

THE

# GEORGE FORMBY

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## Newsletter 112



Specially Produced for George Formby Fans  
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# Welcome to Newsletter No. 112

And it certainly has been a hectic month for some of the Formby players . We have news inside of the concert put on by the Crewe players when they entertained in Crewe market, and also the weekend concerts at Wigan Pier.

## But first: - Spare a Prayer for Eve Stewart

For many years Eve has been a dedicated and loyal supporter of George Formby and his music. She thoroughly enjoys organising her monthly meetings at the Blackpool Cricket Club and greets each one on the door as they enter. However she's not been in the best of health these last few months and is now unable to attend her meetings.



For a number of years Eve, with the aid of Charles, served on the George Formby Society committee as Secretary, and they did a fine job of meeting and greeting members on the doors at the Wintergardens. During the tea break they would invite a crowd back to their home for a feed and everybody would be made very welcome. They were perfect Blackpool hosts for the society, and still are.

We are all thinking of you Eve and sending our love. The photo on the right is Eve at her very best during the Holland trip some 14 years ago.

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**It's Amazing**—In last month's issue we reported the death of our old organist friend John Hickinbottom, - a most wonderful organ, piano and keyboard player. A few days ago I received three CDs in the post from John's wife, Barbara. Prior to the funeral, I didn't even know that John had made any CDs so I was very pleased when they arrived.



John has always done a good job of producing backing tapes, - even songs that he'd never heard before, But these particular CDs are really excellent because he is playing his own well rehearsed repertoire of songs. Songs from his heart, like "Autumn Leaves - Hey There - Tico Tico - On The Street Where You Live - Sunrise Sunset," all great stuff and beautifully played. Very professional and very relaxing! Thanks John. It's great to have you playing in my work room.

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**FUTURE NEWSLETTERS???** Some readers rang in, concerned that there will be no more Newsletters after June 2005. They felt strongly that the monthly mag plays an important part in letting readers know what is going around George Formby land. So we are considering producing the book every 2 months, which will give more time to gather the news and also carry out domestic duties.

**Warrington Guardian, readers letter** - Good to see George Formby in the news again. I have fond memories of George from my schooldays and I attended his funeral with my mother in 1961. We lived in Algernon Street, so we were near to the cemetery, and a lot of neighbours also went.

I have always admired him. When I visit the cemetery on Sundays to take flowers to the grave of my father, who served with the South Lancashire Regiment and died during the First World War, I would visit George's grave too, to look at the very beautiful headstone.

I was also very pleased to see in the Guardian the photograph of George with his usual grin on his face. I am pleased and honoured to know I attended his funeral at the cemetery and silently thanked him for all the happiness he brought to so many people in Warrington at that time. Happy Centenary indeed George, and let's hope you are honoured with a statue in Warrington. NAME & ADDRESS SUPPLIED

*Thanks went to the Guardian for publishing the above readers letter. Several people have asked how the statue is coming along and I can only repeat what I've said before: The opportunity is there to honour George in a big way but it needs a dedicated group or organisation that, - like the Max Miller Society, has the guts to organise the funding. It's not too big a task.*

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## **Blackpool Night—Mickey Mouse**

almost stopped the show! What a grand night we had at Blackpool, with 10 visitors from Sheffield plus Pam & Jon Baddeley. A total of 50 turned up—plus Mickey Mouse, and the ladies did a fine buffet job in catering for them all. It is strange not to be greeted at the door by Eve Stewart, - who is badly under the weather health wise at the moment.

However, Thelma Cartwright and Pat Chenery held the fort and did a grand job in greeting our members at the door.



**MICKEY MOUSE**—When we first started to use the Cricket Club as a venue, Charles Stewart did a grand job setting up a wiring system in the ceiling of the club. This meant that he simply had to climb the ladder, lift up two of the ceiling tiles and drop the wiring down to connect to the amp and speakers.

On this particular afternoon he arrived at the club, with his load of equipment, only to discover that the monitor speaker wasn't working. After a search he found that the monitor cable had been gnawed at by a mouse. This meant that we had to hold the show without the aid of a monitor speaker for the artists. However, all went well and Charles has threatened to dispose of the mouse.

Artists were: Terry Hall (Sheffield), Jonathan & Pam Baddeley, Steve Abbott, John Mason, Don Horton, Frank Bennett, Stan Evans (half a Past It), Phil Jones, Paul Kenny, Peter Brown. John Taylor & Alan Chenery. Charles Stewart on the sound. We have great nights so come and join us on the last Monday of every month.

## Olympic Gold for Crewe Meeting What a

great audience we have at Crewe! A Bank Holiday Weekend, the Olympic Games on the Television (reputedly the greatest show on earth) and would you believe it, 118 turned up for our show. That was absolutely magnificent! You all deserve to be on the podium receiving a Gold Medal for your faithful support. Alan Newton was our MC for the night and he is now very popular with everybody as well as being a talented musician and artiste. Alan was aided by popular Arthur Newton (no relation as far as can be ascertained) as Concert Producer. This is a difficult job getting a good balance to show and Arthur does a splendid job. Stan Evans our Newsletter Editor sold a record number of magazines on the night. Twenty pence of the fifty pence cover price goes to our Club, so well done everybody and well done Stan for all the hard work that goes into collating the information, producing the artwork, printing, stapling and distribution - all done by Stan. Thanks to those who kindly donate nice raffle prizes it all helps the club.



Cyril Palmer had the audience in stitches with his own parody of "When I'm Cleaning Windows" based on the experience of Walter Kirkland who was caught without his pants by a lady cleaner at Warners Thoresby Hall Hotel.

Stan Evans thought that he had a free reign to tell his jokes on the night but he didn't expect Connie to turn up late and kill his act! Full marks to Bryn Evans who gave a really splendid performance of "Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" and "I'll See you in my Dreams." Very nicely sung. Phil Jones, who is a great music lover, who has nearly a thousands recordings of the great Al Bowlly, told us a couple of musical anecdotes including one concerning Al Jolson. It seems Al once entered an amateur contest to find the person who was most like Al Jolson. He was not recognised because he was not blacked up, and he came third! It is always a pleasure to have Margaret Moran and Les Pearson with us. Margaret is a lovely singer and is always very smartly dressed for her performances. Thanks again for everyone who contributed anything at all to the success of the evening.

The artistes taking part were: STEVE HASSALL "When I'm 64" & "Goody Goody." BRIAN EDGE "I'm Nobody's Baby" and "I've Got a Girlfriend." MARGARET MORAN "I Could Have Danced All Night" & "Softly Softly." CYRIL PALMER "I Don't Like" & "When I'm Cleaning Mirrors." CLIFF ROYLE "Bless 'Em All" and "I Wish I could Play the Ukulele." ALAN CHENERY "My Little Back Room Up Stairs" & "The Wigan Boat Express." DAVE CLEWS, BERNARD ASHMORE & ALAN CHENERY (trio) "Putting on the Style." ALICE CRONSHAW "If I was the Only Girl in the World," & "All of me." WALTER KIRKLAND "My little Toolshed in the Garden." & Bones Medley. GARETH SUMNER "I'd Like a Dream like that when I'm Awake" & "You don't need a Licence for That." JONATHAN BADDELEY "The Old Cane Bottom Chair." & "When the Waterworks Caught Fire." PAMELA BADDELEY "An Al Jolson Medley." JIM KNIGHT "Get Cracking" & Bones Medley. DAVE CLEWS "Wartime Medley" STAN EVANS "Stay in your Own

*Back Yard."* & the original version of *"My Way!"* VERA JONES *"Yours"* & *"It had to be You."* PHIL JONES *"Hitting the Highspots Now."* & *Take Good Care of My Baby Medley."* BRYN EVANS *"The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea"* & *"I'll See you in my Dreams."* ALISON NADIN with her *"Magnificent magic mangle manoeuvre"* ARTHUR NEWTON *"Sitting on the Top of Blackpool Tower"* and *"T.T. Races."* COLIN WOOD & ALAN CHENERY *"The Window Cleaner"* & *"Show me the Way to Go Home Medley."* ALAN NEWTON *"Farmer'Boy"* & *"Oo! Oo! Oo! What a bit of Moonlight Can Do"* and finally THRASH *"Leaning on a Lamp Post"* Total 22 Artists. show finished 11.15pm. Thanks Brian.

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## Crewe Market Newspaper Cutting - Wistaston based performers

set toes tapping when they introduced the music of George Formby a new generation of fans. Shoppers of all ages enjoyed music performed by the George Formby Society at Crewe market as part of the borough council's summer street entertainment programme.

Their show proved such a big hit last weekend that they have been invited to perform again on Saturday from 10am to 1pm. Council spokeswoman Tracey Bullock said: "By special request, the group is returning to provide music to tap your toes, dance or even shop too.

The group was formed 10 years ago and regularly performs George's comic songs for the banjo, along with a mix of jazz and their own touch of magic. It supports charity events for the elderly and is equally popular with a young audience.

Members have entertained on the beaches of Normandy for the anniversary of D Day and have been busking in France, Amsterdam and Ireland where they won an award.

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## Prism Leisure

- Over the years, Prism Leisure, music publishers, have supported us with George's tapes and CDs, in fact, way back in the late 1980 I remember ringing all the music publishers for some support for the forthcoming 1991 George Formby Exhibition at Warrington, and every reply I got was, "George Formby? He's dead isn't he?" "Yes, I know he's dead, but we are planning an exhibition and there is absolutely nothing of George's available: no tapes, no CDs, no videos, no music books, NOTHING!!! So can you help us?" Nobody appeared to be interested. So Sad!!!! However, a few weeks later the phone rang and it was Prism Leisure. "Hello, we've produced a tape for you which includes all of George's popular songs." Great Stuff.

I rang EMI in London to tell them that Prism had produced a tape and their first words were, "Thank goodness you've phoned, we've lost your phone number. You'll be pleased to know that we've produced a Twin Tape for you and named it after your exhibition, Turned Out Nice Again." Great again. Now we had three tapes to offer, and all first class recordings.

So I've always held Prism Leisure in high regard, until recently when I purchased a set of 20 CDs on Music From The Shows, through Bid Down on Sky TV. unfortunately they were very poor quality. So if you see them advertised—be wary!

## Alison Nadin reports on the Penyffordd Meeting

Hi Stan, Here is the report for the September meeting of the Pen-Y-Ffordd branch. As Cliff and Margaret Royle are away enjoying a 'pleasure cruise', it has fallen to me to write the report for the Pen-Y-Ffordd meeting this month.

As visitors will have noticed we had a 'learner' bouncer on the door this evening it was Jean Smith who was being coached by the experienced bouncer Myra Knight. As well as taking the entrance money, selling raffle tickets and the Newsletter, Christmas Party tickets were also on sale (It'll soon be here) for the 3rd December 2004 they are priced at £5.00 for adults, £2.50 for children including the buffet.



We started off the evening with a rousing chorus of 'for they are jolly good fellows' to help to celebrate the 49th wedding anniversary of Brian and Connie Edge. Happy birthday wishes were also sent to Phill Hughes for the 15th September.

Jim Knight was our Master of Ceremonies for the first half and the first performer he introduced was Alan Newton who sang "Lancashire Lad And His Uke" and the Dickie Speake song "Grab Your Ukulele And Sing." It was great to see Alan back at Pen-Y-Ffordd again after an absence of four months, he's been busy moving house. Gerald Jones followed with a song of his own called "Good Old Uncle George" then "Get Cracking." Walter Kirkland gave us Frank On His Tank and the first of three bones medleys.

My turn next with a few magic tricks - I still can't get to that miracle standard Stan!! Jim then introduced Brian Edge with I'm Nobodies Baby and I've Got a Girlfriend. Now a change of tempo from Alice Cronshaw who sang Too Young, and Smile. Three dashing young men took to the stage next - The Three Tenors, Frank, Deg and Phill who were in a military mood with their D-Day medley and Our Sergeant Major. Young Daniel Smith gave us We Remember George and Chinese Laundry Blues/Lamp-post medley. Pamela Baddeley sang a lovely medley of old-time sing-a-long songs. Greg Simister closed the first half with T.T. Races and Smile All The Time.

After the interval Deg Bruce took up the baton of Master of Ceremonies, the first act he introduced was a group of our new players comprising of Daniel Smith, Ryan and Russell Rees-Davies who gave us a great version of The War-Time Medley. Our first half MC Jim Knight sang A Long Time Gone. A first time visit from David Rose of Bramall who sang Hindoo Man and Wigan Boat Express, we hope to see you at Pen-Y-Ffordd again soon David. Jonathan Baddeley came up with a couple of obscure Formby songs Lancashire Hot-Pot Swingers and Our Fanny's Gone All Yankee. There was then time left to re-introduce some of the performers we had already seen during the evening. Alan Newton who came on with Get Me To The Church on

Time he then asked his 'Dad' Brian Edge to help him out with The Grey Haired Lady. Walter Kirkland sang The Isle Of Man. Jones the Uke with Granddads Flannelette Nightshirt and to close the evening The Three Tenors with Mr Wu's A Window Cleaner Now.

I hope this report is okay. Next month we should have our star reporter, Cliff Royle, back. COME BACK CLIFF - ALL IS FORGIVEN!!

*Thanks Alison, you're just as speedy as Cliff at getting the report in on time.*

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**Wigan Pier Weekend**— Day One was a pleasant event with about 15 of our players and supporters attending Wigan Pier. It was outside entertainment so it important that the weather was very kind to us, - almost sun-stroke! It was difficult to estimate the number of people there because they were spread about everywhere: In the restaurant—museum—walking round the grounds, or watching the entertainment. The restaurant was full most of the time so all in all there must have been at least 1000 visitors there on the day.

Alan Chenery kindly loaned the sound equipment and arrived at 9am to set it up. So a hearty good cheer for Alan.

The entertainment was Meed by the Town Crier, Donald Evans, who was the only man there able to compete with

the noisy industrial hooter which blew off steam almost every time we struck a high note. The lads did a grand job with George's repertoire of songs: Mr Wu, Windows,

Little Ukulele etc. but someone struck a few wrong chords, and upset the tempo during the solo bit in Lamp Post: A song rehearsed a thousand times.

Part of the entertainment was a Brass Band who's members took life very easy. They would play a song, which lasted about 3 or 4 minutes, and then take a 10 minute break. The Town Crier was fuming because people were leaving thinking that the show was over. Suddenly they'd strike up again and the crowd . . . . CONTINUED PAGE 12



Left to Right: Stan Watkinson—Alan Southworth—Don Horton—Des Redfern—Alan Chenery (with a microphone through his nose) John Mason and Phil Jones.



Stan Watkinson, & Alan Chenery with Town Crier.

# Gerard Loftus

**The youngest comedian in the country.**

Some months back we did a report on Gerard who stole the show at one of our concerts. Apparently he had studied a video of Micky Finn, one of Liverpool's top comedians, and on this occasion he did a 20 minute spot using all Micky's material. As soon as he'd finished, Micky came through the door, straight on to the stage, and told the same jokes. The audience roared with laughter and poor Micky wondered why they laughed all the way through the jokes. He looked confused.

Well Gerard has been invited to appear on Radio 4 with his former teacher, Ronan Dunne, who is now his manager, in a double act.

Meanwhile, a Comedy Tuition Club has been set-up for under 18s at The Picket, Hardman St, Liverpool, and they meet every month. It is compered by Rawhide comic Chris Cairns.

They say that you've got to be a comedian to live in Liverpool and young Gerard is typical with his scouse humour.

He said, "Now that we have become a City of Culture you'll probably go outside and find your car jacked up on books."

Great stuff Gerard and we hope you keep the old time Comedy Flag flying.



**HE'S A NATURAL**—Just look at the style on young Gerard. His whole body language tells you that he is a natural comic. Here he is (above) testing out his jokes on his mum and gran.

When we met him at Liverpool I gave him some jokes and he said, "Great, I love one-liners."

Olga Turner, who is Secretary for 22 Women's Clubs in Liverpool and Warrington, told me that young Gerard is going down very well at the women's meetings, and he is enjoying it. So that's great experience for him. He'll make a star some day.

Here's one of his jokes that he pinched from Micky Finn. "The chap who wrote the song 'Hokey Cokey' died recently and they had awful trouble at the funeral. He kept kicking his left leg out and his right arm in."

# Gran and his Mum test out Gerard's jokes



## A BIT SLOWER GERARD—

I gave Gerard this word of advice at Liverpool, "Although we only live 20 miles apart, if you deliver your jokes too fast, then us Warringtonians have no idea of what you are saying. So for us outsiders, deliver your jokes slow and clear."

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## Email from Albert

Hello Stan, for years I've sung: Leaning On A Lamp Post, Mr Wu, and TT Races at my local club and often I find that the audience are singing different words to mine and wondered which are correct. In Lamp Post George sings, "absolutely beautiful and marvellous and wonderful." Is this correct?

In TT Races, does George sing, "with the winning post on the pillion seat?" Also do you have another verse for Mr Wu? Something to do with the sun going down.

Thanks Albert, George confused us with Lamp Post. The correct wording is "Wonderful, marvellous and beautiful," and in TT Races the wording is "With the women posed on the pillion seat."

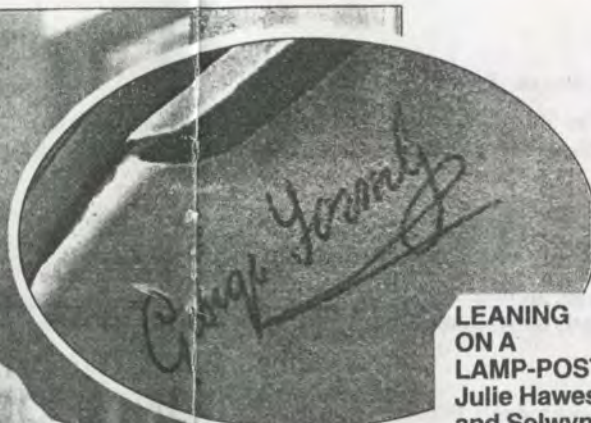
The other verse is

*"Now every night when the sun goes down and the stars they begin to peep.  
You'll find there's a kind of a mystery—round the old green door will creep.  
There's Mr Wu and his Chinese girl—with a pipe and a bottle of wine.*

*Whilst the laundry's getting soaking wet, hanging out on the back yard line. Hope this  
OK for you. If you've any more queries send em in.*



GF is sorry for the confusion



**LEANING ON A LAMP-POST:** Julie Hawes and Selwyn Mares from Lot 3 auction house, show off their latest acquisition – a ukelele signed by Fylde favourite George Formby (see inset above)

**HE'S** leaning on a lamp-post at the corner of the street!

An Ansdell auctioneer has been busy recreating George Formby's legendary lyrics after taking in one of the performer's most prized possessions.

This 1940s ukelele is the only one in the world to be signed by George and his two pals Alan Randall and Billy 'Uke' Scott.

#### Hammer

Although the instrument was not signed by all three at the same time, it is thought that this really is one of a kind.

Brought into Lot 3 on Kingsway by the nephew of the founder of the George Formby Society, John Renshaw, the item will go under the hammer on August 11.

And the staff at the auction

**George's Signature**—The signature on the range of five Dallas uke banjos has caused a lot of confusion. In the past hundreds of people have phoned asking for the value of a uke they own—signed by George.

I tell them that the signature is sited at around 10 minutes to the hour, and they are amazed. "How do you know?" They ask. "Well I know because it is a rubber stamp job applied to the Dallas range of ukes."

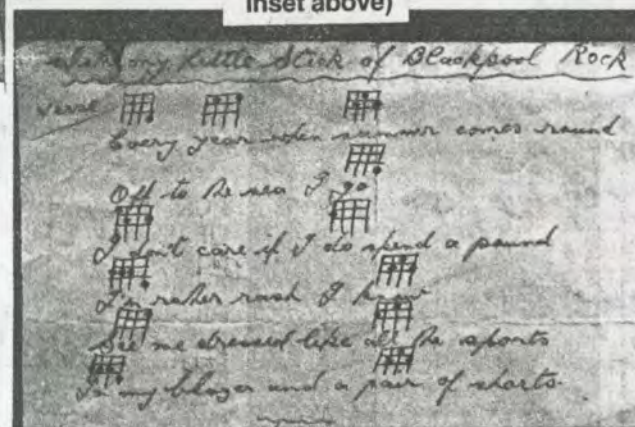
## Who's Kidding Who?

Blackpool Today Newspapers followed this article up with a report that the uke had brought a figure of over £5,000 and was bought by an anonymous buyer. Well he's anonymous OK because I'm sure the buyer doesn't exist!

The uke signature is a rubber stamp job applied to all Dallas skins, which someone has done a grand job of doctoring up. It's too clear for a signature written at least 44 years ago.

Alan Randall never met George and I'm pretty sure that Billy Uke Scott didn't either (we must ask him) and the uke at North Pier is worth nothing like £30,000.

The uke looks like those made by "Melody Ukes" but I've no idea what "JG" means, which is stamped in the peg head. At a guess I would say that a Formby member has offered the uke for sale: So who is he? Does anyone know who the nephew of the GFS founder member is?



#### SEASIDE TUNE: Hand-written lyrics to My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock

rooms are hoping it will attract even more attention once they open the case.

Hand-written lyrics of My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock, plus song sheets from the man himself, add to what is already a collector's item. Born George

Hoy Booth in 1904 in Wigan, 'George Formby' was one of 13 children. He took part in many films and lived in many homes across the Fylde coast.

A gold plated ukelele which is on show at the George Formby Exhibition on North Pier is

worth around £30,000, but this is expected to go for a little less.

Julie Hawes, office manager at Lot 3, said: "We reckon it will fetch anything between £5,000 and £10,000."

"Although it is just a standard ukelele, it is the only one in the world that is signed by George and two of his famous impersonators."

#### Interest

"We are hoping it will generate a lot of interest as George was such a favourite on the Fylde coast. It's certainly a collectors item to any fan of the man."

Soundalike Alan Randall is still performing his shows throughout the North West and there are expected to be many George Formby fans eager to get their hands on a piece of history.

The ukelele and songbooks will appear on the auction room's website [www.lot3.co.uk](http://www.lot3.co.uk) later this week before going under the hammer.

**Smile All The Time/While**—Was one Of George's most popular songs written by Harry Coady, who billed himself as Versatile Comedian of Stage, Film, Radio and Circus, and lived at 1 Empire Rd, Greenford, Middlesex.

BERYL wrote to Harry, "George is thinking of recording "Smile All The While" at his next session, that is if it's OK with you, as he cannot record without the OK.

You will notice that we've added another verse to it for you, so now we would like the agreement made out to the effect that you agree to 50% of all monies received from the song "Smile All The WHILE."

We are still trying to get the song published and somehow I don't think we shall have much difficulty when they know George is going to record it.

HARRY REPLIED— . . . . Please find enclosed agreement signed and I do hope you will send me the verse that you have done. By the way the song is called "Smile All The TIME—not WHILE" but if you think WHILE is better, OK. Please let me know when records will be done and I will buy a dozen for my friends, whether they want them or not. Harry & Doris Coady.

THE AGREEMENT READ—In consideration of the sum of One Shilling I, the undersigned, agree to give George Formby fifty per cent of my song "Smile All The WHILE. All monies to be equally divided.

So George had got his own way with the title (WHILE) until he received his contract from Lawrence Wright and Co Ltd: - Dated 9th April 1942. My Dear Mrs Formby, Herewith the contract for "Smile All The TIME," along with cheque for £10 which I have made out to George, and I shall leave to you to send Harry Coady his share. I am just waiting for the words of the song and the photograph of George and I will get it out at once. Signed, Lawrence.

So George lost the argument with the name of the song but he got a good bargain in buying half the rights to the song for One Shilling.



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7 . . . would come back. One of the highlights of the day was Albert Alchemy: magician, juggler, fire eater, escapatologist, and just about everything else. He invited a man from the audience to tie him up with a heavy rope and asked the crowd to count to 60 seconds. At the end it was 10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1—and he was still struggling to release himself. However, he was a great children's entertainer who had the grown ups laughing, especially when he breathed great balls of fire 20 foot up in the air and told the kids 'don't try it at home.' I'll bet the fire brigade was out that night.

When he tossed a Diablo high up the air I noticed that the kids were ready to scatter for fear of having it land their head. Wise!

**Email from Eric in France**—Hello Stan, I've just spent a few days with Arnold, who is one of your ukulele players. He sang a pleasant little song that you wrote called, *I Want To Play The Ukulele*. Can you email me the words please. *No problem Eric but the title is "I Wish I Could Play The Ukulele" and the writers were: Phil Linder, and myself with chord help from Anthony Mason, and it goes like this:*

D A7 D G D  
I wish I could play the ukulele, just like George Formby used to do  
A7 D Bm E7 A7  
I 'd go strummin along, singin his song, like Window Cleaner, Chinese Laundry too  
D F"7 Bm A7  
I've tried so hard to do the "double shuffle," but me fingers never seem to want me to  
D F"7 Bm  
And when I start to strum I seem to have five thumbs  
E7 A7 D  
It's not the way George Formby used to do

D A7 D G D  
In an old junk shop I found this ukulele, the bloke sold it to me for fifteen quid  
F"7 Bm E7 A7  
I also book called, "Teach Yourself To Play." It was the hardest thing I ever did  
D A7 D G F"7  
Now night and day I play this ukulele, my wife says it is driving her insane  
D F"7 Bm  
She said that she will leave me if she hears it once more  
E7 A7 D  
Why can't they bring George Formby back again.

**CHORUS**—I wish I could play . . .

D A7 D G D  
Now the neighbours have presented a petition, and said that soon my maker I shall meet  
F"7 Bm  
They've broken half me windows and boarded up me doors,  
E7 A7  
and the bulldogs chase me up and down the street  
D A7 D G F"7  
But still I'm going to play this ukulele, and only hope one day they'll understand  
D F"7 Bm E7 A7 D  
They'll see me on the tele "Opportunity Knocks" with me little ukulele in my hand

**CHORUS**—I wish I could play . . .



D G A7 Bm F"7 E7

**PLEASE NOTE:** - The uke is usually tuned G . C . E . A.—(C tuning) using the same chord windows.

## Sale Report by Hilda and Vera

Cyril opened the meeting with his usual news bulletin. We were all very sorry to hear that Sheila had had a spell in hospital, after a fall, and was unable to attend because she was not feeling too well. Our best wishes go to her for a speedy recovery. Eve Stewart is now out of hospital but is still rather poorly and our thoughts are with her and Charles. It was great to have Connie Edge with us again, looking much better. The week-end at Warners, Thoresby Hall, Nottingham, was a great success despite Walter Kirkland having had a rather embarrassing encounter in the changing rooms after a swim (couldn't possibly be put into print!)



Vera

Hilda

The entertainment commenced with a 10-strong thrash, and Brian White did a splendid job as M.C. for the first half. Brave Eddie Bancroft was the first performer with *Mr. Wu* and *Blackpool Rock* followed by Cyril with *When She's Cleaning Mirrors* – his own version of the story of Walter's predicament – brilliant! Then Walter gave us *Frank on His Tank* and a 'Blueberry Hill' bones medley with Alan Newton, Alan Chenery and Roy Brannan. Brian Edge, in great form, gave us *Thirty Thirsty Sailors* and *Guarding the Home of the Home Guard*; Greg Simister, *T.T. Races* and *Home Guard Blues*; Alan Newton *Hitting the High Spots Now* and a Neil Diamond number, *Song Sung Blue*; Alice Cronshaw, *Too Young* and *Making Memories*.

The raffle was drawn by Dick Eaves and Jean Brannan during the interval and we enjoyed a cup of tea/coffee and cakes.

Les Pearson was our host for the second half, and after another thrash, introduced the next artistes. Roy Brannan was the first with *Leaning on a Lampost* and then the very talented Alison Nadin performed another wonderful and unusual magic show with Dinkie and the Giant, and Jack and Jill and then showed us how to turn plain paper into bank-notes. She then sang and played one of Frankie Wood's songs – *Paint the World Full of Rainbows*. Next was Margaret Moran *With a Song in my Heart* and *We'll Gather Lilacs*; Cliff Royle, suitably dressed, sang *Bless 'em All* and a George Formby Snr. song *John Willie's Rag-time Jazz Band*; Brian White took us back to the fifties with *Blackpool Belle* (including an alternative verse) and *The Rawtenstall Annual Fair*; Alan Southworth was *Sunbathing in the Park* and then went *Swimmin' With the Wimmmin'*; Ben Hallowell (straight from the North Pier, Blackpool) *Lancashire Toreador* and *Leaning on a Lampost*; Bryn Evans *Just One More Chance* and *I'll See You in My Dreams*; Phil Jones *My Canary's Got Circles Under Its Eyes* and *Bathing in the Sunshine* (two Al Bowlly songs); Alan Chenery *Little Back Room Upstairs* and *Side by Side* medley; Frank Bennett read one of his own poems about ukes and long-suffering wives and then sang *Bill Bailey* with Walter Kirkland on the bones followed by *Lonesome Me*. The last performer was Alan Southworth with one of Denis O'Connell's compositions, *The Old Time Movie Show* – a bit of a tongue twister, which was well received. This was yet another evening of excellent entertainment with a good variety of songs. (Hilda and Vera).

Thanks Ladies, you've done a fine job—Hee, you do remind me of *The Dolly Sisters*.

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PLEASE SEND AN ARTICLE FOR THE GEORGE FORMBY NEWSLETTER

## Ken Dodd, Andy and John Shreeve



John Shreeve

by Bob Muirhead—Hi Stan, Enjoyed Liverpool the other night everyone seemed on top form. A group of us went to see Ken Dodd on Sunday night and before the show started had a chat with Andy and John Shreeve. Andy opened the second half and was brilliant, as usual, he seems to get more professional each time we see him and his stage presence has improved tremendously.

However imagine our surprise when Doddy started his second half spot by bringing on John Shreeve as his foil and for about five minutes John kept a straight face as Doddy had a go at him with various gags, it was hilarious and ended with John exiting the stage clad in Doddy's Moggy Skin Coat and Irish hat.



Andy Eastwood

My problem was the show didn't end until 1am, getting to bed at 2.0 and we were due on the Dublin Seacat at 7.15, I tell you it was a bleary eyed pair who arrived in Ireland, we drove down to Ennis on the west coast to spend a couple of days with some American friends, I was chasing a Shure SM58 microphone on Ebay Auctions and had to bid before leaving and missed it by £6 as it went for £66. Best Wishes, Bob Muirhead. *Thanks Bob, very interesting. At last we've found a slot for John. Ideal for a Hilda Baker routine. "Have you been?"*

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### Jon Baddeley Emails

Hello Stan, On August 14th 1951, the Theatre Royal in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent re-opened after the original building was destroyed in 1949. Goodwill messages were read out from the stage including one from our George. Alan Southworth has kindly given to me the Souvenir Brochure that was produced for the occasion. The re-opening of the theatre was the subject of an article produced by the Staffordshire Evening Sentinel on Saturday August 14th 2004.

Also in this article a spotlight operator at the theatre is quoted as follows: "We did the lighting for a host of old variety stars. George Formby was one of our favourites. If we did well for him, he tipped us a ten shilling note which was a very good tip in those days." *Thanks Jon.*

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### You Can't Beat A Good Scouse Audience!!!

- Ged (our new Past It) and I entertained a Scouse ladies group—about 30 of them—at Brookside House, opposite Ken Dodd's house—and they were a great crowd. Very pleasant, warm, full of fun, enjoyed Ged's jokes, joined in the singalongs with hearty voices, fast workers who got on with the job—in fact they were too fast! I went to the toilet just as they were starting to call out the raffle numbers. Low and behold they called out my number. "Won't be a minute" - "Has anyone got 423?" - "Won't be a minute, hold on." - "Has anyone got 423?" "Won't be a minute." "Too late, pick the next number." - "Let's get the show rolling."

## George's Volkswagen For Sale - Ebay Auctions

are offering: 1/43 metal diecast model of the classic split screen Volkswagen van featuring an advert for the ukulele player, singer and actor George Formby. George Formby [1904 - 1961] born in Wigan and coming from the northern music hall tradition gained a national audience through radio broadcasting to become the most popular male entertainer with British audiences in the late 1930's. He and his ukulele is remembered for his film appearances but mostly for his hit song of the period 'I'm leaning on a lampost'. Designed in Britain by Oxford Diecasts only a limited number of these attractive models have been produced and each comes with a numbered card. Our model is mint and boxed. Bidder agrees to pay price plus cost of shipping within 10 days of close of auction. Most methods of payment ok including UK cheques and PO's, cash in Dollars or Euros and PayPal. Please have a look at our Feedback to be assured of a good deal and see our other auctions for many other interesting VW items. Shipping cost is reduced for winners of more than one auction... Happy Bidding!

## Ged Jennet—It's no wonder Ged is smiling: After passing his exams at



the Warrington Blind Centre he has been promoted to the "Past Its" group—unpaid of course. He now joins Well Past, Truly Past It, and Definitely Past It, and carries the title: "Almost Past It."

On being honoured, Ged, choked with emotion said: "It is wonderful to think that I am Almost Past It. What an honour! The wife's been telling me that for years but I didn't believe her."

During Jim Bramwell's (Definitely Past It) absence, Ged has stood in at our monthly meetings at the Blind Centre and his performances have gone down first class. When asked if they thought he'd passed his exam, the crowd all

roared with approval: "Yes, he's certainly Almost Past It, the title couldn't fit a better chap." Poor Ged had difficulty holding back the tears.

## Mark Walsh has had his CD played on Australia Radio. Beryl Eissens

Emails: I played it on air and four people rang in, one saying "You have given the wrong name of the singer, the singer was actually George Formby" (how about that?) and most comments have been "gee I thought it was George Formby!!!"

I loaned the CD to an announcer at York Radio Station and also another local community station so it will get played there too.. Don't know what else I can do but I will be playing him every week till all songs have been aired.. Most of the staff at my station are aussie's and think I am strange because I play George (even my family laugh) but I appreciate George and the Society. I do my best to keep the Flag Flying.. Cheers, love to Eva and all, Beryl. Many thanks Beryl. Mark is very Formby talented and he'll make a star someday.

**Fax from Alfred Brown** - Hello Stan, I would like give my thanks for your effort in promoting George Formby in and around the Wigan area. I called in on your Formby Concert at Wigan Pier, but unfortunately had to leave after a couple of hours due to work commitments, otherwise I would have been pleased to stay for the full program. I just cannot believe that anyone in Russia has an interest in a Wigan lad and his Lancashire songs.

Born and bred a true Wiganer (like George) I have always loved his songs and films, and in my opinion George was a very good comedy actor. A few months back I read your newspaper article and agree with you entirely: Wigan should have great pride in keeping George's name alive, and I also agree with you that the Wigan Rugby Club should play his bouncy songs to get the players into action instead of songs like "Abide With Me" which is a funeral hymn. Keep up the good work.

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**Tommy Cooper Top Comic**—In a recent Comedy Poll, Tommy Cooper was voted the top comic with Peter Kay coming second. Ken Dodd, Les Dawson and Eric Morecambe were in the first eight and it was agreed by all that the N. West is a popular area for comedians. It is said Tommy was funny before he told a joke and even funnier after he told it.

He said, "I'm on a whisky diet and I've lost three days already."

And here's more of Tommy's favourites: A policeman tapped on my car window and said: "Would you blow in this bag Sir." I said, "What for Officer?" He said, "My chips are too hot."



Tommy Cooper

I said to my doctor, "I keep dreaming at night that beautiful girls are rushing towards me and I keep pushing them away." "What do you want me to do?" said the doctor. I said, "Break my arms."

I was in the attic the other day with the wife. Filthy, dirty and covered in cobwebs. . . but she's very good with the kids

I said to the doctor, "What can you do for this strawberry growing on my head?" He said, "I'll give you some cream for it."

I went to the pub last night and ate a ploughman's lunch. He was livid.

This little lady was frightened on the plane. She looked at me and said, "Can't you do something religious? I did, I took the hat round for a collection.

I inherited a painting and a violin, which turned out to be a Rembrandt and a Stradivarius. Unfortunately, Rembrandt made lousy violins and Stradivarius was a terrible painter.

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**WIGAN CLOG HACKERS**—On Day Two at Wigan Pier we had the Wigan Cloggers, but did you know that many years ago Wigan had a team called "The Wigan Clog Hackers?" Two men, in clogs, would stand face to face, hold each others jackets, and kick the living daylight out of each other. It was quite a popular sport!

**Olwen Gale**—I received a newspaper snippet from Olwen with a photo of Eva Rush who was celebrating her 100th Birthday. Eva is a former Tiller girl who performed with Vera Lynn and GEORGE FORMBY. Unfortunately the newspaper cutting was far too faint to reproduce but Olwen said that she looked extremely well for 100 of age. *Thanks Olwen.*

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## Cliff reports from Sherwood Forest

Hi Stan, Thirteen Formby Fans recently descended into Sherwood Forest for a Warners' Holiday in their historic House of Thoresby Hall. They came from Crewe, Sale, Penyffordd and Redditch. The weather was not particularly good, but all those present enjoyed their four night break.

Walter where's  
your trousers? -  
Read page 19.

Of particular note was the performance of our players who were permitted to take part in one of Warners' official evening concerts.

Our performance was limited to twenty five minutes but when we finished we received a tremendous ovation from an audience of perhaps five hundred.. Those taking part were Walter Kirkland, Alan Evans, Cyril Palmer, Jim Knight and myself. This is the fourth occasion Formby Members have been permitted to perform at Warners' Venues. They know we do a good job and are always well presented. *Thanks Cliff.*

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## Isn't It Annoying? By MICHAEL ROSEN

Sent in by my Granddaughter, Jennifer.

If your hands get wet in the washing up water,  
If they get covered in flour,  
If you get grease or oil all over your fingers,  
If they land up in the mud, wet grit, paint or glue . .

Have you noticed it's just then that you get a terrible itch just inside your nose  
And you can try to twitch your nose, twist your nose  
scratch it with your arm, scrape your nose on your  
shoulder, or press it up against a wall, but it's no good.  
You just can't get rid of the itch, it drives you so mad  
You just have to let a finger get at it, and before you  
know it you've done it.

You've wiped a load of glue, or oil, or cold wet  
pastry all over the end of your nose.

*Thanks Jennifer. And have you ever noticed anyone  
stamping their feet at the back kitchen sink? This is  
because whenever they plunge their hands in washing up  
water, they get an uncontrollable urge to go to the toilet.*

**THANKS To:** Jon  
& Pam Baddeley and  
Paul Kenny for their  
contribution to Day Two  
at the Wigan Pier event.

Again it was a hot sunny  
day which brought out a  
nice crowd, but, unlike  
Day One, we had diffi-  
culty in getting them to  
let their hair down a  
touch and to join in with  
the sing-alongs. They  
were a more reserved  
bunch.

However, their applause  
was appreciated at the  
end, - perhaps they were  
glad we'd finished.

A new act on Day Two  
was the Wigan Cloggers  
who brought along their  
own rolled up clog  
dancing floor. They  
were Great!

**Max Bygraves Song Wanted**—Barry Cordingley is looking for the words to an old Max Bygraves song: "Cowpunchers Cantata" which was Max's first song. PHONE 0161 483 2340.

*Sorry Barrie but I've never heard of the song, but maybe one of the readers has a copy.*

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**Uke Tip—John Mason Rang** with an article from a Book Of Knowledge: Whenever you change the strings on your ukulele it is a good idea to lubricate the slots in the nut with an HB lead pencil. This increases the stability of your tuning and helps to prevent the strings from sticking.

*Thanks John. I suppose that the slots in the bridge could be treated the same way. Must give it a whirl.*

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## More from Cliff at Thoresby Hall

When Walter Kirkland came out of the Pool at Thoresby Hall he took his trunks off to spin them in the spinner in the Gent's Changing Room leaving himself "in the nuddy". In the room was what he thought to be a chap with long hair cleaning a mirror. To his amazement when the person turned round he found "he" was a "she". The lady walked out of the room and said "I have finished now". This left Walter with a red face, and a depleted ego. All the female staff at the Hall subsequently gave Walter a big smile when they met him.

Cyril Palmer has written a rather funny song about the event based on George's "Cleaning Windows".

*Thanks Cliff. I've noticed that whenever there's any "Carry On" scenes on these holiday trips, Walter is always playing the main character.*

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## An Ode To The British Weather from Brian Edge.

What lousy weather we have been having. Thunder, lightning, rain, more rain, floods, landslides and general misery prevailed. A Flanders and Swann lyric aptly described our weather something like this:

"January brings the snow, makes your feet and fingers glow.

February's ice and sleet, freeze the toes right off your feet.

Welcome March with wintry wind, would though wert not so unkind!

April brings the sweet spring showers, on and on for hours  
and hours.

Farmers fear unkindly May, frost by night and hail by day.

June just rains and never stops, thirty days and spoils the crops.

In July the sun is hot. Is it shining? No it's not!

August, cold and dank and wet, brings more rain than any yet.

Bleak September's mist and mud is enough to chill the blood.

Then October adds a gale, wind and slush and rain and hail.

Dark November brings the fog, should not do it to a dog.

Freezing wet December, then, bloody January again!"



Carry On Walter

**JUST** had a phone call from L.T.V. they are filming "Everything Must Go" in Liverpool auction room and it includes a Uke Banjo. More next month.

## George Formby Meetings

**North Wales Branch** - British Legion, Penyffordd (10 miles from Chester) Every 1st Friday in the month. Tel Jim Knight 01978 358472 Adm 50p.

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**Liverpool** - Broadgreen Conservative Club, Every 2nd Friday in the month - Ring Tom Bailey on 0151 289 1711 - Bring Your Uke

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**Sale** —Timperley Liberal Club, 43 Park Road, Timperley. Every 3rd Friday in the month - Ring Cyril Palmer 0161 748 6550 Adm £1. Inc. Tea & Biscuits.

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**Crewe Branch** - Wistaston Memorial Hall - Every 4th Friday in the month - Brian Edge on 01270 569836.

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**Westhoughton** - The Red Lion Pub (Opp. Police Station) Ring Gerry Mawdsley on 01942 817346 - Every last Wednesday in the month. Uke Tuition.

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**Blackpool. SOUTH SHORE CRICKET GROUND, Common Edge Rd, Blackpool.** Every last Monday in the month -Tel Eve & Charles Stewart on 01253 768097. Wonderful Buffet—Always in need of players.

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## Wintergardens George Formby Society Meetings:

11th and 12th September following Liverpool

13th and 14th November following Liverpool

Concerts usually start around 1.30pm each day.

Please Ring the Secretary, Sylvia Roe on 01142 846245 for details on the GFS or Wintergarden meetings.

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**Web Site** —Two Lancashire Lads:

[www.stanevans.co.uk/formby](http://www.stanevans.co.uk/formby)

**E Mail:** [stan@stanevans.co.uk](mailto:stan@stanevans.co.uk)

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The George Formby Newsletters finish June 2005. To receive by post please send a cheque for £2.25 for 3 months, or £6. 75 to receive issues up to June. Cheques payable to S. Evans - Address Front Cover.



**WHY** do they build high walls around a cemetery? Nobody will want to break in, - and I'm sure nobody will be breaking out!

**NEVER** try to keep up with the Jones's, - Drag em down to your level.

**ALWAYS** treat each day as your last, - and someday you'll be right!