

THE

GEORGE FORMBY

Vol. 10

No. 7

Jan 2004

Newsletter 15

A Merry
Christmas
And a
Happy
New Year



Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
by Stan Evans, The Hollies, 19 Hall Nook, Penketh, Warrington,
Cheshire WA5 2HN

Tel or Fax 01925 727102

Welcome to Newsletter No. 115

And more sad losses to the Ukulele World. First we report the death of Billy "Uke" Scott, singer, composer and ukulele player who was born on March 12, 1923. He died on Nov. 12, 2004, aged 81

Billy was one of the biggest variety stars in Britain during the 1930s and 1940s. A popular radio performer, he always finished his spot by saying: " And finally, to prove that melody can be played on the ukulele ..." and then go into an intricate solo played on a wooden ukulele.

He wrote more than 100 songs, including his signature tune, He's Only Singing For One. He also wrote songs for stars such as Harry Seltzer and Max Miller.

He was born William Scott in Sunderland and made his variety debut at the Empire, Newcastle, in 1936. His buoyant personality and brilliant musicianship soon made him a headliner on the powerful Stoll Moss Empire circuit and he toured throughout the UK appearing on bills with Gracie Fields, Will Hay, Tommy Trinder and others.

He made several wartime British films including Rainbow Round the Corner (1943) and A Night of Magic (1944) as well as numerous recordings. When variety declined he became a theatrical agent and was the subject of a TV programme, The Impresarios, presented by Melvyn Bragg. In the 1970s he made something of a comeback as a performer and found himself in demand as a guest star in summer shows and on music hall bills. The funeral was on Wednesday 24th November at the Crematorium, Holy Family RC Church, Southport.

Please spare a prayer for Margaret Royle who has been involved in an accident with a car. The car backed into her as she was leaving her home and she was immediately taken to the Warrington Borough General Hospital. It was found that her leg was broken, plus bruises.

OH DEAR THIS IS A SERIOUS MONTH—Cyril Palmer rang to say that he has just visited George Cheetham who is in a nursing home. He said that George has aged so much that you would hardly recognise him. Way back in 1961 George was one of the founder members of the George Formby Society. Our thoughts go to Margaret and George.

LAST REPORT IS THAT MARGARET IS NOW IMPROVING AND SMILING



Bill Turner—Just received a phone call from Brian that dear Bill Turner has died. He passed on in hospital, Tuesday 23rd November. Bill, who was the founder member of the Werrington, Stoke Meeting, had been ill for some months.



BRIAN Emails—Bill founded the Werrington Branch of the George Formby Society, known locally as the Staffordshire Knot Ukulele Society. Some years later the branch had to close due to the fact that none of the members were able to maul the heavy sound equipment. Bill and his wife Ivy worked very hard for this branch and members had many happy hours at Werrington. He entertained us on the steel guitar. Which he made himself. He played and sung well usually using his own backings.

He had had a heart bypass operation and hip replacements but nothing seemed to be able to stop his determination to keep pressing on. He was very helpful to anyone who wanted to learn the uke and one of his last students was Crewe's left handed player Dave Clews. Bill helped Dave by providing him with an instrument which Bill had specially adapted for a left handed player. He provided him with the special music and generally pointed him in the right direction.

**Bob Hodson Editor for The Ukulele Soc. of Gt Britain
Remembers Billy Uke Scott.**

It is a sad day when we hear of the passing of another great British uke player, and alas, our dear President Billy (Uke) Scott has died, and we of the Ukulele Society of Gt Britain pass our sincere condolences to his wife and family.

There isn't a uke player today who hasn't heard the name, "Billy Uke Scott." Not just older members like myself, who performed at the Brize Norton Air Base with Billy back in the fifties, but we make sure that the up and coming youngsters get to know him and his great contribution in promoting the ukulele throughout his lifetime.

Billy has been President of our society for the past twelve years or more and we will never forget his final appearance at Digswell Village Hall on the wonderful Spring afternoon in April. He became Nationwide famous for his Saturday night performances in Variety Music Hall in the forties and fifties and was a household name. His contemporary at the time was Fessie O'Shay. I also had the privilege of playing with her at the opening of a fete in Eynsham, Oxford.

Good Bye Billy, "Gone But Not Forgotten."

What a great pity that—unlike George—Billy Uke Scott never produced any tapes or records for his fans to remember him by.

It Was The Birthday Boy's Night by Brian Edge

A great night's entertainment was had by all at the Crewe November concert. Artists and audience alike responded to the party atmosphere. Every artiste answered the call with an excellent performance. Close on a record; one hundred and twenty enjoyed an excellent show with lots of variety. Alan Newton was the Master of Ceremonies ably supported by his Concert Producer Arthur Newton.



I have to thank everyone for their cards and best wishes, as it was my birthday on the day! It seemed very strange that so many knew of the event which became obvious to me when I started receiving cards from so many of my friends. I queried it and someone said it was written on the back of my waistcoat. I nipped into the side-room to check just in case and it was then that I discovered a table with cakes laid out. It was only then that I realised there had been a great deal of subterfuge going on but I have to say that it was the world's best-kept secret. I have to thank Connie for buying the cakes and for all her efforts to ensure that I had a nice party. Thanks again everybody!

There were 24 artistes on the night and Arthur did a good job fitting them all in. It was also good to have five lady artistes in the show, Eunice Evans, Alice Cronshaw, Pamela Baddeley, Vera Jones and Margaret Moran all very special.

The night however, had its sad moments, with the news of the passing of Bill Turner one of our colourful and faithful supporters. I remember Bill appearing on our stage dressed in a colourful Teddy Boy outfit and jiving with his Bobby Soxer wife Ivy. Bill often played his electric guitar (which he made himself) as well as the ukulele. In his working life Bill worked as a Cooper, an AA man and a Senior Hospital Porter. He was one of the lads who landed in France on D.Day. On the 60th anniversary of the landings, fifty of us made a trip to Normandy to celebrate the event. At the time Bill was just recovering from a heart bypass operation that he had had four weeks earlier but he was determined to go. As he stood on the beach near to where he landed he made Connie and I laugh when he said to himself "I moved up this beach a jolly sight faster than this 60 years ago!" Bill was 80. We send our condolences to his Wife Ivy and family.

Artistes taking part in the show were as follows: ALAN NEWTON - *"It's in the Air."* JIM KNIGHT- *"The Unicorn"* and *Bones Thrash.* ALICE CRONSHAW - *"Memories"* & *"A Little on the Lonely Side"* JONATHAN BADDELEY - *"Smile all the Time"* & *"The Lancashire Hot Pot Swingers."* CYRIL PALMER - *"Cecilia"* & *"Delilah."* ALAN EVANS - *"Somebody's Wedding Day,"* & *"Yours,"* DON CHALKELY - *"I went all Hot and Cold"* & *"Pleasure Cruise."* WALTER KIRKLAND - *"You Can't keep a Growing Lad Down"* & *Bones Bash.* BRIAN EDGE- *"Why Can't A Turkey have a Merry Christmas"* & *"All Going Back."* PAMELA BADDELEY - *"The Streets of London"* & *"Any Dream Will Do."* MARGARET MORAN - *"Oh Danny Boy"* & *"New York."* PETER GRATTON - (comedian) *"The*

Laughing Policeman." ALAN CHENERY "Hold Your Hats On" & "Princess Lulu from a Honolulu Isle." COLIN WOOD & ALAN CHENERY - "Windows." PHIL JONES - "Everything Stops for Tea" & "Riding in the T.T. Races." VERA JONES "You Need Hands." THE JAZZ BAND - "Dr Jazz." GERALD BEADLE - "Where have all the Flowers Gone?" BRYN EVANS - "The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" & "Did you ever see a Dream Walking." JED COLLINS - "Ghost Riders in the Sky," "Wild Colonial Boy" & "Singalong Medley." FRANK HUMFRIES & JIM KNIGHT - "When You're Sixty Four." DAVE CLEWS & BERNARD ASHMORE "Putting on the Style." ARTHUR NEWTON & ASHLEY CALDICOTT AND WALTER KIRKLAND (bones) - "The Old Folks at Home" & "Alexander's Ragtime Band." MARGARET MORAN & ALAN NEWTON - "If You're Irish Come into the Parlour." THRASH - "Leaning on a Lamp-Post."

Thank You Brian—sorry the Past its couldn't make the meeting, we were in a charity night at the Preston War Museum. However it sounds as if you had a great night.

The "Past Its" Close to Prison—

The Past Its were invited by Peter & Barbara Brown to entertain in their Charity Concert at the Preston Museum, - which is next door to the prison. When Stan Past It No.2 was insisted that we open the show with a very loud "Please Release Me," I didn't think it such a good idea. Well it might have started a break out and a stampede!

When Ken Dodd opened the "Grin Up North" exhibition a few months back, he got lost on the way and the first thing he said was "Why didn't you tell us that it was next to the prison, we know where that is!

Well the night went along very well and we raised £100 towards their fund. But the highlight of the night was Peter and Co. impersonating the Jimmy James trio and the "Two man-eating lions in the box" routine: One of radios greatest sketches. Peter, with his non-stop patter, is a natural for the Jimmy James role.



The original barmy Casey, Jimmy and dim Ely

Casey (left): - "Have you been putting it round that I'm barmy?"
 Jimmy (centre):- "No! - don't you want anybody to know?"
 Casey : -"I've just been to South Africa and they gave me two man-eating lions."
 Jimmy: Where are they? Casey: "In this box"
 Jimmy to Ely Woods: "He's got two man-eating lions in that box."
 Ely: "How much are they?"



Great stuff— It's a sketch that needs reviving. Today's kids have not seen that sketch. Mike Craig does a very good one-man tribute and tells the story that several relatives played Casey's part, also Roy Castle played him in later year years.

Young Cliff's N. Wales Report

It was a great Party Night with one hundred in attendance. The Hall was really well decorated with Christmas Buntings, fairy lights and a Christmas Tree. A real setting to celebrate Christmas.

There was the initial THRASH and as time was at a premium we initially restricted performers to one song then let some do a second performance later on.



Alan Chenery started the show and livened up the audience with Wigan Boat Express. The other artists in the first half were Pamela Baddeley (Do You Hear What I Hear?); Jim Knight in schoolboy outfit (I saw Mummy Kissing Santa Claus); Tom Meredith (Lancashire Toreador). Good to see Tom back in good form; Alan Newton (Rocking Around The Christmas Tree); Alice Cronshawe (I've Got A Boyfriend); Gerald Jones (Jingle Bells with a Formby Flavour); Brian Edge (Why Can't A Turkey Have A Merry Christmas? A Frankie Woods song); an Old Time Bones Medley performed by the "Bones Ensemble"; Russell Davies, one of our recent learners, (Blackpool Rock) didn't he do well; The Three Tenors, Phil, Frank and Deg, (T.T. Races). They felt they went a bit off heat but many would not have noticed. Young Daniel Smith, Phil's Grandson, (Mr. Wu's A Window Cleaner Now) concluded the first half.

And so to Buffet time, a good spread provided by Marian our Caterer. This together with the Raffle took up about an hour. Following this Alison Nadin displayed her talents with one of her brilliant Living Marionette performances; and suddenly the stage became alive with six Santa Clauses later followed by a two legged reindeer performing three Christmas Medleys. The group not the reindeer! They are now known as the Penyffordd Seven. During this time another Santa (Tony Elsdon) assisted by Pauline Spark was handing out diaries to the Adults and chocolates to the Children.

The second half comprised Jonathan Baddeley (Auntie Maggie's Remedy); our three young learners Daniel Smith, Ryan Hopwood and Simon Hughes (Lamp Post); Ester Ectomy who brought injured Lance Boyle over from America to join in with a Bones session of the song De Mayo. Lance being so badly injured had to do a Knee Trembling Act with steel plates strapped to his knees; Carol Brassey our Mandolin player (A lovely Christmas Song); the Three Tenors (Smile All The Time); Brian Edge another of Frankie's Songs (Smile Smile Smile); Alan Newton (Believe It Or Not); Tom Meredith (Our Sergeant Major); Alan Chenery (Little Back Room Upstairs); Jonathan Baddeley (I Go Cleaning Windows); and Jim Knight (When The Lads Of The Village Get Cracking).

The final THRASH was somewhat unusual for our three young learners were on the mikes and they were supported by about half a dozen non playing youngsters who had ukes.

The evening had its good and bad news. There were three Birthdays to celebrate Marian the Caterer; Jack Davies (recently 80) and Brian Edge. We were delighted to have some good support from Sale, Crewe, and Blackpool Branches and pleased to see Connie Edge looking somewhat better than she has been, although she admits she is struggling to keep going at times. Get better Connie. NEXT PAGE

In a separate part of the newsletter you will read about Margaret Royle's accident. We rang her this evening in Hospital and a hundred voices wished her "Merry Christmas Margaret". She did not sound too well, and a call to her this Saturday morning confirms this. She has stomach problems and is not eating as she should do. Keep going Maggie the Society needs you.

So to the end of an excellent Xmas celebration. Thanks should go to our Committee Members and all those who helped, but in particular to Myra Knight (supported by Jim) and Alison Nadin. A great job; as usual.

Many Thanks Cliff. You've done a grand job in getting this report out so quickly, and I'm sure you're a very busy lad dashing back and to the hospital. How on earth do you do it?

Hee It's Grand To See the Kids Enjoying George

Simon Hughes is 11 years old and started Helsby High School in September. His Granddad Ivan, who lives in Morecambe, first introduced Simon to George Formby when Simon heard his tape whilst out in the car. Simon really enjoyed the songs and music.



Photo Just arrived showing Simon. Ryan and Daniel, which will be included in the next issue.

Cliff's new pupil Simon Hughes

Having listened to his songs lots of times, Simon decided he would like to learn to play the Ukulele Banjo. Not knowing about the George Formby Society then, he searched everywhere for a Ukulele Banjo, without success. He finally managed to buy a Ukulele from the music stall on Widnes Market, where the very kind owner told us about Stan Evans in Warrington. Stan was happy to teach Simon, but when he realised we lived in Frodsham, suggested that we speak to Cliff Royle.

Cliff kindly saw Simon every week, and because of the wonderful way in which Cliff taught Simon, he was soon playing songs. Simon was delighted when Cliff gave him the music for George Formby songs. His brother Sam (9) and sister Alice (7) often sing along, as they also know all the words. In October this year, Granddad Ivan bought Simon a Ukulele Banjo which made him play at every opportunity. Consequently, he is now playing and singing extremely well, as Cliff says, "I can tell you have been practicing a lot, but don't neglect your schoolwork!"

The highlight of Simon's Ukulele playing career was when he played with Cliff at Penyffordd last month. He thoroughly enjoyed the evening and is looking forward to going again.

Well done Simon. You've got a good teacher in Cliff, but as he said: "Keep practising but DON'T neglect your school work." George Formby regretted neglecting his schoolwork..

Only in Britain... can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance.

Only in Britain... do supermarkets make sick people walk all the way to the back of the shop to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.

Only in Britain... do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a DIET coke.

Arthur Kenyon Phoned—Hello Stan, I first met you and a young man (can't remember his name) at the Formby Exhibition about 8 years ago. My wife and I called in about 6 times and enjoyed every minute. We sang along with the young man. What was his name? Did you make a video of the show?

Many thanks Arthur. It was actually 13 years ago that we held the exhibition and the young boy was Anthony Mason. He was 16 years old and he left school on the day that we opened the show—it was also his birthday: April 26th 1991. He gained a lot of experience from there and went on to turn professional. He now runs a jazz band. No, I'm sorry but we failed to make a video of the show.

Kicking Themselves—Actually we've had a number of people asking if we made a video of the Formby Exhibition. They were kicking themselves for not seeing it. So, over the next few months we will run a story on the show and then we will at least have it on record. Here goes.

The Warrington George Formby Exhibition By Stan Evans

It was September 1989 when Bernard Young handed me a note at the Sept AGM in the Imperial Hotel, Blackpool. The note was from Cherry Grey of the Warrington Museum asking for advice and memorabilia as they were considering holding a George Formby Exhibition.

Early the following morning I went along to the museum and met Cherry and Walter the Exhibition Designer, and the rest of the staff. They were a very friendly bunch and dead keen to get started on the show. Kay said: "We've always talked about putting a show on for George, because he lived in Warrington, but none of us know anything about him." To be quite honest, I only knew the basics of George's life, but I was willing to learn. And very few of the Formby members had any knowledge of George either.

FINANCE—It was assessed that the show we were planning would cost in the region of £20,000. 00, but unfortunately, the museum had no funds in the kitty, and we all insisted that it had to be a quality show. It was constantly repeated that George and Beryl were perfectionist with their cars, boats, houses etc. so we must be likewise with his exhibition. All agreed!

At our first meeting it was arranged that I would go into the museum for the next 18 months and help with the paperwork and also the preparation of the show. Our first mail shot was to all the GFS members who had any memorabilia to loan, and about 20 letters went out. The result was nil. Absolutely nil! There was very little confidence—if any—in the show and collectors were reluctant to part with their collection. One or two murmurs went round, "Oh we've tried it all before, doesn't work."

Not to be beaten we contacted the press, TV and radio media asking them to put

out an appeal to anyone who had memorabilia to loan us, plus any sponsors who might be interested. From this we received a call from BBC GM Radio at Manchester asking me to go into the studio. The following morning I turned up to be interviewed by Alan Beswick, a Warrington lad, and for about 20 minutes we talked about George & Beryl and our desire to stage a show - if we can raise any money and memorabilia. The show to be called "Turned Out Nice Again." Alan asked for the date and I replied with: "In about 18 months time," which was a rough guess off the top of my head. Alan then shouted over his mike: "Come on Warrington Council, we want a Formby exhibition."

It was then that the most amazing thing happened! As I walked into the main reception hall I was faced with TV monitors blasting out "George Formby Exhibition to be held at Warrington Museum April 1991," I began to sweat. We had

neither finance or items to show, and I'd let the whole country know that we intend holding a George Formby Exhibition. Cherry at the Museum will be fuming.



Denis Gale



Phil Forrest and Phil Jones

However, a few days later we received a phone call from Granada TV. They wanted to arrange

for Fred Talbert, the Weather Man, to visit us in Warrington and "Can we gather some players together?" "No problem" I replied. Phone calls went out and on the night we had a merry band of players in the Warrington town centre. We didn't have many in those days but they came from all over the N. West: Denis Gale, George Cheetham, Martin Harrison, Paul Tudor and Phil Jones from Manchester, Anthony Mason and Phil Forrest from Wigan, Ray Bernard from Alsager, Jack Sharp from Yorkshire, Jim Bramwell, Craig Tynsley, Mike Metcalfe and myself from Warrington. Fred the Weather Man, from Liverpool, was delighted.



Fred Talbert Weatherman

DISASTER STRUCK!!! We were lined up in the town centre with plenty of light coming from the large shops. Fred briefed us with: "I will give the weather forecast and then introduce you as Formby fans. We'll all shout "Turned Out Nice Again" and then you all sing "Leaning On A Lamp Post." "No problem!" Or so we thought.

Countdown: 10—9—8—7—and at that point there was a power cut and we were in total darkness. It was pitched black and at that stage we had no hope of recovery. But these camera lads are used to disasters! Within seconds they produced a large flash lamp from their kit, and we were rolling. What a relief!!! Actually the light failure added to the atmosphere making a bright and cheery spot. We then put out an appeal to all in the N. West to search their drawers etc. NEXT PAGE . . .

CONTINUED. . . for any George Formby memorabilia and please loan them to us. Our publicity had started to roll with phone calls coming in thick and fast. Several came in offering loans of Formby photos, records etc. and we were now feeling more confident in staging the show, - but we still had no funds. Alan Randall agreed to loan us photos and items that Pat Howson (George's lady friend) had given to him, and George Harrison, - through John Croft (then President of the GFS), gave us £5,000.00, plus the loan of his Formby uke. Lord Daresbury, an old friend of George Formby, and owner of Greenalls Brewery, sent in a cheque for £700.

The Museum office staff spent the next few months ringing round all the many Cheshire Council offices asking for any surplus cash they had which brought in around £6,000, 00.

George Formby's early life was in horse racing so it was essential that we include this in the exhibition. We made a radio appeal for anything connected with George's racing career and received a reply from Liverpool University offering to loan us a racehorse model. "Great" we said, thinking it would be small enough to fit in a showcase. They also offered to deliver it, "Great again" we said.



SHOCK!!!! But what a surprise we had when they rolled up in the street with this massive monster in their cattle van. It was life size and some of those horses are big. To make things worse it was a steeplechaser to be reared up on its hind legs. Our show room was two flights of stairs up plus 200 yards through the passages, so we had a lot of puffing and grunting to do before we got the thing up there. It took exactly 3 days of hard graft lugging the horse up the stairs and getting it reared up. Visitors to the Museum thought we'd gone mad when they saw us manhandling this horse up to the top floor. We sweated cobs, and the photo above shows how tall the thing was—all of 10 foot high and my goodness it was heavy! Not only heavy but clumsy and difficult to steer because it was moulded in a reared up position and only the two back legs rested on the ground. Along with the horse, the university also supplied us with the jockey to go with it.

During one of our broadcasts, we appealed for anyone who could make various models of George Formby. A few days later we received a reply from one of the local colleges offering to make them from paper mashie as a school project. Great—things were on the move!!! Our request was for: George cleaning windows, George leaning on a lamp post, George as Mr Wu, and George dressed up in a dinner suit and tie playing his uke. MORE NEXT MONTH.

Emails from Grandson's Bedroom—

1. Two blondes walk into a building...you'd think at least one of them would have seen it.
2. Phone answering machine message" If you want to buy marijuana, press the hash key"
3. I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day but I couldn't find any.
4. I bet the butchers 50 quid that he couldn't reach the meat off the top shelf. He said, "No, the steaks are too high."
5. My friend drowned in a bowl of muesli. A strong currant pulled him in.
6. I went to a seafood disco last week...and pulled a muscle.
7. Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly. They lit a fire in the craft, it sank, proving once and for all that you can't have your kayak and heat it.
8. Our ice cream man was found lying on the floor of his van covered with hundreds and thousands. He'd topped himself.
9. Man goes to the doctor, with a strawberry growing out of his head. Doc says "I'll give you some cream to put on it."
10. 'Doc I can't stop singing The Green, Green Grass of Home' "That sounds like Tom Jones syndrome. ' Is it common? ' "It's not unusual."
11. A man takes his Cross Eyed Rottweiler to the vet. The vet picks the dog up and examines his eyes, then checks his teeth. Finally, he says, "I'm going to have to put him down." "What? Because he's cross-eyed? ""No, because he's heavy"
12. Chap goes into the doctor's. "Doc, I've got a cricket ball stuck up my backside." "How's that?" "Don't you start."
13. Two elephants walk off a cliff...boom, boom!
14. What do you call a fish with no eyes? A fsh.
15. Apparently, 1 in 5 people in the world are Chinese. There are 5 people in my family, so it must be one of them. It's either my mum or my Dad, or my older Brother Colin, or my younger Brother Ho-Cha-Chu? But I think its Colin.
16. Police arrested two kids yesterday, one was drinking battery acid, and the other was eating fireworks. They charged one and let the other one off.

Syd Little, Feeling the Pinch

Poor old Syd. With his partner, Eddie Large, they have entertained millions in the past and 10 million viewers on TV was a regular audience. But at the moment Syd's audience is limited to a few fellow workers doing up a derelict warehouse.

The 61 year old has returned to his trade of painter and decorator after his latest stint in pantomime, as Baron Hardup in Cinderella.



One of his fellow workers at the warehouse in Kirkham, Lancs, said, "He's very chirpy and just gets on with the job." Syd's former partner, 62 year old Eddie Large, had a heart transplant last year. He has now made a full recovery and is now back on TV making guest appearances as Clare Short in Jon Culshaw's ITV series.

Little & Large between them earned more than £1 million in their heyday. Today however, Syd's annual earnings from entertainment are thought to add up to less than £15,000, supplemented by around £50 a day for decorating jobs.

Jimmy Bow Tie Steals the Show at Blackpool



Star of the night, Jimmy Bow Tie

By Alan Chenery—And what a bundle of fun Jimmy he is. Can't sing, can't play, possibly can't tell jokes either, but, oozing with charm and character, he gave the crowd the biggest laugh of the night.

When he stormed into the room we thought he'd arrived from an unknown planet. He walked in with a gallop and filled the room with atmosphere. Everybody said, "Who on earth is he? What a charming chap! His "Lamp Post" spot with Des Redfern was the highlight of the night. The crowd couldn't believe what they were watching as he banged his strings in sledge hammer fashion. His face shone with great enthusiasm, making him the star of the show. Great stuff Jimmy.



DES'S BACKINGS —LOST AGAIN—"Well it's here somewhere" said Des as he and Charles desperately searched through the disks to find the backing to his first song. "Try number 6—or 5—or 2—no luck and in the end he gave up. With head bowed he walked ashamedly back to his seat accompanied by a large moan from the crowd. Poor Des was devastated again. However he was back to his normal self later when suddenly he found his lost tracks. I had a nightmare the other night when I dreamt I was his manager.

The evening was grim and freezing cold to start with but, as they say "IT Turned Out Nice Again". About 44 turned up and the entertainers were Ben Halliwell, John Taylor, Alison Nadin, from Rhyl, John Mason, Cyril Palmer, The well and truly Pastits (Stan Evans & Stan Watkinson), Alan Middleton, Peter Brown (with his coffin case), Phil Jones from Swinton and Paul Kenny. We had a surprise visit from Keith Smith who has recently moved from south Wales to Blackpool to be nearer to the George Formby activity.



Freda'a a champ at uncovering buffties.

Thanks to Pat Chenery & Hazel Astin for manning the door, Charles Stewart for the sound and assistant Peter. The buffet was great as there was hardly anything left. It was nice to see Sheila Palmer who tries to come as much as possible to support us with Cyril. The next meeting is on the 27th Dec. so hope you will be able to be with us then. A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at Blackpool.

THANKS TO ALL WHO SUPPORT CHARLES—HE DOES A GRAND JOB.

Beryl's Uniform - As reported in previous Newsletters the whole



Elaine Taylor poses
in Beryl's ENSA
uniform

of the Warrington 1991 George Formby exhibition was destroyed— total cost around £20,000.00, never again to be seen and enjoyed by Formby fans, - a great disappointment!!! However I managed to salvage Beryl's ENSA uniform which was sent in by Fred & Jessie Bailey's niece, Beryl Kier, (named after Beryl Formby) then living in the USA.

At the time we were planning a permanent Formby Exhibition in Warrington and she requested that we include the uniform in the show. It has been stored in my office since.

Neil Forshaw is doing a grand job as the Archivist for the GFS so I decided to pass it over to him to add to his collection. During the North Africa campaign both Beryl and George lost a lot of weight so Neil and his tape measure had great difficulty (it must have been very tiring work) in finding any young lady small enough to measure up. Exhausted, he was almost at the point of giving up when he spotted Elaine, a neighbour, and quickly engaged her services. She was perfect, and with a slight look of Beryl.

Some months back we reported that Fred & Jessie Bailey went to the Old Bailey Court Rooms in London, and I often wondered why. Well Beryl Kier's letter from the USA explains that Beryl Formby willed all her jewellery to her but she never received it. It was later willed by George to Pat Howson. Fred & Jessie went to fight the case in the Old Bailey but the decision went against her. Pat Howson got the lot.

Beryl Kier writes that Beryl used to teach how to clean her rings with gin and wipe with a clean white handkerchief. When she was 14 Beryl gave her a Beryl Stone Ring. George had bought her a new one so it was no longer required. She has since given the ring to a friend. Beryl Kier was in a bad state of health when she wrote, so no doubt she has now passed on and this is the reason why she was parting with her treasured items.



Lost a lot of weight

She apologised for being unable to attend the exhibition due to ill health. The uniform was delivered from the USA by two friends and her request to contact the Warrington Guardian to cover the story was carried out. Our thanks to Beryl Kier.

Sale Report by Hilda and Vera—It

was a cold, frosty evening and the Timperley Liberal Club was warm and inviting. Over 40 members and friends enjoyed yet another evening of varied music and song. We were all very sad to hear of the passing of one of the George Formby Society's Honorary members and good friend, Billy 'Uke' Scott. Billy attended our meetings when he had the opportunity even when he was a working entertainer. He was always generous with his time and always gave a memorable performance on the ukulele. We were also sorry to hear the news that George Cheetham was now in a nursing home and that Margaret Royle had broken her leg in an accident. On a happier note, we were all delighted to have Elizabeth White with us again after her successful operation. A group of members recently gave a charity concert in Swinton in aid of the Joe Jaffe Children's Renal Unit at Pendlebury Children's Hospital which was a great success.



Vera

Hilda

Les Pearson was the first M.C. and, after the 10 strong thrash, EDDIE BANCROFT was first up on the stage with The Lancashire Toreador and Leaning on a Lampost. BRIAN WHITE, complete with cap and scarf (aka Rupert Bear!) followed with Matchstalk Men and Wunga Bunga Boo. The other artistes were JACK VALENTINE A Long Time Gone and The Fleet's In Port Again – a very refreshing 'new' song; JIM KNIGHT The Unicorn, another 'new' song and a bones medley with FRANK HUMPHREYS, WALTER KIRKLAND and ALAN CHENERY Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavour and MARGARET MORAN Pal of My Cradle Days and How Can You Buy Killarney.

The raffle was drawn by Dick Eaves and Marjorie Travis in their usual jovial manner followed by a second raffle of items kindly donated by Marjorie and Gerald's friend, Alice. We all enjoyed a cup of tea, biscuits and cake served by Anne Ratcliffe. Brian White took over as M.C. and introduced the following artistes: WALTER KIRKLAND Ain't She Sweet and Railroad Bum Medley (rattling his bones): DAVID RHODES The Bowler Hat Song (complete with bowler hat) and Mr. Wu's a Window Cleaner Now: BRIAN EDGE King of the Swingers and Talking to the Moon About You: ALAN NEWTON Hard Hearted Hannah and the lovely Barry Manilow song I Can't Smile Without You: ALAN CHENERY Hold Your Hats On and, on the wooden uke, I Love To Play My Ukulele: JONATHAN BADDELEY Smile All the Time and I Blew a Little Blast on My Whistle: FRANK HUMPHREYS and JIM KNIGHT (two convincing Beatles) When I'm Sixty Four and Let Me Call You Sweetheart medley: GED COLLINS Bianca and South of the Border, using alternative words as only he could sing it! PAM and JONATHAN Streets of London and Any Dream Will Do with great clarinet accompaniment: BRYN EVANS rounded of the show with Did You Ever See a Dream Walking and Somewhere Over the Rainbow. Unfortunately we ran out of time but we all enjoyed music, song and laughter. Can't be bad! Hilda and Vera. *Thanks Ladies, you've done a grand job! See you do remind my of Young Mother Riley & Kitty.*

 HAPPY TRIPPERS WANTED FOR THE IRELAND TRIP—Ring 01270 663558

Eve Stewart

This photo—courtesy of The Vellum—is typical of Eve. She was always ready to share a cuppa with anyone she met. She was our Mother Hen and our Blackpool Rock. Some might play and sing like George, but none can compare with Eve. She was our Formby Lighthouse signalling to all to come to Lancashire to hear the songs of George Formby. My God she will be sadly missed. Backed by her husband, Charles, she represented George Formby more than anyone has ever done.



I regret to say this but I'm afraid that George in Blackpool has lost a lot of attraction, and already the media is looking for loopholes to step in and ridicule. The Richard & Judy TV coverage was a typical example. They can build you up and then wait in the wings to break you down. For the love of George Formby and his music, let's hope not.

THANKS FROM BLACKPOOL LIFEBOAT- As requested by Charles, there was to be no flowers at the funeral but any donations would be greatly appreciated by Blackpool Lifeboats, a charity supported by George & Beryl. A letter was received from Mr C Fenton thanking all for the £485 received.

Liverpool - Clashing with the Wintergardens Weekend for the Formby GFS members we didn't expect to have many with us on our 13th Anniversary Night, however we are pleased to report that every seat was taken and we had an excellent night, complete with a great buffet. Many thanks to Tom Bailey who has been our unflinching stalwart organiser for the past 13 years.



Tom was the man who found the venue for us for our first meeting, took over the reins as organiser and treasurer, which are thankless jobs—and has carried them on without complaint. We will never forget our first night: It was Friday 13th 1991, which was a most dreadful night with rain, storms, gales, cold and very miserable outside. However, inside we had a brilliant night and we've kept the happy event flowing ever since. Long may our meetings be enjoyable.

THERE WAS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR—A Merry Christmas sir, I'm the man who empties your dust bins. How do you do, I'm the feller who fills em!
NEVER ARGUE WITH YOUR WIFE IF SHE'S PACKING YOUR PARACHUTE

Email from Martin Thomas

These are from a book called Disorder in the American Courts, and are things people actually said in court, taken down and now published by court reporters that had the torment of staying calm while these exchanges were actually taking place.

Q: What is your date of birth? - A: July 15th. - Q: What year? A: Every year.

Q: *What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?*

A: *Gucci sweats and Reeboks.*

Q: This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all? - A: Yes.

Q: And in what ways does it affect your memory? - A: I forget.

Q: You forget? Can you give us an example of something that you've forgotten?

Q: *How old is your son, the one living with you?* A: *38 or 35 years, I can't remember*

Q: *How long has he lived with you?* - A: *45 five years.*

Q: What did your husband say to you when he woke up that morning?

A: He said, "Where am I, Cathy?"

Q: And why did that upset you? - A: My name is Susan.

Q: *Do you know if your daughter has ever been involved in voodoo or the occult?*

A: *We both do.— Q: Voodoo?* - A: *We do.* - Q: *You do?* - A: *Yes, voodoo.*

Q: Were you present when your picture was taken?

Q: *How was your first marriage terminated?* - A: *By death.*

Q: *And by whose death was it terminated?*

Q: Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people?

A: All my autopsies are performed on dead people.

Q: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

A: The autopsy started around 8:30 p.m.

Q: And was Mr. Dennington dead at the time?

A: No, he was sitting on the table wondering why I was doing an autopsy.

Q: Are you qualified to give a urine sample?

Q: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse? - A: No.

Q: Did you check for blood pressure? - A: No.

Q: Did you check for breathing? - A: No.

Q: So, is it possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy? A: No.

Q: How can you be so sure, Doctor? - A: His brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

Q: But could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

A: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law somewhere.

Thanks Martin. Keep sending em in.

MY SON AND DAUGHTER IN LAW

are not particularly lovers of George Formby music, in fact at first they thought they hated it. But they can't understand why there are times when they can't get George's songs out of their heads. They hear a few lines of George singing and then the song is with them for the rest of the day and night. Some times they wake up in the middle of the night both tormented by George's song. So what do you think? Are they natural Formby fans? G & B In Middle East



For Sale—George's Lamp Post.

I bought this seven foot tall lamp post specially for the Warrington Exhibition where it was quite a talking point with the many visitors. It has also been used in many other George Formby events and is always a favourite with newspaper photographers. Ideal for inside or outside, and it will pack down to approx three foot high. Price £100 ono



Brian Edge Emails—Stan I'll bet you don't know that there is a verse to "I Like Bananas".

Here it is

*Standing by the fruit store on the corner
Once I heard a customer complain
You never seem to show. The fruit we all love so
That's why bus'ness hasn't been the same*

I don't like your peaches, They are full of stones
I like bananas because they have no bones!
Don't give me tomatoes, Can't stand ice-cream cones
I like bananas because they have no bones!
No matter where I go, With Susie, May or Anna
I want the world to know, I must have my bananas
Cabbages and onions Hurt my singing tones
I like bananas because they have no bones



Oh yes I do, in fact I have a recording of it played and sung by the Billy Cotton Band.

Martin Thomas Is About To Read Your Mind and

on the inside back cover he will tell you what two words you are thinking of. No hard thinking, just write down the first thing that pops into your head.

Now... just follow the instructions as quickly as possible. Do not go to the next calculation before you have finished the previous one. You do not ever need to write or remember the answers, just do it using your mind. You'll be surprised.

How much is: $5 + 6 - 3 + 56 -$ Keep scrolling... $89 + 2 - 12 + 53 -$ Keep going!!
 $75 + 26 -$ Keep going... $25 + 52 - 63 + 32 -$ I know! Calculations are hard work, but it's nearly over... Come on, one more... $123 + 5 -$ keep going... **QUICK NOW!**
THINK ABOUT A COLOUR AND A TOOL! When you have finished the questions turn to inside back cover.

URGENT—WE NEED MORE HAPPY SMILING PEOPLE TO JOIN US ON OUR TRIP TO IRELAND NEXT JULY 8th to 11th. MORE DETAILS FROM CHRIS WOOD ON—01270 663558 or ALAN CHENERY ON 01253 681439.

John Mason of Wigan and The Pub With No Beer

In 1957 Gordon Parsons was travelling round and singing a humorous little ditty called "The Pub With No Beer" and when music producer Slim Dusty was looking for a flip side for "Saddle Boy," he invited Gordon to use the song. They recorded it and it took off like a rocket, not only in Australia, where it was written but also overseas. Not only that but it became the very first 78rpm Gold Record and also the last. It was written during the war years by Dan Sheahan who was inspired when he found that the American forces had drained the last drop of beer from his pub. He then went on to write a song called, "How The Pub With No Beer Came To Be Written." *Many thanks John.*



Dennis Lee from Cyprus—

Hi Stan, Thanks for the newsletter. It was very sad to here the news about Eve, last time I saw her she was full of energy. It just goes to show that you can never tell. I hope Charles is coping, please give him my best wishes.

Did a gig a couple of weeks ago and came across a couple from Warrington. I had to ask the question, "Do you know Stan Evans?" They asked was this the chap who made tents years ago!! They didn't claim to know you but knew who you were.



I was in a bar doing a quiz and chatting to some folks at the next table. They'd seen me somewhere and asked if I had my uke with me. I told them I was having a night off. One of them said that he had a good friend who played the uke and that he was from Bromborough. I said, "D'ye mean Tommy Meredith?" and the bloke nearly fell off his chair!! Everything is ticking along here nicely and The Ukulele Band is doing well. Best wishes to Eva. *Many thanks Dennis, and thanks for "BLOKE" - you know I don't like the American word "Guy." Makes me shiver!!*

2 UKES FOR SALE Dallas "B" Model in superb Condition—a Collectors Item with Original Case.

ALSO A Dallas "E" Model—Standard Version of this Top Of The Range Uke in Really Good Condition—with a bright tone. Ring Brian Edge on 01270 569836.

AS A GUIDE TO ANY NEWCOMERS—Brian is 100% Reliable.

TALKING ABOUT RELIABLE! In the last issue I told you to be wary of TVs AUCTION WORLD as they'd ripped me off for £158 and didn't supply the goods. Well I complained to the Access Credit Card Co. And they refunded the money.

Jack Jones Tribute Friday June 10th at **ROOSTERS** in Warrington. It's another clash with the Liverpool meeting but we can handle it, and the Liverpool lads enjoyed the last Warrington trip. The club is booked 12 months in advance so it's difficult getting other dates. Jack was a favourite with the Formby players so it looks like it might continue as a regular yearly event.



Paul Woodhead at ROOSTERS

Can you also make sure that July 23rd is in your diary. I am holding a concert at Roosters with Pat Ralston to celebrate the achievements of a good friend of mine. It will be Formby do, ticket only. It has been booked a while and I shall ask you to advertise it next year in the Newsletter.

Birthday Boy Walter Kirkland writes

Stan, I wish to thank all who made my 80th Birthday so enjoyable. I would like to thank everyone for the many cards, presents and best wishes I received from all the members of the George Formby Society. I had a wonderful time and now I'm looking forward to my 90th—you are all invited. I am very lucky indeed because I had three parties: Crewe, Sale and Penyffordd.

Thanks Walter—Only Three? I thought it was six because everywhere I went they were stuffing themselves with birthday cake, and shouting "Three Cheers for Walter—and his pasties." Great Stuff. You can another nine parties before you are 90.

Snippet from The Daily Express

Has **BILLY CONNOLLY** formed the greatest and funniest band ever? The Scots comedian, who recently courted controversy with a sick joke about Iraqi hostage Ken Bigley, can often be found jamming with three of Hollywood's most high profile funnymen.

"I don't write songs anymore but sing and play every day," says Connolly, who struggled as a banjo player in Glasgow in the sixties. Steve Martin plays the banjo and Eric Idle plays guitar. We get together and have evenings when we jam a little.



Robin couldn't play the uke

"We bought Robin Williams a UKULELE but he hasn't studied it much" Indeed in true Williams style, he prefers to ad lib. "He just sits and does animal noises and makes up verses." Connolly tells Time Out: "It's good, record that and it would be worth a million."

MARTIN THOMAS says that you thought of "**RED and A HAMMER**" Let me know if he was right—or wrong. You're a genius Martin!!

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.

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

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.

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

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

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

Wintergardens George Formby Society Meetings:

12th & 13th March 2005 following Liverpool

2nd & 3rd July 2005 following Penyffordd

10th & 11th Sept 2005 following Liverpool

3rd & 4th Dec 2005 following Penyffordd

Concerts usually start around 1.30pm each day.

Ring the Secretary, Pam Walker on 01142 888199

Email is ian@formbytowers.co.uk for details on the GFS or Wintergarden meetings.

Web Site—Two Lancashire Lads:

www.stanevans.co.uk/formby

E Mail: stan@stanevans.co.uk

The George Formby Newsletters finish June 2005. To receive by post please send a cheque for £3.75 to receive issues up to June. Cheques payable to S. Evans - Address Front Cover.



A man walked into the doctors, he said, "I've broken my leg in several places" The doctor said, "Well you'll have to stop going to those places"