

THE  
**GEORGE FORMBY**

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**Newsletter 119**



Specially Produced for George Formby Fans  
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# Welcome to Newsletter No. 119

and one more issue to go and it's the end of our little mag. Over the past couple of months I've been overwhelmed with requests to keep the George Formby Newsletter running. However, I've decided to call it a day.



Thanks for your support over the years.

Retiring from business way back in 1983, it gave me an opportunity to take over the production of the Vellum for the GFS for 8 years and then the George Formby Newsletter for 10 years. Believe me, I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute and would love to carry on. However, Eva & I have grandchildren who are struggling trying to make their way in the world. We feel that it would be criminal on our part not to give them the benefit of our business experience.

Lyndon, our oldest grandchild, and ex Formby uke player, has a wall full of certificates and is now a fully fledged Hypnotist with his own practice. I am now his Secretary and general dogsbody (unpaid of course) taking messages while he is dealing with his clients. He specialises on Smokers, Druggies and Drunkards etc, so the world is his oyster.

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## An Email from Connie Edge Sums it up—It will be a sad



day for me at Crewe when I sell the last copy of the George Formby Newsletter at our next meeting. Apart from enjoying the variety of articles that Stan has produced over the past ten years, readers were also able to keep in contact with what was going on at other Branches around the North West.

Selling the magazine enabled me to meet the members as they arrived in an effort to sustain the friendly atmosphere that was always our aim from day one. Of course I will still be there to greet members but alas there will be no magazine.

I fully understand why Stan is retiring as he has dedicated so much of his time to this labour of love. He could always be contacted at his office desk from early morning until late at night. I must give Stan full marks as he has never failed to meet a deadline over the years. In fact we all will miss his contribution but sadly all good things come to an end.

I have to say that I've always enjoyed the jokes in the magazine which have made me laugh, and what is more they have always been clean – Stan knew which side his bread was buttered on. It was more than his life was worth to step beyond the fringe! Ha –Ha! Thanks again Stan, and remember retiring from the magazine does not mean retiring from entertaining us. Connie Edge. *Thank You Connie.*

# Len Wilson by Bob Muirhead. Regarding our dear lost friend

Lenny (you asked for any info in the last issue) In his early days he was a member of an Harmonica band. After the war the "Civil Service Motoring Magazine" did an article on the Arnheim reunion imagine my surprise when I opened the page and saw Lenny Quaffing a Pint, I would like both back so could you bring them to the next Liverpool meeting.



This is Len with his comrades

Lenny was a great Pal of Frank Bennett and they always arrived at the White House on the convention Thursday, Arthur Sinnott and I would arrive on the Friday when the pair of them would take us walkabout around Blackpool the first stop being "Tower Music" where Lenny would have a go at any available Guitar whilst Frank would strum any Uke he could get his hands on, I could never work out if the Owner enjoyed their visits or was wishing he had closed five minutes earlier, in some seven years they only bought one item an electronic tuner. It would then be "Cash Converters" where Lenny always had a Camera or other electronic gear to buy usually with Frank informing him it would never work ( and usually they didn't ).

Len was an superb musician playing the Ukulele, Guitar, and Steel Guitar, he had a large collection of Ukuleles and Guitars and was always buying and selling instruments, his big interest apart from the GFS was Hawaiian music and he was a regular at many Hawaiian Society meetings he was always ready to help anyone with advice on playing either the Uke or Guitar.

He was an ex Paratrooper having fought on D day, at Arnheim, and the Rhine crossing, he always looked forward to his Airborne reunions and It was at one of these whilst playing his Uke he stopped for a breather and had a Heart Attack, how fitting that he died enjoying the company of his old comrades whilst playing the instrument that he loved. *Thanks Bob.*

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## Harry Boffey's a popular chap!

The other night he went to see Ken Dodd at the Lyceum Theatre, Crewe, and as Harry usually does, he managed to grab Ken for a photo. Ken, a very big hearted chap, obliged as you can see on the right. The amazing thing was that, as the theatre was emptying, the huge crowd walking passed them both all muttered, "Who's that chap with Harry Boffey?"



## Crewe's Harry Jones is Eighty Hip- Hip-Hoorah!

Almost one hundred of our supporters attended the Crewe March meeting held on Good Friday. The theme of the night was celebrating Harry Jones' 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Harry is a front line worker for the society who dresses the stage for our meetings and performs lots of odd jobs that pass by without anyone noticing. He is also a stand in on our sound system, a Roadie when we have private Gigs' and official photographer (currently converting from film to digital). He is a local historian and in depth researcher, and he is the hammer on local officialdom should it get out of line at any time. Believe it or not when Harry gets his teeth into some matter of local importance he never lets go. On the surface Harry is unemotional, but I know that he loves the society and without him we would be hard pressed, he is a real stalwart and in view of all this we were delighted to commemorate his elevation to becoming an octagenarian especially when his wife Vera, another stalwart, brought along cakes for all! A very Happy Birthday Harry and special thanks from everyone for all you are doing for us and have done for us in the past years.



We were delighted to welcome Phil Hatswell and his wife Janet who travelled all the way from Rotherham to see the show. Phil and Janet must travel thousands of miles supporting George Formby events also Alan and Eunice Evans from Redditch, two other staunch supporters of George Formby who also travel far in pursuit of their interest. We were also very happy to have the delightful singer Margaret Moran and her friend Les Pearson with us again. Hopefully all being well Margaret will be with us in April when she intends leading the flag waving for St George's Day with that great rousing number Land of Hope and Glory. That is really something I look forward to. Gareth Sumner was with us again after a number of absent months and he showed the audience that he had not lost any of his enthusiasm for the ukulele and soon had the audience cheering for more. Nice to see you Gareth, come again soon.

We got a late apology from Stan Evans who was a bit under the weather but promised to come next month to show you all how the paper tearing really should be done! We look forward to that Stan and you're your friend Max the Dog? Our sound Engineer Colin Wood had a present of a Banjo at Christmas. His dear old Dad used to play the banjo many years ago and Colin always wanted to have a go himself. So if you see someone around with an oversized ukulele strapped around his neck then that's Colin! He is another of your society's stalwarts, and he's certainly having fun with his new acquisition. Talking about big banjos it is good to see Mike Gafney on stage again. We always called Mike the "Big Banjo Man" when he first came to the society some eight or nine years ago because he had the biggest ukulele we had ever seen. Mike needed a block and tackle to hoist it into a playing position! He got that much stick about the size of his instrument that he found himself a very nice Dallas "C" which he played on stage at tonight's concert. Mike is also a violinist and he is hoping to join the jazz band with his Jazz Violin. That certainly sounds good, I hope he makes it.

Good too to see Margaret Royle walking into the hall without human assistance after her terrible ordeal of being knocked down by a car some months ago. Tough stuff these Scots are made of! Keep up the good work Margaret and indeed Cliff who has worked hard caring for Margaret over the past months. As usual we had a great show, a real colourful mix of Formby and Fun.

Mary Newton won the George Formby film "Keep Your Seats Please" in the draw. For the next seven months there will be a brand new George Formby film as a main raffle prize, so please do your best to win one of them.

Artistes and their songs:- The concert started with the usual THRASH. STEVE HAS-SALL - Jazz Medley "It Aint no Sin," "Everybody Loves My Baby." etc. BRIAN EDGE - "They Laughed When I Started to Play" & "Put Your Arms Around Me Honey." CLIFF ROYLE - "Bless 'Em All" & "Somebody's Wedding Day." COLIN WOOD (accompanied by ALAN NEWTON) "I'm Saving up for Sally" & "I've Got the Whole World in My Hands." ALAN EVANS - "Granddad's Flannelette Nightshirt," "Cat Ba-loo" & "The Crystal Chandelier." PAMELA BADDELEY - (vocals) "Morningtown Ride" & "In a World of Our Own." JIM KNIGHT - "Little Ukulele" & "Bones Medley." MARGARET MORAN - "With a Song in My Heart" & "Crazy."

GARETH SUMNER - "You Don't Need a Licence for That," "Leaning on a Lamp-Post" & "Auntie Maggie's Home made Remedy." CYRIL PALMER - "There's a Blue Ridge Around My Heart - Virginia" & "Twilight Time." THE THREE TENORS (aka PHIL HUGHES, FRANK HUMPHRIES AND DEG BRUCE) - "Smile All the Time" & "Pack up All Your Cares and Woe Medley." ALISON NADIN AND ALF - (featuring a great escape after some dodgy mental arithmetic). JONATHAN BADDELEY - "Mr Wu's A Window Cleaner Now" & "Thanks Mr Roosevelt." VERA JONES - "Sunny Side of the Street" & "Over My Shoulder." PETER GRATTON - (Comedian). DAVE CLEWS, PETE DODD, RALPH WHITTAKER, COLIN WOOD and backing group - "Putting on the Style." ARTHUR NEWTON - "I Promised to be home by Nine o'Clock." ASHLEY CALDICOTT- (assisted by Arthur Newton) "Alexander's Rag Time Band." & "When the Saints Come Marching In." ALAN NEWTON - "A You're Adorable" & "Springtime's Here Again." FINAL THRASH. Three Formby Numbers.

Artistes taking part: 23. Formby Numbers 14.

The M.C. for the Evening was ALAN NEWTON with ARTHUR NEWTON the concert producer. The show finished at five past eleven. *Thanks Brian, and a special thanks to Arthur Newton for accompanying Ashley on stage. I'll bet he was reet chuffed. Sorry I couldn't make it—man's trouble.*

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ALISON'S REPORT CONTINUED from page 6—To round up the evening Stan Evans sang 'Daddy's Little Girl' and then 'My Way' in his own special way. A final thrash was then played and another enjoyable evening at Pen-Y-Ffordd drew to a close.

During the evening Jim Knight announced our Charity events results from February 2003 to March 2005. During this time we have raised £2,000 for Hope House Children's Hospice, £900 for Nightingale House Children's Hospice, £200.00 for Llandudno Local Charities and £1,800 for Nightingale House Hospice in Wrexham. We would like to thank everyone from all the other branches who have helped us raise this amount during the past two years. It was also announced that our charity for the next twelve months will again be Nightingale House and this starts off in Llandudno on Saturday April 30th, Sunday May 1st and Monday 2nd May at the Victorian Extravaganza, if you are able to come along I'm sure you'll have a great time and raise some money for a very worthy cause. For more details contact me, Alison Nadin on 01745 330668.

Don't forget that at our next meeting on May 6th it will be our VE day celebration night - so come along in your 1940's gear singing the wartime songs. *Thanks Alison.*

## Alison Beats all records with N. Wales report

Speedy Alison must have stayed up all night working on this report because the morning after the meeting— while I was still in bed, recovering from a late night — the email popped up in my in tray. Thanks Alison, you're an angel!!!!



To start the evening off we had the usual thrash of five Formby songs, our MC for the night was Jim Knight and he announced that we were celebrating three birthdays this month, they were Connie Edge, Dot Wood and Frankie Woods, congratulations to all of them. Apologies were sent from Cliff and Margaret Royle to say that they weren't able to be with us tonight as Margaret has just had her cataract operation and was still recovering. Hope you'll both be fit and well and with us again next month.



Birthday girl Dot Wood having a cuddle with husband Valentine.

Jim started the main performance by singing 'Little Ukulele' and was then joined on the stage by Walter Kirkland, Alan Chenery, Frank Humphreys, Alan Newton and Charlie Penman for a bones medley. Next up was Alan Chenery with a Summertime Medley and 'I love To Play My Ukulele'. Gerald Jones (Jones the Uke) took to the stage with 'Good Old Uncle George' and 'You Don't Need A Licence For That'. Jonathan Baddeley was ready to go on next and his first song was going to be 'Licence', Gerald had beaten him to it, but luckily Jonathan has such a big repertoire that he was able to change to 'I Wish I was Back On The Farm' without any problem. Jonathan's second song

was performed on the clarinet and it was a Max Bygraves song 'Big Head'. Alison Nadin was next with a ventriloquist act accompanied by Alf. Following that was Alan Newton with 'Springtime's Here Again' and The Bachelors hit 'Marie'. Greg Simister performed 'Our Sergeant Major' and 'Home Guard Blues'. 'I Remember George' and 'The Wartime Medley' was sung by Tom Meredith and to finish the first half we had the Three Tenors - Frank Humphreys, Phill Hughes and Deg Bruce with 'It's In The Air' and 'Bye Bye Blackbird - Red Red Robin Medley'. During the interval we all enjoyed the celebration cakes for Dot's 65th Birthday.

The second half was started off by Walter Kirkland singing 'You Can't Fool Me' and then a bones medley. Brian Edge then entertained us with 'When I Come Up On The Football Pools' and 'Wigan Boat Express'. A newcomer to the Pen-Y-Ffordd group, Peter Bird, then came along and sang 'The Blue Eyed Blonde Next Door' and 'Dan the Dairyman' he was accompanied by Jim Knight and Jonathan Baddeley. Pam Baddeley sang: 'When I Fall In Love' and 'Around The World'. Our youngest member Daniel Smith who is nine years old sang 'I Remember George' and 'Leaning On A Lamp-post', he is certainly getting better every month. Carol Brassy our mandolin player, played 'Distant Drums'. 'Mother What'll I Do Now' and 'Granddads Flannelette Nightshirt' was performed by Arthur Newton. CONTINUED page 5

# The Warrington George Formby Exhibition—Part Five by Stan Evans.

It is the night of the exhibition opening and the Warrington Museum is packed with Formby fans. The staff said, "In all its 100 or so years the museum has never held an opening like this." It was then that I learned that George Formby also drew a huge crowd to the very same room when he re-opened it after the war. Apparently the museum had been commandeered by the Ministry as part of the war effort. George, looking very smart and dressed immaculately in a white suit, was honoured to do the opening.

Alan Randall did a fine job of opening the exhibition. He played his part perfectly, "I Now Declare This George Formby Exhibition Well and Truly Open." and there was an uproar of approval from George's many fans. He then sang two of George's songs followed by a short concert by the GFS members. The Warrington Councillors had never experienced anything like it in the museum. The room was buzzing with Formby atmosphere, which gave them ideas for similar type events. Until then the museum had been used for displaying old antiques, skeleton bones, old pictures, paintings, sea shells, handicrafts etc. but never anything remotely like a music show. Normally there would be no more than a handful of people roaming round the place, but tonight was different with George singing his heart out through the continuous tape system.

Leading up to the opening the thoughts going through the councillors minds were, "Just another boring show" and consequently few showed any interest.

I was told that many of them showed little interest normally in museum events but would come along to the openings for the free drinks. But how wrong they were on this occasion. George had

hit Warrington with a bang and already, on the first night, they were talking about setting up a Permanent Formby Exhibition. A group of councillors asked what we intended doing with the display units exhibition later and went on to discuss the possibility of setting up a permanent display in part of Walton Hall, Warrington.

For the councillors to consider giving us space in Walton Hall was quite an honour. It was previously owned by the Greenall family, famous for their success in the brewing industry. The Hall itself was built in Elizabethan style during the 1830. The Estate was bought by Warrington Borough Council in 1941 and has been enjoyed as a park since 1945.

FRIEND OF GEORGE'S—Edward Greenall (Lord Daresbury) was a great friend of George & Beryl's. They would visit the family quite often and George would try out the horses at the stables.



Walton Hall Gardens

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

CONTINUED— Lord Daresbury gave a donation of £700 to the museum because of his connection with George. Some weeks later, I received a phone call from him, "Hello Stan, nice to know the exhibition is going well. Send me an application form and I'll join the society." Which he did. He also asked if I would send him a couple of George's films—my own choosing.

Now the Greenall family had just been through a tough time with the brewery business. They'd sold off all the brewing side of the business to Walker Breweries and Edward had retired in Jersey. Very appropriately I chose "Come On George" to suit his connections with horse racing, and "Trouble Brewing". He rang to thank me for the videos but when I asked him how he liked my choice of films, he didn't get the joke.

Testing out George's mock up Shuttleworth Special is Alan Randall, and behind him is the kind owner who loaned us the bike for Walter the designer to dress up. Trevor Brown is next to him, John Croft, Councillor Owen, Cherry Grey and Ray Bernard. Yours truly is perched at the



front. Walter, the designer, had made such a good job of dressing the bike that most visitors thought it was the original bike that George rode over the Isle Of Man cliff in the film, "No Limit." Not wishing to spoil their memory of having seen and touched George's original Shuttleworth Special (or so they thought) we left them with a happy thought.

George played a major part in entertaining the troops at the front line so one of the important displays was a World War Two Trench area, which Walter designed with help from the local barracks. They were very generous with loans of trench equipment: a bren gun, khaki netting, sand bags, dummy ammo etc. It certainly looked the real thing.

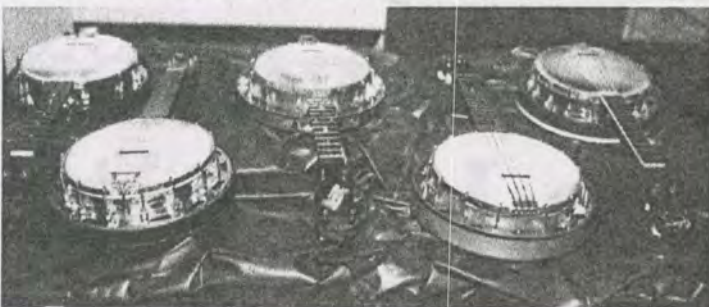
Next to the army area we had three tape players, each set up with earphones. Place the phones on your head and press the start button and you can have the continuous playing of George singing "Mr Wu, Cleaning Windows, or Leaning On A Lamp Post." This was a great attraction to the children.



In fact the children were delighted with these simple songs that had a beginning, a middle and an end. They'd never heard these songs before that told a story, and as they walked around we heard them singing: "Now Mr Wu was a laundry man with a shop with an old green door," or "I go cleaning windows to earn an honest bob" (What's a bob mum?) or "Leaning on a lamp, maybe you think, I look a tramp." During the exhibition some children were so excited about finding these songs, they came back many times just to use the earphones.

**BACK TO THE OPENING**—Another main attraction was the display of George's

ukes. These were part of the collection of nineteen left by George when he died in 1961. One uke in particular in the museum show case was George's Dallas "E" model, kindly loaned by



George Harrison, who had recently joined the Formby Society. He was keen to get started in playing the uke and learning George's songs.

He also requested secrecy about him becoming a member. It made sense when he said, "If people find that I have joined, they will be asking for application forms and very soon it will become a Beatle Society. "Very wise! However, although we attempted to hide the news that he had joined us, it soon leaked out through an article in a Dutch newspaper.



A Leaning on a lamp model made for George & Beryl and loaned by Alan Randall.

Granada TV from London rang, "Hello Stan, is it true that George Harrison has joined you?"

"Well er, er, er, I'm not sure" I lied. I was caught on the spot.

"Well, if he has please send me application forms to join." A few days later a phone call came through to the museum, "Tell George Harrison that I've got a Dallas uke for sale and I want £4,000 for it. Must be mad!!! It had leaked out through the media that George was a member, and looking for uke banjos. Suddenly the value of ukes rocketed. Even the cost of cheaper ukes rose due to the Formby publicity that was hitting the country.

Back at the museum, the continuous tape of George singing, and the video GF documentary video went on and on. It was all very nice on the opening night but can we stand it for three months? MORE NEXT MONTH



George's death mask loaned by John Wallevy, a founder member.

# George's Favourite Sanctuary is Demolished

Warrington Guardian

Landlord's granddaughter gives insight into history

# The Bay Horse: popular with the rich and famous

By JENNI CARROLL

THE Bay Horse pub, demolished at the start of February, was the hub of a thriving community in Warrington town centre at the turn of the 20th century.

The pub, a Grade II listed building and two cottages, were demolished on Sunday, February 13.

Developers should have got permission from the borough council before demolishing the three buildings on the corner of Tanners Lane and Winwick Street, and the council has since confirmed that it is looking into the demolition.

Norma Hare, aged 78, is the granddaughter of Ethel and Tommy Roberts, who ran the pub until 1927.

Norma said: "It's a great shame the pub has been knocked down.

"It was a very popular pub and it was a real social place. People used to know pubs by

the proprietor and my grandma and granddad were well known in Warrington."

The pub was built in 1796, but it was during the Roberts' tenure that some of the most famous people of the day were customers at the Bay Horse, including the Formby family.

In fact, the Bay Horse pub played an important part in young George Formby's life.

When he ran away from stables in Ireland, where he was training to be a jockey, he ran straight to the Bay Horse pub and asked his 'uncle' Tommy Roberts to let him stay.

Norma said: "Liza and my grandma were very great friends.

"She called for my grandma when young George did his first show at Earlestown and she asked her to go along for support.

"After she saw the performance, my grandma said he wasn't a patch on his dad."



**TREASURED MEMORIES:** Norma Hare looks through photographs and books of her family's time at the Bay Horse

**Joan Bramwell**—Latest news from Jim is that Joan, one of our dear Formby friends, is now resident in a nursing home, where she is receiving regular care. Jim had extreme difficulty caring for her at home and the local hospital recommended that a home should be found.

PLEASE SEND A CARD—I'm sure that Jim and Joan will be pleased to hear from you so her new address is: Mrs J Bramwell, Parr Nursing Home, Fleet Lane, St Helens, Lancs. WA9. As a token of appreciation for taking care of Joan, The Pastits have offered to supply the home with entertainment.



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## 30 Years And Not A Cross Word

FROM THE WEEKLY NEWS

It was the TOP OF THE POPS to remember. First it was Adam Ant in his dandy highwayman coat outfit, then up stepped two blokes dressed in bright green Irish leprechaun costumes! Twenty years on, and not a lot is heard of Adam Ant, but the Irish duo, Foster & Allen are still going strong. Indeed the pair went on to sell 18 million records worldwide, stacking up five No. 1 hits in various corners of the globe, and even a video reached the top of the British charts.



Foster & Allen

“And we still have those green suits—though we don't fit into them these days” laughed Tony Allen, the guitar playing half of the duo. To date they've released 25 albums, all of which have gone into the UK charts, and recently, “The Very Best of Foster & Allen” featuring 40 of their best loved songs, with a DVD of their live shows.

“We've been out of fashion for over 30 years, but we are still going strong” said Tony, who now has his own recording studio in his native Ireland. “There's no real secret to our success. The songs we sing were good songs in the 40s, 50s and 60s, and are still good today. We travel all over the world—we're just back from South Africa—and no matter where we are, people request the same songs.” The early years were tough, traveling the length and breadth of the UK in an old van, trying to break through with their easy-on-the-ear harmonies and Irish classic hits. Their first break came in Ireland with “A Bunch of Thyme” but it wasn't until four years later that listeners in Britain heard it and shot the song into the pop Top 10.

“We were in Washington, USA, doing some gigs, putting on an Irish show in a club. That's where we came up with idea of the green suits, which raised a few highbrows. That night, we were told we were on Top Of The Pops the next day so we flew straight to London and went on stage in our Irish suits. They didn't know what to make of us either.” Britain, then the world took notice, and the duo have never looked back.

“In 30 years together, they say they've never had a cross word. “It's true, not an argument at any time,” said Tony. “The secret is not only do we get on but, after we finish touring or recording, we head back to our families and go our separate ways.”

## George in Warrington TV Show



Presenters Clayton and Jamie

We received a phone call from ITV, "Hello Stan, we are filming "Everything Must Go" in Warrington, close to George Formby's grave. Can you gather some players together for the occasion?" - "Yes, but we can't bring the lads from as far as 50 miles away for a quick shot on screen." - "Don't worry the lads will be on screen for at least 8 minutes." As it was a charity show for MINDI didn't want to pressure them.

Thanks to Alan & Pat Chenery, Phil Jones, Bob & Greg Simister, Jed Gennet and Stan Watkinson we had a nice little Formby group neatly set up in the rear corner of the St John's church hall, a couple of stones throw from George in the cemetery.



Shelley Butterworth believes this Dallas B is valuable

The show opened well with the two presenters in Warrington town centre discussing George's connection with the town, and a chat with Sandy who runs the local MIND centre. It then went on to Shelley, daughter of the Butterworth family—long established carpet traders in the local market. They knew George and Fred & Jessie Bailey very well. Shelley held a Dallas "B" uke and told the story of how her father was approached in Stockton Heath (where the Formby family lived) by a man who had a uke signed by George Formby. He wanted £15 for it but Mike gave him gave him £20. She claimed that it was very valuable because George must have played it when he autographed the skin, perhaps owned it. A likely story.

I met the two lads at the church hall and they were delighted that they'd just handled a uke signed by George. I told em: "Go back and tell the Butterworths



Jed Greg Alan Phil Stan

that the signature is a rubber stamp. They didn't believe me so I asked, "Have you ever tried signing a banjo skin reaching across the strings? If George intended writing on the skin he would have found an easier position than ten to the hour."

The church hall was set out with tables in the centre all filled with second-hand items for sale. The church door was opened to the public and the crowds came pouring in. We played George's songs and sang merrily while the customers milled around looking for bargains. The two presenters tried to act a comedy sketch! They played two frying pans but the sound was actually coming from young Greg Simister who

who was hidden behind them, playing his uke. The camera then picked Greg out to expose them as cheats. They chased Greg off. Nice little sketch.

One little daft scene was when I was singing and being filmed. The producer said "lower, - lower, - lower." I thought he was referring to my height, so I stooped down. "No!" he said, "you are singing too loud." Silly me! Fortunately it wasn't screened.

At the start of the show they announced that they would like to raise £800 to fund a holiday trip to the lakes for MIND patients. The total figure was £1429. 00. So they were very pleased with the event.

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## More On Len Wilson by Geoff Shone

FURTHER TO BOB MUIRHEAD'S LETTER—Thank you for reporting the sudden death of my dear friend Len Wilson. Although not well known in the N West he was a very well respected society member at Blackpool. I was first introduced to him at Blackpool by Dennis Lee some 14 years ago and he always stayed with us at the White House Hotel. A widower for many years he lived in Middlesborough. He was a fine steel guitar player and had a collection of Hawaiian Kumla wooden ukuleles which I have had the pleasure of playing. Len taught me a lot about playing and finger chording for which I will always be grateful.



He told me many tales of his paratroop days during the second world war and how his ukulele kept his spirit up at the war front. On the night he died he was at an old comrades meeting for the parachute regiment. He had been on stage and came off to a standing ovation. He sat down in his usual seat and after the interval he was called once again to play for the men. He didn't respond to his name being called, and as they approached him he had his pint and his uke at his side. They saw that his eyes were closed and unfortunately had passed on.

I spoke to Len in February when he rang to apologise for not sending a Christmas card, the first time in 14 years. He had been in hospital for heart surgery.

The gates of heaven have been surely blessed recently with four of my dearest friends having passed on: Len Wilson, Frank Bennett, Joe Hodgins and Billy Uke Scott. Billy & I worked together back in the late 60s and 70s when I was circuit drummer for Mike Hughes Entertainments of Liverpool. I don't know who was more surprised, Bill or me when we met up again nearly 20 years later.

Dolwyn & I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for the pleasure we have had over the years reading and contributing to the George Formby Newsletter. Enjoy your retirement with Eva and the family, from Geoff & Dolwyn Shone.

*Thanks Geoff. I'm afraid we are at the age when we can expect to lose many of our old friends. When our number's called we have to go to the big table. It's a bit like a raffle*

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PLEASE SEND IN AN ARTICLE—BIG or SMALL FOR THE LAST ISSUE

## Sale Report by Vera Eaves

The evening promised to be very entertaining with the return from illness of some of our regulars. It was nice to see Sheila Palmer and Jack & Pauline Valentine fully recovered from their recent illnesses.

Cyril opened the meeting with the annual business report thanking Margery & Gerald for a very successful year. After many years 'holding the fort' as Secretary Cyril Palmer retired from the position. We were all pleased when Ken Ratcliffe offered to take over. Cyril agreed to carry on transporting and setting up the sound system.



Vera also won the Ladies Easter Bonnet prize.



Phil Hatswell had the right name for winning the Men's Easter Bonnet

We welcomed, from Milton Keynes, Janet Hawkins and Christine (Formby) Booth (wife of Jeffrey, the late nephew of George). It was also nice to see again Martin Harrison and all agreed he had been missed at our meetings. As it was an Easter Bonnet Evening, the room was filled with the ladies—and some men—donning their own home made hats, and what a grand job they did.

Dick Eaves, as MC, opened up with Eddie Bancroft singing *Blackpool Rock* and *Chinese Laundry Blues*. Brian Edge entertained us with *Sing A Song About Formby*. Walter Kirkland sang *You Can't Fool Me* and with the bones players on stage they gave us *Railway Bum* in memory of our late member Frank Bennett.

Stan Evans gave us a good hearty laugh stating that it is good for your heart, and all the other body parts, after reading a page called Laughter. He then sang a medley of *Side By Side*, *Happy Days*, and *Show Me The Way To Go Home*, followed by *Daddy's Little Girl*. Jack Valentine gave us *I Can't Give You Anything But Love* and *TT Races*. Remembering St Patrick's Night Margaret Moran sang *How Can You Buy Killarney* and *I'll Take You Home Kathleen*. Alan Newton sang *Little Old Wine Drinker* and *Springtime's Here Again* which brought the first half to a close. Now was the time for the Hat Parade and Janet & Christine offered to be the judges. After two circuits of the parade ring the winners were: Phil Hatswell and Vera Eaves who both received lovely Easter prizes.

After the buffet and raffle the second half was Mceed by Les Pearson who introduced Alan Chenery with *Little Back Room Upstairs* and *Putting On The Style*. Martin Harrison received good applause when he sang *You Don't Need A Licence For That* and *Leaning On A Lamp Post*. Alice Cronshaw gave us *Smile* and *A Little On The Lonely*. Brian Edge brought back memories with *Nursie, Nursie*. David Rhodes with *Window Cleaner* and *Ali Baba's Camel*. Townsend sang *You've Got Something There* and *All I Do Is Dream Of You*. Jim Knight, *Chatanooga Shoe Shine Boy* and a *Bones Medley*. Arthur Newton sang *It's Turned Out Nice Again* and *Sitting On The Top Of Blackpool Tower*. Phil Jones gave us *Putting On The Ritz* and *Dancing Cheek To Cheek*. Bryn Evans sang *Just One More Chance* and *Did You Ever See A Dream Walking*. Cyril Palmer then gave us *Blue Ridge Round My Heart* and *Hula Heaven*, followed by Alan Chenery with *Wigan Boat Express* and Martin Harrison with *Our Sergeant Major*. THANKS VERA—GRAND JOB!!!!

Our good friend, **Bob Hodson**, editor for the Ukulele Society of Gt Britain, wrote in his latest magazine, "We are a purist ukulele society, and unlike the George Formby Society, we make our own music. That is why we employ a backing band. I do hope we are NOT going down the road of backing tapes. Your opinion on this would be appreciated, but this is how your editor feels about the subject."



So I replied:- **Mechanical Backing Tracks:**

"Isn't it amazing Bob, we can print 20,000 words to perfection and nobody bothers to comment. But as soon as we make one error everybody jumps on our backs. I made one particular error at the turn of the year when I printed Jan 2004 on the front of the George Formby Newsletter. It should have read "2005" - and just about everybody commented on the mistake.

Well now it's my turn to jump on your back. On page 5 of the last Syncopator, you claimed, - supported by Paul's Culkin's limerick— that the GFS don't use a backing band at their concerts. This is totally incorrect!!! The GFS hold four weekend concerts per year at the Wintergardens and have really excellent, and well experienced, live backing on stage. They are capable of backing any Formby song thrown at them and are often asked to accompany non-Formby stuff.

Now the USGB do a great job in providing live backing on stage, but please bear in mind that (as far as I am aware) it is for two concerts per year only, - and four for the GFS. It is not a big task finding backing for such a small number of shows. However, in the North West here (most of whom are not members of the GFS, including myself) we hold almost 80 concerts per year, plus special shows, making a total of around 100 concerts annually. We find it an impossible task engaging accompanists who are prepared to travel to various venues on such a regular basis. Sometimes we hit on an excellent keyboard player but then find that he/she is not into Formby.

Just imagine attempting to hold a Digswell meeting around 100 times per year. All would go well for a month or so, but how long would it take for the backing group to get bored of playing the same songs over and over again. Very shortly there would be absences on stage, a breakdown of the band, and the committee would eventually be considering using mechanical backing tracks.

However we still have a few players who prefer to use the accompaniment of the uke only and they sound great. But we also have a number who attempt to play without backing and, on the night, they could sound dreadful. They could set off in the wrong key and then struggle to reach the end.

Keep up the good work Bob. As we would say up north, "You are doing a real grand job! Nobody appreciates more than I the amount of work that goes into producing a regular magazine. Stan Evans.

## A Few Facts from Brian Edge

Thousands of years ago, cats were worshipped as gods. . .they've never forgotten it.  
 There's two theories as to arguing with a woman . . . . . neither one works  
 When everything's coming your way, you're usually in the wrong lane  
 There is no such thing as Mr Right. There is, however, Mr Trainable!  
 One nice thing about egotists -- they don't talk about other people  
 The golden years . . . . . When actions creak louder than words  
 Why is the third hand on the watch called a second hand?  
 A clean desk is a sign of a cluttered desk drawer.  
 Few women admit their age. Few men act theirs.  
 A flashlight is a case for holding dead batteries.  
 Shin: a device for finding furniture in the dark.  
 Stop repeat offenders. Quit re-electing them  
 No one is listening until you make a mistake.  
 Crime wouldn't pay if the government ran it  
 If cows could fly, you'd appreciate seagulls  
 Born free . . . Taxed to death  
 Most toilets flush in E flat.

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## Blackpool Night by Alan Chenery



And what a grand night it was with Jimmy Bowtie once again stealing the show.

Charles spends the full afternoon setting up all the equipment before the meeting, so he looked worried when Jimmy started to dismantle it all by unhooking the mike and parading the floor in

Sinatra style, - dragging the cables with him.

It was a pleasant surprise to see Paul & Kath Mountain walk through the door. We can always guarantee a few Formby numbers from Paul, and once again he didn't let us down.

It was a bit slow at the beginning but by the end of the night we had ten acts including The Pastits (The two Stans), Cyril Palmer, Charles Stewart, Ben Hallelwell, Paul Mountain, Des Redfern, Jimmie Bowtie, Margaret Moran, Peter Brown and Alan Chenery. Pat Chenery on the door, Charles Stewart MC, Peter on sound And our usual lady, Freda, setting out the butties. *Thanks Alan.*



Doreen

### The Whitehouse Hotel

102 Adelaide Street  
 Blackpool FY1 4LA  
 Tel 01253 620156

Hosts: Doreen & Jack Cumpsty  
 extend a warm & friendly  
 welcome to all George Formby  
 Society members and players.

Party night starts Saturday  
 night to Sunday morning with  
 our resident Compere  
**DES REDFERN**

Excellent Buffet included  
 Bring your ukes and play for  
 your supper (Residents only)  
 Last artist brings the milk in.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Doreen is a George Formby fan  
 who attends our Blackpool  
 monthly meetings at the South  
 Shore Cricket Club.*



**Bobby Grand**—Just had a visit from professional Formby entertainer Bob Garner who goes under the stage name of Bobby Grand. Over the past years he has worked the clubs in the N. West and also been resident around the holiday and caravan parks in the Rhyl area. Bob turned professional in 1964 and has worked at it ever since, playing with groups like The Mersey Beats and Creation. He's also had long term tours in Germany. As a goodwill tour he played in New York after the Twin Towers were destroyed.

Later he turned to writing songs, and especially Line Dance Music. He wrote a very lively song titled Hill Billy Rock and Simon Cowell liked the sound of it. It was used in the Woolpackers video (Emmerdale Farm) which Simon produced.

**UKE FOR SALE**—Bob's main reason for the visit was to bring an excellent "Dallas D" uke banjo which he wishes to sell. If this uke could talk it would tell a few tales because it has travelled all over with Bobby: theatres, clubs, cabarets, and throughout Spain. It has been completely refurbished to a first class and highly polished condition with a very bright sound.



Price  
£300  
with  
soft  
case

Bobby with the Dallas D

Bobby has fitted two mikes (with standard jack plugs) inside the drum to give more volume for the large halls and theatres, but claims, that due to the loud volume of the uke he hardly used the mikes. In the centre of the skin there is a drawing of a Spanish Bull which he had drawn for the Spanish tour when he sang George's "The Lancashire Toreador."

Bob left the uke with me so on his behalf I will take it to the N West meetings. Ring me on 01925 727102 if you are interested.

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### Who's The Young Dolly Bird?

Here we have a young starlet who swept the board whenever she entered a singing competition. This was way back in the 19??s. Who is it? Answer back cover.

Some years ago I asked her to help me out with a Ladies Social Club in Warrington. I received a phone call to say that she will be a bit late but keep the show going until she arrives.



It was a well organised ladies meeting in a church hall and well attended by smartly dressed ladies. The meeting was opened with a prayer by the local vicar. As I was singing my first song, she walked in. I introduced her to the crowd and she apologised for the delay. Not noticing the vicar was presiding, she opened up with one of the bluest joke, which I thought would have caused a riot. Les Pearson and I cringed, but the crowd, and the vicar, had a hearty good laugh.

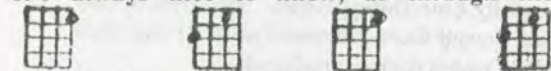
# Share And Share Alike for Jed Gennet

Stan, I can't get the song "Share And Share Alike" out of my head. Can you send me the words and chords? *No problem Jed: This song has got to be one of George's best so why don't we hear it more?*

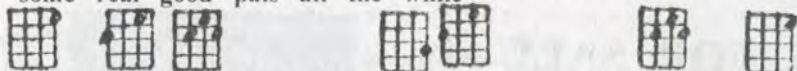
Suggested Tuning  
C F A D



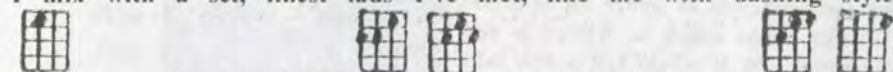
It's always nice to know, as through life you go



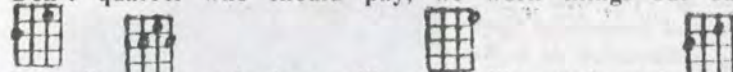
You've some real good pals all the while



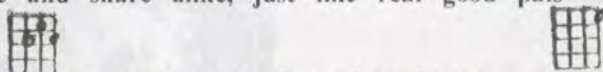
I mix with a set, finest lads I've met, like me with dashing style.



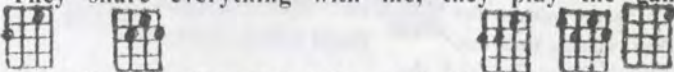
Don't quarrel who should pay, we work things out our way.



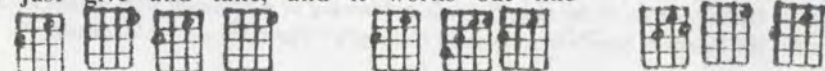
We all share and share alike, just like real good pals



They share everything with me, they play the game, I do the same



We all just give and take, and it works out fine



They've never any money but they're real good pals so they all share mine

We like to have a joke, with the women folk

Oh we're all real devil may care

If a fella clicks he shares with five or six, we're all like 'Owen Nares'.

The girls always make a fuss, over strapping cavemen like us

But we all share and share alike, just like real good pals.

They share everything with me, they play the game, I do the same

They all just give and take, and it works out fine.

Not one has got a missus but they're real good pals so they all share mine.

Not one has got a home but still they're real good pals so they all share mine

Customer: How much for a hair cut?

Barber: £5

Customer: How much for a shave?

Barber: £2

Customer: Shave my head.

Customer: How much are the two pies?

Baker: £3 for the two

Customer: How much for one?

Baker: £2

Customer: I'll have the other.

**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

July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005

ROOSTERS NIGHTCLUB< WARRINGTON

North West Newsletter Celebration Night

Tickets - £3.00 each to include buffet (limited to 100) The Newsletter seems to have been with us for ever but July 2005 it will have been filed to the history section. On July 23rd we will be celebrating the purpose of the Newsletter ie to celebrate the life and times of George Formby. We will also celebrate the achievements of Stan Evans who single handedly conceived, steered, assembled & published the Newsletter during this time. So :

1. Book a ticket  
Paul Woodhead 01952 598840 or email paulwoodhead@supanet.com
2. Turn up on the night with your instrument(s).
3. Take part in this one off concert event.

Lets make it a special event for George and for Stan.

Any unusual entertainment is welcome and several "special", well known but rarely seen GFS guests have already committed to join us.

Ring or email now. Don't be left out. Roosters has a strict limit on it's numbers. I will have to let those tickets that are left go on a first come, first served basis.

\*\*\*\*\*  
If I write a book called 'How to Fail' and it doesn't sell does that mean I'm a success?

Married people don't really live longer than single people, it just seems longer.

Women's minds are cleaner than men's because they change it more often.

Confidence is the feeling you have before you understand the situation.

If your feet smell and your nose runs you're built upside down.

It's not hard to meet expenses, they're everywhere.

If you're open-minded your brains will fall out.

## Blackpool's Wintery Gardens

Well our phone was hot during the last GFS weekend meeting at Blackpool. While Eva & I were snuggled in front of a nice warm fire, the members of the society were stamping their hands and clapping their feet to keep warm. It was freezing cold weather outside and apparently just as cold inside. Some reported that they sat in the huge theatre room all wrapped up in anoraks, and some went out shopping to buy extra sweaters.

About 50 odd new faces turned up for the first time and shivered throughout the meeting. Some went home but most braved it out, proving that George's music is still a great attraction. I was wondering if anyone dared to get up on stage to sing "Sitting On The Ice In The Ice Rink." And did they show the film "I See Ice?"

# George Formby Meetings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Wintergardens George Formby Society Meetings:

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](mailto:ian@formbytowers.co.uk) for details on the GFS or Wintergarden meetings.

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**Web Site** —[www.stanevans.co.uk](http://www.stanevans.co.uk)

which links to George Formby or The Pastits

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

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Back copies from No.1 of the Newsletter are available at a special offer of 40p plus postage.

Address on front cover.

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**SO WHO'S THE YOUNG DOLLY BIRD on P17?**

WELL IT'S NO OTHER THAN OUR SALE NIGHTINGALE

MARGARET MORAN showing off all her trophies.

