

THE
GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 118

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Welcome to Newsletter No. 118

And I'm pleased to report that all of the N West Meetings are well attended. In fact, The Pastits (well & truly) arrived extra early at the Crewe meeting only to find that the car park was full and inside was almost 'standing room only.' Every seat was taken at both Sale and Liverpool. Blackpool and N Wales were down in number but this was due to the extreme cold and wet weather. All in all, the N West meetings are sound and healthy.

Just when we thought we'd gone a full month without any losses I received an Email from Neil Forshaw to say that Len Wilson had died.

With regret I didn't know Len, although I've seen him on many occasions at the Blackpool meetings, and I have no information on him. So perhaps some of our readers can fill me in with any information.



Looking at the photo of him he certainly looks as if he enjoys playing the uke. Who knows, he might be giving George a tune now.

Warrington's Bay Horse Pub - There's some

controversy in Warrington regarding the Bay Horse pub where George, as a young boy would go to when he ran away from the stables. As he walked in he would shout, "Uncle Tom, can I stay here tonight? and in the morning will you ring my dad to tell him I've run away again. He'll kill me if I go home now." Apparently it was a favourite pub of the Formbys because they were able to take the children along to play with Tom's kids while they had a drink.

The Warrington Guardian's just phoned with the story that someone has demolished the Bay Horse pub without permission, and would I like to comment on it? It was quite plain that they were just trying to create sensationalism for the next few editions so I turned em down. "Not really" I said,

A few months ago the Guardian campaigned for a Formby statue in Warrington and rang me many times a day urging me to pull out all stops, which I did with Emails flying all over the globe as far as Russia. It was top news for some weeks after, and loads of letters and Emails flowed in to the Guardian office. But as soon as they'd got enough excitement from the story they dropped it in my lap and published that I was campaigning for a statue. By that time they were busy building up some other news item.



VARIETY - By Barrie Cordingley

When I was a lad many moons ago, in nineteen-never-you-mind,
I used to frequent the Music Halls, for the variety I would find,
There were singers, dancers, musicians, and jugglers juggling too,
Magicians and comics and novelty acts, to name only a few,
You could leave your home at seven-o'clock, on any Saturday night,
And with ten bob in your pocket, see a show buy some fags and a pint,
But now that I've grown older, those good times are long since gone,
I'd like and recall some of the stars, who's names will live on and on.

Norman Evans, over the garden wall, putting the world to rights,
Or playing a pantomime dame, in a dress, comic hat and pink tights,
Sandy Powell dressed up in uniform, ventriloquist doll on his knee,
His lips moving ten to the dozen, and pretending no one could see,
Arthur English telling funny tales, in his raincoat and flashy tie,
"Open the cage ma" he'd yell, as he bid his audience, goodbye,
Arthur Askey said, "Hello Playmates, don't worry it's only me"
Then finish his spot with, "I Thank You" and a song about a bee.

Frank Randle, the great northern comic, without a tooth in his head,
Often making the ladies blush, with some of the things that he said,
Max Wall, "Professor Wallofsky", made us roar with his funny talk,
Then accompanied by a drum role, he'd perform an eccentric walk,
I remember the great Hilda Baker, "be soon" she would say, "be soon"
And "The Army Game" on the telly, with Bill Fraser and Ted Loon,
Richard Hearn was the great Mr Pastry, attending a lavish hunt ball,
Going through all the dance steps, then falling through a brick wall.

George Formby sang songs with his uke, that were just a little risqué,
Oh, how we laughed all those years ago, and we're still laughing today,
Max Miller, "The Cheeky Chappie" Filled theatres most every night,
He said "they'll never be another one" and by golly, he was right,
Billy Bennett with his monologues, that made us both laugh, then cry,
Like, "The Sailors Farewell To His Horse, or "The Old Soldiers Tie"
Life seemed like a barrel of fun then, there was laughter at every turn,
If only the comics around today, took time to look, listen and learn.

There's no need to curse to be funny, just tell stories of everyday life,
Talk about your mother-in-law, but don't do it in front of your wife,
Normal things that happen each day, can reduce us to fits of laughter,
Laugh now, while still here on earth, there'll be none of it in hereafter,
Lets remember what Morecambe & Wise sang, at the end of every show,
And bring sunshine back into our lives, a good laugh would make it so,
Give us shows all the family can watch, free from swearing and bad taste,
Lets get back to the days of jollity, you know, we haven't a moment to waste.

Thanks Barrie. GREAT STUFF Your poem sums it all up very well. We had great fun watching or listening to the comedians of yesteryear and I've tried to listen to these so called modern comics but I just can't understand what on earth they are talking about. So bad!!!!

Record Attendance at Crewe for Jonathon's Fiftieth



Jonathan Baddeley, Crewe's February M.C., celebrated his 50th Birthday in front of a record audience of 117* for whom he provided cakes all round. Jonathan has attended these meetings for the past 15 years although his interest in Formby began many years earlier. As usual his wife Pamela made light work of her role as Concert Producer organising a well balanced show which flowed very smoothly throughout the performance.



Pam & Jonathan

The meeting began on a very sad note with an announcement of the sudden death of Iris Hough, a lady who loved the George Formby meetings at Crewe and who generously provided raffle prizes and helped in the kitchen with the refreshments. Iris will be missed by all her Formby friends. She was cremated on the day of our concert. The society sent a wreath from all the members and Chris and Evelyn Metcalf represented the society at the ceremony. We all offer our sincere condolences to Iris's husband Brian on his sad loss.

On the subject of raffle prizes there will be a brand new Formby Film video in the raffle for the next eight months. Eight different films in all, so please do try your best to win one of them. The highlight of the night for me was the presence on stage of four of our novice uke players: Dave, Bernard, Ralph and Pete. These lads are practicing hard and it will not be long before they are entertaining us in their own style. It was good to see such a big audience and we send our special wishes to all who attended for the first time. We hope they enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and the show and we hope to see them again soon.

ARTISTES TAKING PART IN THE SHOW:

JIM KNIGHT - "Five Foot Two/Bye Bye Blues Medley" & Bones Medley. CLIFF ROYLE - "Cleaning Windows" & "My Maggie." ALICE CRONSHAW - "You Made me Love You" & "Memories." THE THREE TENORS - "Blackpool Belle," "Side By Side Medley" & "Mr Wu's a Window Cleaner Now." BRIAN EDGE - "My Little Goat and Me" & "There's No Pleasing You." WALTER KIRKLAND - "You Can't Fool Me" & Bones medley. ALISON NADIN - presented the "Frankie Woods Puppet Show." ALAN NEWTON - "Sunbathing in the Park" & "Singing in a Honky Tonk." PAMELA BADDELEY - "Noughts and Crosses" & "Banjo boy." INTERVAL. "Wartime Medley" & Dr Jazz." STEVE HASSALL - "Granddad's Flannelette Nightshirt" & "You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming." VERA JONES - "You need Hands" & "Are You Lonesome Tonight." STAN EVANS & STAN WATKINSON - "If I Had my Life to Live Over" & "Hurt." ASHLEY CALDICOTT - "The Soldier's Dream." PETER GRATTON - Comedian. JONATHAN BADDELEY - "Madame Moscovitch" & "Chinese Laundry Blues." COLIN WOOD & ALAN NEWTON- "Windows" & "Saving Up for Sally." FINAL THRASH.

Whoops— Just spelt FIFTIETH wrong in the heading. Good job I spotted "FILTHIEST"

Max is
looking for
a
Scouser

By MARY MURTAGH

LEGENDARY crooner Max Bygraves wants to track down the Scouser who helped him on the road to fame - with a little help from the ECHO.

The 82-year-old star of stage and screen is seeking the Liverpudlian songwriter who penned the song *That Old Straw Hat*.

An admirer sent Max the song and he recorded it in the 1950s.

Now Max will sing the song once more in a television series about his life and career.

He proved his voice was still in full working order by serenading ECHO reporter Mary Murtagh down the phone, from Australia.

Max is calling on ECHO readers to help him track down the man who wrote the lyrics and make sure he gets the hundreds of pounds of royalties due to him.

The song goes: "That Old Straw Hat my poppa wore/ I'm gonna take it down and wear it just once more."

Max's quest came in a handwritten letter to the ECHO which opened with his famous catchphrase, "I want to tell you a story".

In the letter, sent from Max's second

Max needs a hand to track down a mystery songwriter

home on the Gold Coast, he recalls how he made lots of friends from Merseyside while serving in the Liverpool City of Speke 611 squadron of the RAF during wartime.

He said: "The squadron was full of Scousers and we got on like a house on fire. I have a great affection for Liverpool.

"I topped the bill at the Empire in the late 50s and that brought me to the attention of the showbusiness scene in London.

"The city changed my career. I started making records and they caught on. A man from Liverpool sent me the song thinking it would suit me. It was lovely and in a vaudeville style.

"During the song I make sounds like I am tap dancing while I move my feet in time. People love it and the song is still entertaining.

"I wrote and thanked the songwriter in a letter but I lost contact with him. After all this time it would be lovely to see him and thank him."

Max is starring in a series of 13 television shows and wants to use the song, but is keen to make sure the songwriter whose brainchild it was gets the credit.

If you know anything about "That Old Straw Hat My Poppa Wore" let us know about it. Max played the uke so it could be a good song.



Alison Steps In For Young Cliff

who is under the weather—We had another great night at Pen-Y-Ffordd, although at the beginning it seemed as though we were going to be short on numbers, but people started to appear and the room began to fill up. You will have noticed a change on door management as we had a first-time lady 'bouncer' helping out. This was Dot Wood who was standing in for Margaret Royle as unfortunately both she and Cliff were both unable to come because of severe colds - Get well soon both of you. Myra Knight was of course on hand to give Dot her expert guidance.



N. Wales Reporter

The show began with the usual thrash and then our MC for the first half, Jim Knight, introduced Alan Chenery who sang Lancashire Lad And His Uke and Hold Your Hats On, this was followed by Jonathan Baddeley with I Blew A Little Blast On My Whistle and Why Don't Women Like Me. I Remember George and If You Don't Want The Goods Don't Maul 'Em was sung by Gerald Jones then Alan Newton gave us Sunbathing In The Park and Dean Martins Little Old Wine Drinker Me. Our newcomer Russell Rees-Davies got upon the stage and sang The War-time Medley. Brian Edge performed My Little Goat And Me and the Chas and Dave song There's No Pleasing You. Pamela Baddeley assisted by Jonathan sang Noughts and Crosses and Banjo Boy. To close the first half Greg Simister did Sitting On The Top Of Blackpool Tower and Pleasure Cruise.

During the interval Alan Chenery drew the raffle with a little help from Dot and Val Woods granddaughter Zoe. Thank-you to everyone who donated raffle prizes.

The MC for the second half was Deg Bruce who introduced Phill Hughes to the stage and they both sang Blackpool Belle and The Old Kitchen Kettle with help from Jonathan Baddeley on clarinet. Daniel Smith, our youngest performer on the night sang Our Sergeant Major and Leaning on A Lamp-post. Alan Chenery and a first time visitor to Pen-Y-Ffordd, Hazel Astin sang I'd Like to Teach The World To Sing and a Sing-A-Long Medley. Stan Evans gave us Stay In Your Own Backyard and the original version of My Way. Arthur Newton who we haven't seen for a while at this club made a welcome return with Barmaid At The Rose and Crown and T.T. Races. Jim Knight sang Somebody Stole My Gal and the only bones medley of the night with the usual bones and castanet players. Tom Meredith sang Lancashire Toreador and Little Ukulele. A return to the stage then from Greg Simister who sang Home Guard Blues. Then Alan Newton with Sing and a great rock and roll tune Shake Rattle and Roll. All players then took to the stage for the final thrash.

A number of birthdays were celebrated this month including Alice Cronshaw, Stan Watkinson, Jonathan Baddeley, Myra Knight, Margaret Royle, Jean Smith and Bob (Greg's Dad), many happy returns to all of them.

Don't forget that at our May meeting on May 6th we are having a 1940's theme night, so come along dressed in your 40's gear to celebrate the 60th anniversary of VE Day. *Thanks Alison. It all fitted perfectly and you've beaten Cliff's speed record.*

The Warrington George Formby Exhibition—Part Four by Stan Evans.

The preview opening of the George Formby Exhibition was planned for Friday 26th April at 8pm, and selected visitors were invited, which included every member of the Formby Society, an invitation having gone out with each copy of the Vellum magazine. We were still struggling to find someone to open the show. Alan Randall had been approached but his fee of £700 was far too high for us to consider. We had nothing in the kitty so it looked as if the Formby Society would have to do the honours. However, towards the last few days Alan had a change of heart and offered his services free of charge.



A few days previous we received a call from Gloria Honeyford's office in London. She wanted to interview a Warrington group representing the exhibition, plus children, on her London TV show on the morning of the opening. We explained that it would be impossible for us to be in London because we had to be back in Warrington for the opening, and also we had no child members at that time in Warrington. We couldn't take Anthony Mason, (half Warrington) our resident uke player, because he was leaving school on the same day and couldn't take the day off.

"That's no problem," said Gloria's office, "we can get two children from the Midlands and have you back in Warrington for the opening. The only other player in Warrington was Mike Metcalfe so it was arranged for the two of us to travel to London Euston Station the previous day, Thursday.



We arrived at Euston and was met by a driver and people carrier. He was quite a chatty type of chap, telling us of various stars he had transported to and from the studio. He said that Estha Ranzén was one of their favourites but nobody appeared to get on well with her husband, Desmond Wilcox. "No matter which car you turn up in he will moan about it. If you turn up in a top class Mercedes he'd still moan."

Gloria's office had arranged for Mike and I, plus two children, Scott & Mawson Chipchase, with parents, to stay over night at a hotel, close to the studio, so that we can have an early Friday morning start. The following morning we arrived at the studio and was directed into the make-up room where they painted our faces and filled in all the cracks. I remember they added quite a layer to my face.

We were then introduced to Gloria, and what a wonderful host she is. In fact, of all the presenters we have met since then, she is definitely the tops. She had everything planned before opening the show. Every few minutes she would come to check if we knew the format of the show, and any queries. CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

CONTINUED . . . Gloria is a perfectionist who welcomes you to her show and makes you feel relaxed and comfortable.

PETE WATERMAN AGAIN—We entered the set and we were pleased to see that a small group of London members had come along in the audience to give us some support. Also on the set was Pete Waterman who claimed he was a Formby fan and who ducked out of his promise to help the museum with the exhibition. Was he using our publicity wagon? I hoped not.



THE GLORIA HONEYFORD SHOW—The show opened with Gloria introducing George in a snippet from The Friday Show when he sang a medley of Mr Wu, Cleaning Windows and Lamp Post, which brought loads of applause from our London lads in the audience. The cameras then swung over to our group of four: Pete, Mike, Gloria and myself. Way back in 1991 we had very little knowledge of George and his family, so in the hope that we didn't make a fools of ourselves we spent the previous few hours swatting up on the Formbys. Unfortunately, and quite unexpectedly, Gloria, who wanted to get involved in women's talk, asked about Beryl, and "Was she the dragon the media portrayed her to be."



This threw us off completely because we knew very little of Beryl. I remember panicking slightly at that stage. With an audience of millions watching we were expected to answer questions on someone we didn't know. I summed her up by saying "She was tremendous" three times. Fortunately Pete Waterman saved the day when he swung the conversation over to George Harrison and how the Beatles basic playing began with Formby songs. To complete the act Mike Metcalfe played and sang a few bars of "When I'm 64."

Gloria invited young Scott & Mawson Chipchase to entertain with a Formby song, which they sang with confidence. They also answered all the questions she threw at them like experienced troopers. When asked why they played the uke instead of a guitar they said, "Oh that's old fashioned."



The show was over and back to Euston Station we were quickly transported. We boarded the train amongst a carriage load of bowler-hatted business men who were not in the least pleased when Mike brought out his ukulele and strolled up and down the carriage entertaining them all. I was embarrassed by the whole thing and tried to hide my face. Mike went on with his entertaining for

at least half an hour, - perhaps he was excited at having done his first TV show.

Although I wasn't involved in his performing I noticed that they were giving me the most weird looks. I thought that maybe they don't approve of northerners riding on their business train. As we were leaving London there were less businessmen in our carriage, so Mike stopped his show and closed his eyes for the rest of the journey. I felt more at ease but noticed that the passengers were still giving me funny looks.

I had no idea of why they were looking so strange at me until I arrived at home and Eva said, "Well you do look well with all that make-up on." My goodness I'd travelled 200 miles by train covered in rouge.

THE POWER OF TV—On arriving home I was met by Ron & Ellen Holiday from Yorkshire. They were staying the night after the exhibition opening, and Ellen was shouting for help. Since the broadcast on TV they'd been bombarded with phone calls from people wanting to join the Formby Society. They were calling from all over the country and already they'd collected a list of at least 30 potential members who, until the show, didn't know a society existed. "No problem" was our response, "We'll put you an application form in the post."

I must admit that we didn't realise that the phone would be ringing every few seconds. We hadn't planned for that and Eva and I had booked to go on a short holiday the following morning. "Ron & Ellen" we said, "How would you like to stay here for a few days and take a list of the phone calls while we are away?" "No problem! We'll be pleased to stay."

THE PREVIEW OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION—

The plan was to open the show at 7.30pm, eat the snacks and drink the wine and then take a short ride to the Alliance Club in Warrington where the main hall had been booked for a Formby session. However, a phone call came in saying that the room had been double booked so we'd have to find elsewhere. We made a quick phone call to the Pattern Arms, - a short walk from the Museum, and another room was booked.

We arrived at the Museum and received a wonderful surprise. The place was oozing with people, and although the Fire Chief had stressed a limit of 200 we had reports from the staff that the figure was nearer 400. There was no doubt that this Formby exhibition would go down as the most exciting show ever held at the museum. They'd never experienced anything like it, and when the wine was dished out we couldn't find enough glasses to go round. Fortunately the ladies saved the night when they volunteered to wash and dry.



ALAN RANDALL

What a great night! We had a continuous playing tape George in the background which filled the whole place with a Formby atmosphere. **MORE NEXT MONTH.**

Singalongs banned if more than two join in

A GROUP of pensioners have been banned from holding their weekly sing-song after a killjoy council said they needed an entertainment licence.

Scores of elderly have flocked to a seaside hotel for the past four months to join in as a pianist and singer perform *Beside The Seaside*, *Roll Out The Barrel* and other singalong classics.

But then council officers turned up at the Pier Hotel, in Morecambe, Lancashire, and threatened licensee Janet Kirk with a £20,000 fine unless she applied for an entertainment licence – because the audience participation meant that more than two

By **Richard Moriarty**

people were performing. They told her that the Old Time Music Hall was the same as a karaoke session and therefore required a licence, which takes months to be granted and could cost up to £3,000.

The Monday afternoon show, with singer Patricia Ann Higginbottom and pianist Rikki Bates, has become so popular that people from neighbouring towns regularly travel to join in and meet up with friends.

Last night Mrs Kirk, 45, accused the council of being heavy-handed.

"I think it is disgusting what the council have done," she said. "To



A KIND OF HUSH: Silenced music hall singalong regulars with Patricia Ann Higginbottom and Rikki Bates

begin with there were only four people for the first few weeks but then word spread and the place was packed. A couple of weeks ago four licensing officers turned up and said the event was classed as karaoke. I was just stunned.

"It is nothing like karaoke. There are no backing tracks, no screens and no words. They have barred any of the customers from getting up to sing, so it is now just Patricia and Rikki as the council say my Justices' Licence allows this.

"But if anyone else were to get up and sing I could be slapped with a £20,000 fine. It is just ludicrous.

"The event is already starting to

die off because people are not now allowed to sing. If it drops off any more I will have to stop it altogether because I can't afford it.

"I am not making a lot of money at this event, I am making people happy, but the council are stopping it. It is red tape gone mad.

"It is good, old-fashioned live music but the council is killing it off."

Elsie Lake, 69, who attends with husband Donald, 75, said: "We are not doing any harm. It is a great day out for us. We have friends who like to sing but have stopped coming because they can't. It is wrong."

But last night Morecambe Council appeared unwilling to relent. A

spokeswoman insisted: "A singalong probably falls outside Mrs Kirk's current licence. One of the officers in attendance at the event said that it was the same principle as karaoke.

"As soon as the third performer starts it is a breach of the 'two in a bar rule' and a new licence is required."

An initial application for an entertainment licence costs £315. The venue then has to be inspected by the council for such issues as electrical safety and disability access – which can lead to an order for costly work to be carried out – and pass a police safety inspection. The police are also required to inspect the venue for safety reasons.

NONSENSE LAWS—So if two people sing together they are OK, but if another person joins in they are breaking the law, and could face a £20,000 fine. Surely the country is going daft with laws like these. During the two world wars the spirits of the nation were lifted when entertainers like George organised singalongs in the air raid shelters and in the tube stations.

George introduced "Bless Em All" in the shelters when he said "Come on folks, join in, you'll soon learn the words." I'll bet the stuffed shirts didn't attempt to close them down. It looks as if the law makers have little respect for the older folk, but I don't want to harp on it too much because they've just increased my pension by 20p per week, and if I rock the boat they may take it off me. Now what can you do with 20p? Any ideas?

Old Movies in Widnes From Ged Jennet



Do you enjoy watching the old films? If so St Basil's Club in Hough Green Road, Halton, Widnes is taking a trip down memory lane with CINEMA as it used to be. They are holding a great night of Nostalgia and Laughter on Friday February 25th—(Bit late now but it's worth publishing in the Newsletter) at 6.30pm (doors open 6pm). To reserve a ticket ring 01744 635071. All seats £3 or advanced booking £2.50

The film showing is GEORGE FORMBY in KEEP FIT plus news reels—Adds—and loads of slapstick from Laurel & Hardy, Three Stooges and more. You can also have a drink after the show and you are welcome to ring to ask about any future shows. Isn't it wonderful that they've chosen George for their first showing.

By Charles, he's got it!

-Over the years Blackpool, like most meetings, have had a few problems with sound systems, feed back and whistling etc. and sometimes the artists prefer to go on stage during the second half when the mikes have settled in. Well there was nothing to be concerned about at the February meeting because Charles had the sound spot on. Best ever!



Jimmy Bowtie

The freezing cold weather didn't help the turn out, but those who braved the cold and sat there all rugged up in their great coats on were: Ben Halliwell, Don Horton, The Well and Truly Pastits (Stan Evans & Stan Watkinson), Alan Middleton, John Taylor, Des Redfern, and myself. On the door Pat Chenery with Hazel Astin. Once again Jimmy Bowtie surprised us all with his rendition of "New York, New York" "Fly Me To The Moon." No wonder he's a favourite at the British Legion.

Hazel did us proud when she supplied trays of tasty meat and potato pies and cheese and onion pies which went down very well on a cold night. Where else can you get a feast like that and entertainment for £1? Our thanks to all who helped on the night and gave it all a very pleasant atmosphere.

Jonathan Baddeley wishes to thank everyone who has sent cards and best wishes for my half century birthday on 11th March.

HAVE YOU SENT AN ARTICLE IN TO THE NEWSLETTER?

Jim Knight Reports on Warners Holiday - Our winter

break holiday at Nidd Hall Hotel Yorkshire was once more a howling success and although there seemed to be quite a lot in our party when we all arrived, the number of Uke players were only five in total including George Forrest who forgot to bring his Uke. Arthur Newton quickly came to the rescue with a spare Uke only to find it was of no use to George as he is a left handed player. However we still had four.

Players who were determined to keep up the good name of the George Formby Society, and so they did with a grand performance that was well appreciated by the audience. George Forest was designated Sound Engineer for the performance and it all went without a hitch. The four Players of course were Walter Kirkland, Arthur Newton, Roy Branning, and Myself Jim Knight.



Lucky Myra Knight wins the £75 jackpot—what's that hand doing?

Alice Cronshaw made the first move by approaching the Entertainment's Manager with a request to let us perform and was welcomed with "Oh The George Formby Society " Yes I've heard them before, they're brilliant. Incidentally, his name was also Jimmy and he did us proud by giving us a prime spot just before the comedian came on at 10 p.m. The hall by then was obviously full and we had a wonderful reception.

We arranged a Dart Match between the Ladies and the Men, The Ladies won. "But as you might well have guessed, THEY CHEATED" The biggest laugh of the holiday was when Walter and I came out of - the Steam Room in the Pool area and walking past the Jacuzzi found it was full of ladies about at least ten in all. One of them invited us in so I slid in next to her and soon found her arm around my neck being pulled in for a cuddle,



Jim, Caroline and "Carry On Walter"

At that moment Walter slid in the other side only to receive the same treatment. Neither of us were complaining. I did hear Pat Forrest passing a remark, "I can't see Jim getting out of this alive, but oh what a lovely death."

Unfortunately there were no camera's about but we did meet the lady, Caroline, in the bar later for a photograph. Myra has threatened her with a rolling pin and me with divorce proceedings, and the rolling pin. Alice, Walter, Myra and myself have booked another break at Holme Lacy House Historic Hotel from 8th to 12th Aug. 2005, if anyone would like to join us, see Alice.

On the first day of school, a small girl handed teacher a note from her mother. The note read, "The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of her parents."

A woman was struggling to get the ketchup out of the jar, when the phone rang. She asked her 4-year-old daughter to answer the 'phone. "It's the minister, Mummy," the child said to her mother. Then she added, "Mummy can't talk to you right now. She's hitting the bottle."

Sale Report by Hilda and Vera

We had another happy evening in the Timperley Liberal Club, but one or two of our regular members were unable



Walter Langshaw

to attend owing to illness (Sheila Palmer and Pauline and Jack Valentine). Once again we had to begin on a sad note. Walter Langshaw, a founder member of the Sale Branch and a writer of some popular Formby-style songs, has been in hospital since before Christmas and is very seriously ill. Our thoughts are with his wife Kay and family.



Vera

Hilda

Our dear friend, Frank Bennett passed away on 29th January in tragic circumstances. Frank joined the G.F.S. in 1970 and was at one time the Secretary of the Ukulele Society of Great Britain when meetings were held in Oxford. He also helped Ron Bed-

does in the manufacture of the New Concert Ukuleles. After retirement he moved to Blackpool and has always been a well-loved and popular member. He will be sadly missed.

We had a full and varied concert with several artistes singing the lesser known songs and some returning to the stage to do an extra one. We also had the pleasure of the company of John Shreeve who delighted us with his fabulous ukulele playing.

We commenced with a 10 strong Thrash (plus Elizabeth White who was playing her uke very discreetly whilst sitting in the audience). Les Pearson was the M.C. for the first session.

The artistes were as follows: EDDIE BANCROFT with Licence and Chinese Laundry Blues; BRIAN EDGE followed with a rarely sung song, My Little Goat and Me, There's No Pleasing You, in memory of Frank Bennett, and one of Walter Langshaw's popular songs My Grandad's Bowler Hat; ALAN NEWTON Auntie Maggie's Remedy, Thank Heaven for Little Girls and Slow Boat to China; WALTER KIRKLAND Fanlight Fanny and The Harry Lyme Theme (with bones); ALICE CRONSHAW I've Got a Boyfriend (one of Billy 'Uke' Scott's compositions).

As usual Dick Eaves and Marjorie Travis drew the raffle after we had enjoyed a welcome cup of tea/coffee and cakes and biscuits kindly prepared by Anne Ratcliffe.

Our M.C. for the second part of the evening was Dick Eaves and he introduced the following performers - JOHN SHREEVE You Can't Keep a Growing Lad Down, If You Knew Susie medley, Home Guard Blues and the fantastic William Tell Overture; STAN EVANS Stay in Your Own Back Yard and, with Margaret Moran, I Could Have Danced all Night; MARGARET MORAN With a Song in My Heart and We'll Gather Lilacs; ALAN CHENERY The Lancashire Lad and His Uke (by Walter Langshaw), Riding on a Blackpool Tram (by Dickie Speake) and Lampost; ALAN SOUTHWORTH Dare-devil Dick, She's Got Two of Everything and Delivering the Morning Milk; ARTHUR NEWTON Mother What'll I Do Now, Nine O'clock and With My Little Ukulele in My Hand; CYRIL PALMER Twilight Time and One Meat Ball; BRIAN WHITE Lancashire's Beautiful and the Rawtenstall Annual Fair with soprano uke accompaniment, both very funny songs. STAN EVANS rounded off the evening with his own amusing version of MY WAY. *Thanks Ladies. Always on time as usual. I've run out of "look a likes"*

Sent in by
Ken Smith, of
Yorkshire
who makes
ukes with a
different
shape

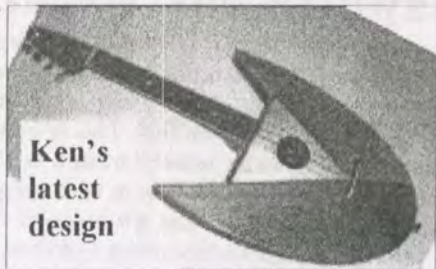


**Oliver Cross of the
Yorkshire Evening
Post writes:-**I've wanted to
use a picture of George Formby
for ages as a kind of reader
service. When most people see
George, they pay him a most
remarkable tribute by going into
an involuntary gormless grin—

-- filling their head with a snatch from one of his daft songs and playing air ukulele. This means that George is by far the easiest way of brightening up a dull page and I would use this picture every week if I thought I could get away with it, and if I wasn't aware that it is possible to get severe George Formby fatigue (which I know it is because I once went to the meeting of the George Formby Society and realised that you can only spend so much time doing mass collective chuckling before the whole experience becomes rather sinister and Stalinist.)

But I've an excuse for using him tonight because I discovered a totally unexpected side of George Formby on a Radio 4 this week, "George The Radical Political Freedom Fighter." Apparently, he toured in South Africa in around 1960 and refused to play to segregated audiences. This was not because he was a liberal or what is now called 'politically correct' (Oh Mr Woo not being a song known for its cultural sensitivity). He just thought, being a northern working class lad, that the people who served him meals and set up the stage should also be allowed to see the show.

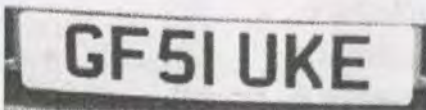
This developed into a confrontation with Dr DF Malan, leader of the Nationalist Party, which was soon to introduce full-blown apartheid. Dr Malan a fierce fundamentalist theologian, met his match in George's equally fierce wife, Beryl. She told him with great economy and effectiveness to p . . . off. **THREE CHEERS FOR GEORGE & BERYL** and to Ken Smith for sending the cutting in.



Ken's
latest
design

Ken Taylor writes from Oswestry—Dear Stan, following our conversation this morning I enclose photo and brief explanation that might be of interest the your Newsletter readers.

An occasional visitor to our village parked his car and went into a shop. As I passed by I noticed the registration number on his car. When he came out I went over to speak to him. "You must be a member of the George Formby Society" I said.



"No I'm not a member but I do like his music, why do you ask? I then pointed out his car registration plate (which could be re-spaced to read GF5 1 UKE). He said that he had not realised the significance of the number at all. I suggested to him that it might be of some value to a George Formby fan! Any offers? Ken Taylor, ex GFS. *Many thanks Ken.*

Sylvia Atkinson Hindley, nr Wigan writes—

Dear Stan, I hope you don't mind me asking you, but is it possible you know Ted Formby's address? I just wish to know if he remembers my Dad. He may have been too young at the time, but he may be able to confirm that my father and George were mates as lads and it was when George had a horse, he would take my dad for a ride in the country and then leave him there to walk back. My father never told me lies but I would like to have the story confirmed.



Young George grooming his horse at Hindley House

George used to go to my Grandmas in George St, Hindley, and my Aunt Jancy used to look after George's younger brother and sister, so maybe he will remember living in Hindley. Sadly my dad has now passed away. *Thanks Sylvia. Ted's address is attached but I don't think that he will be able to help you because he was born years later in Warrington.*

Haworth 40s Weekend — The Pastits (Well & Truly)

have been invited to host part of the 40s Weekend at Haworth (between Todmorden and Keighley, Yorkshire) on Sat & Sun 7th & 8th May. I understand that we will be operating from the Church steps, playing 40s music, entertaining the crowd and inviting everybody to join in. This is quite a big occasion that is held every year, drawing large crowds, mostly dressed in 1940s gear. So come along and give us your support. You can join in with songs like: Roll Out The Barrel, Run Rabbit Run, Lamp Post, Bless Em All etc, and if you are Adolf Hitler's look a like, or Winston Churchill's, come along and show us what you can do.

ukulele rescue

PRESTON musician Ken Nicol is to help recreate a moment of Peter Sellers madness when he performs at the London Palladium next week.

Ken - guitarist, singer and songwriter with folk-rock legends STEELEYE SPAN - is currently on tour with the band and visits the Palladium on Monday night. As a special event, Steeleye is to recreate a novelty record they made in the Sixties - Oh You New York Girls - which featured the ex-Goon guesting on ukulele. This time round the guest musician will be Ralph McTell, famous for writing The Streets Of London, and also a renowned ukulele player. Steeleye Span and Ralph have worked together before, and toured together in Australia earlier this year. It was there that Ralph bought Ken a ukulele as a gift. But when the duet at the Palladium was suggested Ken was left in a dilemma - as he had accidentally left the instrument Down Under and had not yet got it back! Help has come in the shape of HOUGHTON WEAVERS guitarist David Littler, who lives in Cottam and is a friend of Ken's. David said: "I have a George

Folk

Phil Widdows

Formby-style ukulele which was bequeathed to me by my father, who used to use it on the old charabanc trips to Blackpool. It's also made many an appearance with the Weavers."

Ken and David became friends over two-and-a-half years ago when David moved to Preston. "I was ~~over the moon~~ to find out that such a talented guitarist lived less than half a mile away. Apart from our mutual interest in playing the guitar we also share an interest in golf. It was during a game a few months ago that Ken mentioned the ukulele, so I suggested he borrow mine. I'm looking forward to seeing it played on the stage of the London Palladium!" said David.

David along with brother Denis - an original member of the Weavers - were inspired as boys to play music after hearing their Dad play the "Uke".

Ken said: "The Palladium show will be something special and the bit with Ralph is going to be a bit of fun - but I was rather embarrassed because I'd lost the ukulele that Ralph bought me. David's got me out of the mire!"

Steeleye Span, who have just released a new Christmas album, will be at the Southport Arts Centre next Friday, December 17, and the Houghton Weavers are also on the festive trail and will be performing their annual Folk & Brass concert at the Guild Hall in Preston on Sunday December 19, with the Wingates Brass Band as their guests.

Ukuleles are optional!

Stars in Steve's Eyes



Well, did you vote for Steve Duncan in the Stars In Their Eyes TV Show?

Steve, an excellent player and artiste has been a GFS member for some years, and often turned up at Blackpool weekends

He is also an exceptionally good pianist.

Well, I didn't expect Steve to win against the modern artists but he certainly put on the most exciting show.

The Newsletter finishes soon— June—so send an article before it's too late. Jokes, News, Have you enjoyed the Newsletter? etc. Drop a Line.



RESCUE: David Littler (right) hands the ukulele to Ken Nicol

Jill Woodhead at Penyffordd—Something big was hitting

the Penyffordd meeting on Friday the 4th Feb. Jill Woodhead turned up with her posh looking video camera fitted with all the mod cons and high powered lens etc. And she certainly looked the part as she filmed Paul doing his "One Man Band" routine on stage. Everybody thought the BBC had moved in for the night, but actually Paul had received instructions from a TV company to produce a film of his act and send it in for a particular Comic Relief Fame Academy audition.



Paul, (great organiser) and Jill

After travelling some 70/80 miles, Paul & Jill got to Penyffordd very early so that they could get seats on the front row of the British Legion hall. They'd really put a lot of thought and effort into their preparation. Paul made umpteen journeys to his car carrying in all his equipment: drums, ukes. Guitars, comb and paper, whistles, Jews harp, radio mike, head phones etc. Nothing was forgotten and the operation went like clockwork.

Paul's act came on stage immediately after the interval, and as the curtains opened, he sat there behind his 'one mad band,' looking pleased and reet proud with the effort they'd put in the whole operation.

Jill looked very professional as she filmed every move of his act. She panned the whole room to catch the happy audience and then captured Paul at every angle: front side, left side, right side and back side, and looked chuffed at having done a fine job, oozing with confidence! Alfred Hitchcock couldn't have done a better job.

11pm and the concert is finished. Paul and Jill gathered all their equipment, loaded the car and hurriedly drove back to Telford so that they can have supper watching the results of their night's videoing. TV switched on! Video switched on! And "ACTION" accompanied by Paul's FANFARE "ta, tat, tat, tat ta".

Press PLAY . . . NOTHING, - try again—NOTHING!!! Not a sausage. Absolutely NOWT!!! ZILCH - Only a blue screen. So what went wrong????

Amidst all the thorough, top class, and well planned organising, they'd forgotten to tell Jill to press the RECORDING button. On dear. Poor Jill.

Ring Mike Turner.

Since Mike moved address I've received a lot of calls from his friends asking for his new phone number. Well I had no idea because he and his family moved into temporary accommodation for a few months. However, last night I received a call from him, with his new number: 0151 548 9124 and he looks forward to hearing from you.

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.



Paul Woodhead at ROOSTERS,

Warrington Can you also make sure that July 23rd is in your diary. Paul is holding a concert at Roosters with Pat Ralston to celebrate the achievements of a good friend. It will be a Formby do, ticket approx £3 (further details later) which will pay for the room rent and the buffet. You can contact Paul & Jill on 01952 598840. Roosters lies about half a mile outside the town centre on the A57 Warrington to Liverpool road. Immediately opposite the soap works.

Mildred was a 93 year-old woman who was particularly despondent over the recent death of her husband, Earl. She decided she would kill herself and join him in death. Thinking it would be best to get it over with quickly, she took out Earl's old Army pistol and made the decision to shoot herself in the heart since it was so badly broken in the first place. Not wanting to miss the vital organ and become a vegetable and burden to someone, she called her doctor to inquire as to just exactly where the heart would be. "On a woman," the doctor said, "the heart would be just below the left breast." Later that night, Mildred was admitted to the hospital with a gunshot wound to her knee.

Uke Banjo For Sale—Derek Worsley, who is reducing his collection of 10 instruments, wishes to sell his Dallas E model uke banjo. It is completely refurbished with an equally beautiful tone and original case. The price is £395.



Derek's address is Sandrock House, Sandrock Rd, Niton, Ventnor, on the ISLE of WIGHT, PO38 2NQ and the phone number is 01983 730445.

For the benefit of any beginners, a Dallas E model uke is the top of the range of five made by Dallas: A B C D & E. These letters are stamped in at the back of the peg head. For some reason the Dallas A is not stamped.

Alice Cronshaw writes—Warners Holiday . . . If anyone would like to join us on a Four Day, Mon to Fri, Warners (adults only) holiday at Holme Lacy on August 8th, please give me a ring on 0161 727 9829. Bring your uke as we always get to perform a spot on stage. It's a ball of fun.

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 —www.stanevans.co.uk/formby
www.stanevans.co.uk/pastits

E Mail: stan@stanevans.co.uk

The George Formby Newsletters finish June 2005. To receive by post please send a cheque for £3.00 to receive issues up to June. Cheques payable to S. Evans - Address Front Cover.



Chap ordered a double sherry, a triple whisky, and three brandies. "I shouldn't be drinking these with what I've got!" "Why, what have you got?" "A pound!"