Freshfield.

AMBULANCE : Formby Ambulance Station, Piercefield Road, Formby. (Telephone : Formby 127.)

AREA : 7,308 acres.

BANKS : District Bank Ltd. ; Martins Bank Ltd. ; Williams Deacon's Bank Ltd.

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL : John Breese, Council Offices, Freshfield Road, Formby. (Telephone : Formby 720.)

ENGINEER AND SURVEYOR : H. P. Turner, M.I.Mun.E.

M.O.H. : M. G. Garry, L.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., L.M.

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Facts and Figures

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EARLY CLOSING DAY : Wednesday.

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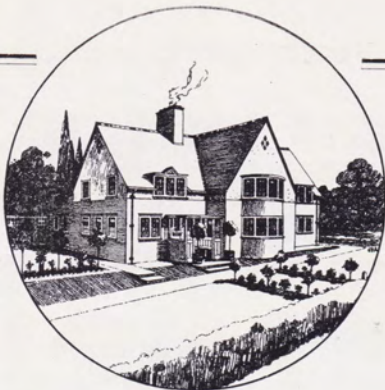
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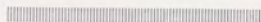
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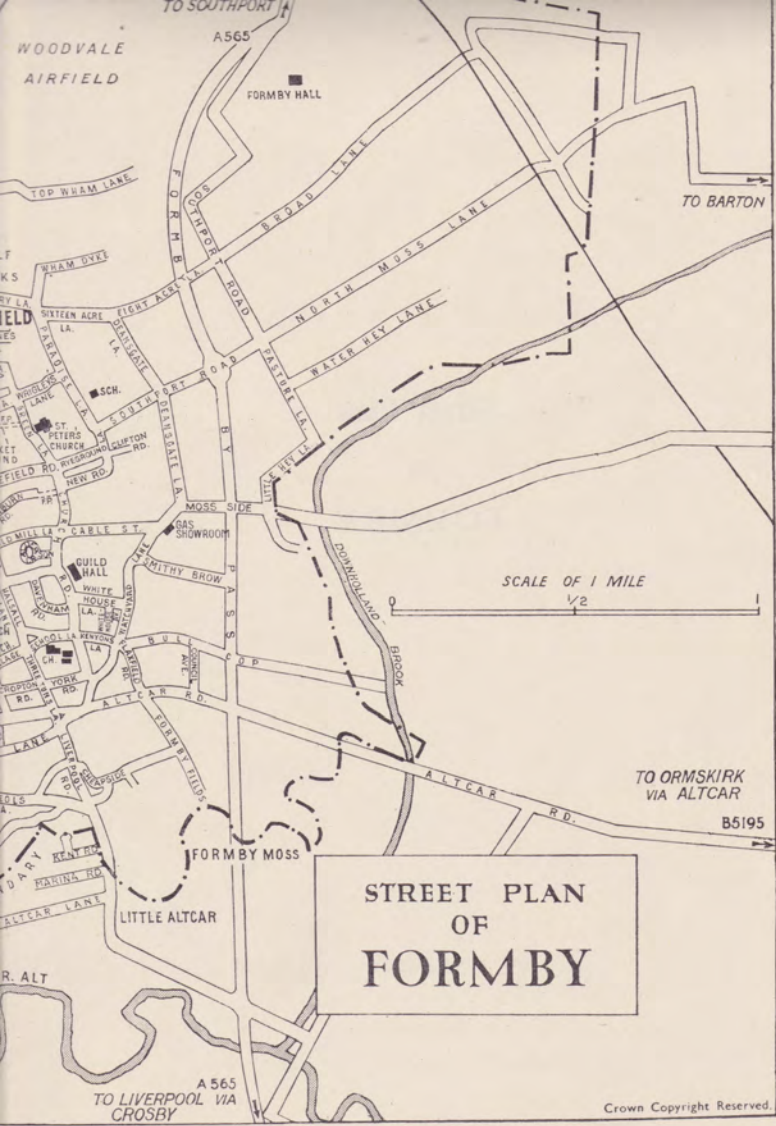
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