

THE
GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 120

Vol. 10
No. 12
Jun 2005



Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
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Welcome to Newsletter No. 120



Founder Wally Cronshaw

This is it Wally!

This is the one the cobbler threw at his wife! The Last!!!

But haven't we done well over the past ten years? We've produced about 23,500 Newsletters and dispatched them all to the meetings and through mail order. And never once have we been late with our deliveries. That's because you



Yours Truly

were hounding me from your Heavens and shouting, "Come on, get moving, the members are waiting for the next issue."

I will never forget the way you chased me round the meetings ten years ago. You were hounding me to get started with a North West Newsletter and I was reluctant to go along with the idea because there were those who would claim it was done to oppose the GFS Vellum Magazine. Not on your life, and time has proved it. The Vellum still remains as a glossy coloured magazine while our George Formby Newsletter has picked up and reported all the nitty-gritty chit-chat that possibly the Vellum would have been too proud to use. So we'll get on with the Newsletter shall we?

Eh Wally, the first bit of news is that your Granddaughter, Jenny Cronshaw, has got married to Gareth Hargreaves. Alice gave me

the photo of Jenny and Gareth at the Sale meeting.

I'll bet Jenny's

never forgotten her uke playing days when you and Alice drove her to all the meetings. On stage she would say, "I'm going to sing a song for my Granddad." She was reet proud of you. This photo was taken when she was in the Junior competition at the Wintergardens. She really enjoyed singing George's songs.



Young Jenny at the Wintergardens

And Another Sad Loss Walter Langshaw has Died

An Obituary by Alan Southworth—Walter Langshaw died on the 24th April 2005, aged 82 years.

Walter was born in 1922 in the Manchester area and he lived there all his life. He spent 47 years working on the railway, first for the L.M.S. Company and then for British Rail. He worked his way up to the mainline engine driver and spent many years on the London run, spending nights in London where he was able to visit the variety theatres to see all the great acts of the day. George Formby and Max Miller were two of his favourites.



As a youngster he had always been interested in the variety theatres and when he was 16 years old he successfully auditioned for Will Murray's entertainment troupe, Casey's Court. Many years earlier it had been the foundation for the careers of Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel. Being so young he had to get a form signed by his parents and on the way home he had second thoughts about leaving home so he never went back to the agent. Instead he formed a double act with his friend, Ernie, writing much of the material and songs for the act, but the war intervened and Ernie was called up. On his first leave he told Walter that he had joined a concert party and the material was going down well. Sadly some months later Ernie was killed in action and that was the end of the act.

Walter carried on the sometimes dangerous job of moving men and munitions all over the country in wartime Britain. One day in 1948 he was browsing through a Regal Zonophone record catalogue and came across a novelty record by a famous racing tipster who called himself Ras Prince Monolulu from Sunny Honolulu. This gave him the idea to write the song 'Princess Lulu' which he later sold to Stanley King one night when he appeared at the Manchester Hippodrome. Walter got 30 shillings for the song and Stanley used it to great effect in his stage act and in the Frank Randle film 'Somewhere in England'. Many years later Walter joined the G.F.S. and started the Sale branch with Bob Sheldon. Bob is no longer with us but the society they started is still going strong over 30 years later. About this time Walter was involved in a serious moped accident which permanently damaged his left shoulder, making it difficult for him to hold a ukulele. After two years of surgery and physiotherapy he did manage to return to work on local engine driving duties only.

This was his most prolific period for song writing and he wrote a lovely song about George's life, 'The Lancashire Lad and His Uke', Eddie Latta's song about Grandad's nightshirt inspired him to write 'My Grandad's Bowler Hat', other songs followed, 'Robin Hood', 'Fearless Fred the Fireman', 'Don't Let Them Touch My Ukulele' and 'I've a Video Film of That'. Walter's other hobby was painting and he was quite an accomplished portrait painter. Walter has not been in the best of health since his retirement but there was always a twinkle in his eye and a cheerful grin and a joke whenever I called or met him. The legacy of songs he left us will ensure that his name will live on in ukulele circles for many, many years to come. Thanks Walter. Alan Southworth.

Many Thanks Alan. Walter was a really nice chap who will be remembered for his great comedy songs.

A Report on the death of **Alan Randall** is in the centre pages

Big Cheer For Connie Edge at Bernard's Debut

Bernard Ashmore made his debut as the *Master of Ceremonies* at the April 2005 meeting and what a good job he made of it? It is just over 12 months since Bernard bought his ukulele and since then he has worked hard practising and I am really delighted that he has now made his mark as one of our M.C.'s. Bernard I am sure found the job rather rewarding particularly when Margaret Moran was on stage! Only joking Bernard! (Rest assured I won't tell Pam). I must say that he has really thrown his all into our society since he first joined us and he is a tremendous asset to our ranks.



Alan Newton was unable to attend on the night due to him having to play with his popular band the *Salt City Jazzmen*. We also had apologies from Steve Hassall, Jim Knight, Dave Clews, Angela Caldicott, Phil, and Ashley but as usual we had our great audience of around ninety. We were however, delighted to have with us on the occasion of St George's day, Margaret Moran and Les, and also from the Sale Branch, Cyril Palmer, David Rhodes, Gerald, Margery, Ken and Ann Ratcliffe who all said they had enjoyed the evening. And of course we had the usual support from our friends from Penyffordd. Cyril Palmer won this month's George Formby Film Video. Don't forget there will be another in the raffle each month for the next seven months so do have a go and try and win one. They are good relaxing entertainment.

The versatile Harry Jones stood in for Angela Caldicott on the sound system and along with our excellent Sound Engineer Colin Wood they did a grand job on the night. One of the biggest cheers of the night went to Connie who got on stage and played her ukulele and entertained for the first time in well over a year due to illness. I was particularly proud of her effort which was very encouraging.

It was Frankie Woods' birthday on the night and Jonathan led the singing of Happy Birthday for a great entertainer and a very faithful supporter from Rhyl. Frank raised his hand in appreciation. After the final thrash "Leaning on a Lamp-Post" all the performers stayed on stage and through the curtains came Margaret Moran draped in the English Flag – the red cross of St George, and she sang what I believe to be the only song that can follow "Leaning on a Lamp-Post" that being "Land of Hope and Glory." We all experienced a great patriotic finale – every table in the room dressed with large Union flags and the flag of St George appeared on either side of the stage and everyone in the audience had a flag that they eagerly waved. Everyone went home with the feeling "It Makes You Proud to be British" – a phrase frequently used by George Formby. Who said we can't fly our own flag in our own country – bravo everybody!

Artistes taking part in the Concert and their songs.

THRASH (four numbers), WALTER KIRKLAND – "Frank on his Tank" and a Solo on the bones. CLIFF ROYLE – "Little Ukulele" and "The Lottery Millionaire." BRIAN EDGE – "Guarding the Home of the Home Guards." ALICE CRONSHAW – "Lily Marlene" & "You Made Me Love You." PHIL & DEG – "Auntie Maggie's Home Made Remedy," "Bye Bye Blackbird Medley" & "Who Do You Think you are Kidding Mr Hitler" medley. MARGARET MORAN "Lay Down your Arm and Surrender to Mine," & "Yours." CYRIL PALMER – "I'll See You In My Dreams," & "You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming." DAVID RHODES – "Granddad's Flannelette Nightshirt," "Wigan Boat Express" & "The Window Cleaner." ARTHUR NEWTON – "Careless Love" & "I Promised

to be Home by 9 o'clock." JONATHAN BADDELEY - "It's a Grand and Healthy Life," "Sitting on the Top of Blackpool Tower" & "They Laughed When I Started to Play." CLIFF, ARTHUR & COLIN - "Blackpool Rock." BERNARD ASHMORE & ARTHUR NEWTON - "Goodnight Little Fellow Goodnight." PAMELA BADDELEY - "Al Jolson Medley." PAMELA & JON - "Count Your Blessings and Smile." VERA JONES - "The Sunny Side of the Street" & "Over My Shoulder." PETE DODD, BERNARD ASHMORE, RALPH WHITTAKER, COLIN & CLIFF - "Putting on the Style." CONNIE EDGE - "Living in the Middle of Trafalgar Square." THRASH - "Leaning on a Lamp-Post" and finally MARGARET MORAN - Accompanied by the entire flag-waving audience singing "Land of Hope and Glory."

THIS IS IT I'M SORRY TO SAY.

Well folks this is the last issue of the Formby Newsletter and I am particularly sad it is all coming to an end. It has done so much for us at Crewe and indeed our members have been great supporters of the publication. I know that many in our society always looked forward to the next edition and were always eager to be the first to get their hands on a copy.

Apart from the marathon task that Stan had to get the magazine out each month he never missed a single deadline, although he had a few near misses due to his photocopying machine breaking down or his computer hiding one of his pages at the last minute. Stan knew the kind of stories that appealed to his readers and his stories always showed his great compassion for his many friends particularly when they were experiencing serious illness - he often wrote "may George's Light shine on you," and we all took comfort from those words and really believed "George's Light" would do just that. He also knew that we liked a laugh and was always keen to put in a cartoon or a joke here and there.

He loved George Formby and with this in mind he never made any attempt to add colour to the publication because he rightly maintained that George was from the black and white era. He was also a great supporter of Beryl who indeed was a very astute manager in a period of male domination. Although the egotistical male presented Beryl as a dragon she doubtless proved that a good woman was very hard to beat.

Everyone knew the magnitude of the task of producing a twenty page magazine every four weeks. This was confirmed when Stan gave us all good notice of his intention to retire as Editor for not a single person ventured to suggest that we try to find someone to continue with the production of the magazine. Everyone was well aware that there was only one person dedicated enough to tackle such a job and that was Stan.

From my own point of view I must have contributed over a million words to the newsletter during the last ten years so one shudders to think of Stan's contribution not to mention writing stories, collecting the stories from contributors, production of the artwork, photocopying, collating pages, folding, stapling, stuffing envelopes, addressing, stamping, posting and distributing finished copies to the branches before starting the whole thing over again.

Stan, it has been great fun working with you and we all at Crewe wish you a good rest from the routine which has been your life for the past 18 years. (Eight years as Editor of the George Formby Society's magazine "Vellum" and ten years as Editor of our very own George Formby Newsletter). I speak for all readers of the newsletter when I say "Thanks a Million Stan you are unique."

Thank you Brian. It's been a joy to do and it'll take some time to adjust from working on the Newsletter. REST??? Eva's started teaching me how to operate the washing machine.

Super Cliff's Last Report

This is rather a sad occasion as it is our report for the last edition of the Newsletter which has kept us all informed about what is going on particularly in the Northwest. Your publication will be greatly missed. However to you, Eva and your family we send the very best of Good Wishes for the future. *Many thanks Cliff.*



This is Super Cliff who has been head cook, bottle washer and nurse maid during Margaret's set back.

Our meeting was blessed with a good number of new faces including a group of relations of Dot Wood; Bishop Gerald J. Crane (Bishop of Llandudno) whom we met at the Llandudno Victorian Weekend; and John Edmiston a Branch member of years past who we hope will return fully to the fold. This was our V.E. Celebration Night. The hall was decked out with bunting, balloons, flags and red, white and blue tablecloths. A considerable amount of time and effort had been put into this aspect by Myra and Jim Knight, and Alison Nadin. We are indebted to them for all this and other hard work they do for our Branch. A number were in typical wartime dress, including a "spiv" who still has silk stockings to sell.

So what about the Concert. There are many reports that it was an excellent night. After the THRASH, apologies were given for Stan Evans and Alan Chenery who were to attend a special VE Day Celebration in Yorkshire on the Saturday. (Hope the weather was better than at the Crewe Celebration). Then followed a minutes silence in respect of the death of Alan Randall (one of George's greatest exponents), and finally Birthday Greetings to our very own Alison Nadin without whom we possibly could not survive. So Happy Birthday Alison.

The concert started with Alice Cronshaw singing Happy Birthday to Alison, and followed this with that lovely wartime song Lily Marlene, and I've Got a Boy Friend (as if we did not know). The next performance was by young Daniel Smith who played the War Time Medley accompanied by sister Sophie (birthday two days later) who popped up during Run Rabbit Run dressed as a rabbit, danced around and gave a great curtsy at the end. There was great applause. Then followed Walter Kirkland (Can't Keep a Growing Lad Down, and Down the Mississippi played on the Bones); Gerald Jones (Bingo Magic, his own composition, and Maxi the Taxi Driver); Brian Edge (Guarding the Home of the Home Guard); Pam Baddeley (Baby Face and Count Your Blessings and Smile), latter accompanied by husband Jonathan; Jonathan Baddeley (When the Waterworks Caught Fire and Our Fanny's Gone All Yankee); Tom Meredith back to his old form and in full flight (Blackpool Rock and Lamp Post); the Three Tenors, Phil, Frank and Deg, (Auntie Maggie's Remedy, and a War Time Medley); and Greg Simister our young Star (Out In the Middle East, with Fez, and William Tell Overture). What a performance the latter was and it brought the house down. It seems he was aided on this by tutor John Shreeve, and I gather it may have taken him twelve months to get to such an excellent stage. Well done Greg!

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

After the official opening of the Warrington Museum George Formby Exhibition we strolled down to the Pattern Arms Hotel where we finished the night with a Formby concert. We were fortunate to book a room so close to the museum and especially as it was at the last minute after discovering that the booked room at the Alliance Club had double booked. It all Turned Out Nice Again in the end because the Pattern Arms was to be our venue for the next couple of years, and many Formby fans paid their first visit there. Dickie Speake and his keyboard made their way to the hotel and by the time we arrived, the small concert rooms (actually they were originally two stables) were heaving with Formbymania. You could hear the music bellowing out half way down Parker Street. The non-stop concert went on to make an excellent finish to a grand Formby Exhibition Opening, and half way through the night we had a surprise visit from George's sister, Louie, who got a great kick out of meeting her brother's fans. The night was over and all went home thoroughly delighted.

The Warrington Exhibition did a wonderful job in uniting the members of the Formby family. Almost all the family members were divided and living in different parts of the world, rarely contacting each other. The first we made contact with was George's sister, Louie, who lived alone in Warrington. It didn't take long for Eva & I to discover that poor Louie was mentally ill and completely mixed up with her ramblings.

At 84 years of age she told us that she was pregnant to one of the TV newsreaders and if she kept her TV playing all through the night he would receive more wages. No doubt this was due to living a lonely life. She was in a fantasy world, but she talked sensibly when we asked her about the Formby family history. She had a wonderful memory of the past years, right back to her childhood days, and enjoyed reminiscing about the show business years. She was also an expert at impersonating her father and singing his songs.



Louie on stage with brother Frank

The second family member to contact us was Jeffrey Booth, Frank Formby's son. He had been cut off from the rest of the Formby family for many years and had no idea where they were. He phoned us in the hope that he could contact other Formby members.

Jeffrey and his wife, Christine, became good supportive friends of the Formby Society. We told Louie that Jeffrey had contacted us and her immediate reaction was: "Don't have anything to do with him, he's bringing a lorry to take all my fur-



Jeffrey (Formby) Booth, son of Frank Formby.

niture away. Poor Louie was obsessed with thoughts of people stealing from her. Before Louie would open the door to Jeffrey he was grilled with lots of questions about the Formby family.

Knowing Jeffrey was a great benefit to the society because, after speaking to Louie, he immediately set about tracing other Formby members. These were: Ella in America, Ethel in South Africa (both George's sisters) : Ted in Oxford (George's Brother) : and George's nephews and nieces including Geraldine, who often attends our N West functions.



Left: Geraldine (Ethel's daughter) Mike (Ella's grandson) and Angela (Frank's daughter).

The Warrington Exhibition brought about big changes in the GFS. Until then the meetings had been held in a large room—with a 10 minutes, beer spilling trip, (up the stairs) from the bar, at the Imperial Hotel Blackpool. This was laid on with the generosity of the manager John Herdman who was a keen Formby fan and who didn't seem concerned about demanding payment of the overdue rent. There was talk of abandoning the GFS should John lose his position as manager.

This wasn't far off because the Forte Group took over The Imperial Hotel and at the next meeting we were made very uncomfortable. Big changes were taking place and uke playing George Formbys didn't fit in with their new image.

We received a letter from John Herdman. He'd taken over as manager of the Savoy Hotel and we were welcome there. This we did for the next meeting, but somehow it didn't appeal to the fast growing membership. Publicity throughout the country and Europe was bringing in a lot of new members so it was important that we establish ourselves in an attractive venue.

Eve & Charles Stewart mounted a search to find a suitable meeting place. 287 new members had joined in 1990 and 1991 and many of them showed interest in attending their first meeting. Things were desperate. We then received a phone call from Eve & Charles. They'd found the Wintergardens as the ideal venue and they'd also negotiated free room rent with the Blackpool Council. "Pay or we'll lose the Formby image to somewhere like Southport." they told the council. A brilliant job done and the society is still benefiting from this today, some 14 years later.



A basic stage setting at the Imperial Hotel

The Warrington show brought in the media from all over the country and hardly a week passed without cameras and mikes being prodded into our faces. The Museum in all its 100 years had never experienced anything like it. One morning I turned up at the Museum and saw a huge crowd blocking the street. I naturally thought that there had been an accident or a robbery or something, but when I managed to get to the front of the crowds I realised that they were waiting for the doors to open. A lot of the success of the exhibition was due to 16 year old Anthony Mason who turned up each day to entertained the crowds. Over the first couple of weeks, a lot of visitors tried to join in the singing with Anthony but didn't know the tunes or the words. However, after purchasing a Formby tape from the little shop, they came in for a second visit and enjoyed singing with him.



Eve & Charles found the Wintergardens

The keenest fans of all were the motor bike boys who had great admiration for George. He was a hero to them. On one occasion we had a crowd who had hopped on the boat from the Isle Of Man TT Races. They were highly delighted with the show and asked Anthony to sing all George's popular songs, plus their favourite, "Riding In The TT Races" which they joined in with. Due to the vast amount of publicity our show became very popular and many claimed that it played a part in putting Warrington on the map. Whenever I parked my car in the town centre, the attendant would say, "Let him through, it's George Formby."

During the next 12 months the society members were invited to perform on many TV and Radio shows. For "Children In Need" we represented the N. West area at the Manchester BBC Studios, along with well known names like, Terry Wogan (not a Formby fan) George Melly, Kenny Baker, Bert Weedon, Hamish Muir, Acker Bilk, Johnny Dankworth & Cleo Lane) Don Lusher, Reg Varney, Russ Abbott, and three ladies named Fairer Sax. What a great performance this was. In turn each group played their piece and then we were all brought together with "When The Saints Come Marching In." A wonderful finish and we all went home delighted.

The Warrington Council organised a George Formby Road Race and asked if I would accompany the Mayor during the event. No way! I'm not into Mayors and Mayoresses, so I rang Ray Bernard, "Ray, get me out of trouble. The Warrington Mayor needs a Formby representative to accompany him and you are ideal for the job." Ray was delighted. He phoned to say how pleased he was to ride in the Mayor's Rolls Royce and enjoy a meal with them. Also he was invited to present prizes to the road race cycle winners and also to perform a few Formby songs. Yes it was all happening in Warrington. George Harrison, when interviewed on radio said, "Yes, there's no doubt about it, this is George Formby's year." When asked about playing the uke he said, "It is such a happy sound."

A GF Competition was organised by the council and guess what the prize was? A George Formby tape. Why not? they were hard to obtain then. Continued over ..

CONTINUED— A George Formby coach trip was organised from the Museum and we also appeared on BBC Merseyside's 'Hold Your Plums' with Billy Butler and Wally Scott. BBC TV picked up on the publicity and immediately started to screen George's films. There was great response from the public, and requests to join, when John Walley was interviewed by John Dunn on Radio 2, a very popular show. Several Formby members from all over the country, rang to say that their local paper, or radio, had reported the exhibition. Michael Parkinson rang from the radio studios to interview us, and plans were put forward for TV producer, Daniel Wiles, to produce a George Formby "South Bank Show" which gave the society a tremendous amount of positive publicity.

Alan Randall said, "If you had to pay for all your free publicity it would have cost at least three million pounds.

Paul Mountain Sums It Up 29th April 1991

Dear Stan, I would like to take opportunity to thank everyone concerned for the hard work and forethought that went into the construction of the Warrington George Formby Exhibition. It was out of this world and by far the best ever collection of photos, ukes and all kinds of Formby memorabilia, that I have ever seen. And all under one roof. The design and layout was excellent and I'm sure that many hundreds, if not thousands, of hours must have gone into the organising of it.



Sorry about the photo Paul but it's the only one I have. Is that a glass of beer coming out of your ear? How did you do that?

The welcoming drink as we entered the museum was the perfect touch to the start of a great evening. There were so many things to see and so little time to admire it all that I must make another trip to view it all again. This time to take it all in.

What an opening day by Alan Randall. I think he gave it the right touch, nothing stuff-shirtish or melodramatic, but a light-hearted approach. George would have been proud. How kind it was for people to lend their prized possessions to make this such a memorable occasion. It was all laid out so neatly, which reflected the way George was in life whenever he performed on stage. Let us hope that the exhibition is such a success that it runs for many months, if not years to come.

After viewing the exhibition we made our way to the Pattern Arms Hotel and a great social evening followed to round off a perfect day. During the evening we were fortunate to be graced with the presence of George's sister, Louie who sat and enjoyed every minute of the concert. May I say a special thank you to all who helped to make this such a perfect day. Paul Mountain.

SHORTLY I WILL BE PRODUCING A VIDEO/ DVD OF AROUND SIX HOURS OF FORMBY PUBLICITY STARTING FROM THE EXHIBITION.

John Sheeve Emails

Here is a short story telling of how I became a uke playing George Formby Fanatic. It all started when I was eight and I was watching the kids television program Blue Peter after school one night and Peter Duncan did a spot on George Formby. I remember vividly him singing When I'm Cleaning Windows, followed by a uke solo. From then on I was hooked and wanted to hear more.



My dad had some old tapes of him and played them to me when he took me out in the car. I couldn't stop playing the songs and kept rewinding the uke solos back again and again. So now I wanted a uke like George. My uncle Fred, who was a professional country and western musician, made me a toy uke out of an old steak and kidney pie tin and a few fishing wire strings. So now I could mime the solos as George played them.

I then bought a little yellow plastic uke with red strings from a local sweet and toy shop. It cost £1.50, but it enabled me to play most of the chords to Leaning On A Lamp Post and Cleaning Windows. Unfortunately it broke, so now I wanted another one, but £1.50 wasn't easy to find. My mum said she would give my cousin and I £1.50 each if we camped out in the garden all night in my tent. We tried but got scared and came in a few hours later. The next night we tried again and this time I remember waking up about 5 am and seeing daylight and saying to my cousin, "We've done it." My mum paid us so we went to the shop and bought the last uke.

A few months later my uncle and mum both spotted a melody uke in the Liverpool Echo for sale. Unknowingly they both rung up about it for me, but my uncle pipped my mum to the post and bought it. My mum didn't know that it was my uncle that had bought it and thought that she had lost out. It was great to play and my uncle taught me the first five chords, and played me a Lonnie Donegan record called Lazy John, which I picked up in no time. I'm sure I must have driven my poor nan and mum mad with all the practice. From then on it was just me and my George Formby records. I would just listen for hours on end and study George's sounds and chords, then try and do the same.

It was a very exciting time for me. I played anywhere I was asked and had lots of encouragement from most of my teachers in school. I played in the school orchestra, and countless school concerts. My first big experience of the stage was at Butlins in Ayr where I was entered a talent contest. I think I came second. I wrote to the George Formby society with an address off the back of one of my LPs called Chip Of The Old Block, and got a reply asking me to join, - but at 10 I was too young to go to Blackpool on my own. In 1991 I attended the Opening Night of the Warrington Exhibition and that's where I joined the society. Its hard to believe that I've been playing for 24 years. I still enjoy it and hope to be playing for many years to come.

Thanks John I remember you making your first appearance at the exhibition and giving us a brilliant demonstration of how a £15 uke can be played. Keep on playing.

John Ruffley of Preston reports on George's 1924 Ner-a-car Model B, which was discovered rusting away in a basement in 1990.



George's Ner-a-car in almost scrap condition with the ex-mayor of Preston. On the right is Brian Beck the owner.

JOHN TELLS THE STORY: "The car now belongs to Mr Brian Beck, an antique dealer, and is now fully restored and on display at No.10 Cannon Street, Preston. Going back 35 years the car belonged to a

very good friend of mine, Neville Tudor Thomas, who was an optician and owned the Cannon Street shop. Unknown to me the car, which belonged to Neville's father, was in the basement collecting dust and rotting away. It is understood that his father bought it from

Old Cock Yard Garage at the back of the antique shop. Had I known, I would have been pleased to have restored it myself as I had the necessary equipment and contacts in the motor trade. I am not certain of the cost of restoring the car but a figure of £30,000 plus has been mentioned."



And here is the Ner-a-car ready for the road

S.O.S.—John claims that George rode the Ner-a-car in one of his films but I don't recall having seen it, DO YOU? He said, "If I close my eyes I can see George in one of his films (front camera view) sat in something, driving madly, and shouting, 'Oh Mother.'"

Many thanks John for your article. The nearest I can get to the film is "Spare A Copper" where George speeds through the country lanes in a small car. Perhaps one of the readers can throw some light on it. If so, you can ring John on 01772 795800.

What's White—Yellow— Green—Yellow and White? - A frog butty.

Dennis Lee Emails from Cyprus

Hi Stan, I must say right away that I will greatly miss not receiving the Newsletter each month. Living out here in Cyprus it was an ideal way of keeping me in touch with what was going on over there. As you know all my mail is sent via a Post Office Box and many were the times when I've sat outside the Post Office refusing to go home until I'd read the Newsletter from cover to cover!



And here is the Ukulele Band which was formed by Dennis soon after he moved to Cyprus. Great work Dennis.

I believe that the success of the various groups in the Northwest is in no small way attributable to your publication. Nay, I'll go further than that and say that your unstinting drive and determination in helping the groups by your attendance at the meetings should be mentioned also. Without your support I feel that some of the groups, particularly in the early stages, would have struggled to maintain their presence. I feel sure that I speak for all when I say that we fully understand the reasons for your decision and that you deserve a well earned rest. No doubt Eva will look forward to the rest also!

Perhaps now you'll have a little more time to arrange gigs & events whereby the groups may show their appreciation & support you a bit more. Let us hope so. The Ukulele Band out here consists of 8 ex-pats, none of whom had ever played a uke before. We go around entertaining at various venues and the reception we get is often overwhelming.

We've been fortunate in having members from the UK visit us from time to time and it's always a pleasure to see them. If any member is thinking of visiting Cyprus then they can contact me as follows: Telephone 00 357 99755714, E-mail dlee@cytanet.com.cy Postal address PO Box 64300, 8073 Pafos, Cyprus.

Finally, Debbie & I have arranged to be married in Pafos on Tuesday 31st May. All the very best, Dennis.

Many thanks for your article Dennis. I'm sure that I speak for your many friends in the N. West, and in the society, in wishing you and Debbie a wonderful life together. You deserve it. You've gone through a most terrible experience in losing Lesley and the fact that you've survived it with your head up is a miracle in itself. Good luck to both of you. You look well matched!



For those readers who don't know Dennis, he reminds me of the ant that moved the rubber tree plant. No matter how big the task he will have a go at it until the job is done.

ALAN RANDALL

Musical entertainer whose finest achievements were forever dwarfed by his uncanny impersonation of George Formby

A JAZZ musician and brilliant multi-instrumentalist, Alan Randall became famous for his uncanny impression of the Lancashire music-hall comedian and singer George Formby.

Although he was renowned for his own expertise on the vibraphone, piano, trumpet and trombone, it was his recreation of Formby's near-the-knuckle stage act that brought Randall appearances in Royal Variety Shows, more than 300 radio and TV broadcasts, cabaret on the *QE2* and the starring role in *Turned Out Nice Again*, the hit stage musical of Formby's life. He appeared with Perry Como and Liza Minnelli in Las Vegas and played in concerts with Cliff Richard and the Rolling Stones.

Alan Randall was born in 1934 in Bedworth, Warwickshire. He claimed that he had been a fan of George Formby since he was 3, when his parents had bought a radiogram but had only eight records, including two by Formby. As an infant Randall would shout "George" to demand to hear the records, with which he sang along. His uncle bought him a ukulele when he was 4, and he began singing along to Formby records at school concerts.

At 19 he played the vibraphone and piano with the Gerry Allen Trio on ATV's daily magazine show, *Lunch Box*, and toured the US. In 1957 he returned to Britain and began a solo ca-

reer at the Windmill Theatre, London. Spotted by Lew and Leslie Grade, he toured Britain with variety stars and singers such as Cliff Richard and Tommy Steele. But Randall did not sing on stage, he said, "because no matter what I sang I always sounded like George Formby."

Randall said his biggest mistake was to become identified as the Formby tribute singer at the expense of his "true talent with the vibraphone and piano". He was described by *The New Yorker* as "one of the world's best musical acts", and his successes included a solo performance with the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall televised by the BBC.

The Formby fame began in the late 1960s when he needed a "front cloth" number while the stage was cleared of his vibraphone and piano, ready for the next act. The performance achieved such a reputation that he was rarely asked to perform his own musical act again.

With his toothy smile and cheeky grin, not to mention the voice and the ukulele-playing, Randall became indistinguishable from Formby himself. Even Pat Howson (Formby's fiancée after the death of his famously irascible wife Beryl) and Formby's relations thought it must be recordings of the man himself. After Formby's death

in 1961 Randall did much to keep his name alive with concert appearances and his own recordings of Formby songs such as *When I'm Cleaning Windows*, *With My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock* and *Leaning on a Lamppost*.

Although performers such as Lonnie Donegan, Roy Hudd, Clinton Ford and Peter Goodwright all used Formby numbers in their act, it was Randall who tactfully modernised some of the lyrics, and it was largely due to him that a Formby revival began in the 1980s. Pat Howson became a close friend of Randall and gave him many of Formby's possessions, regalia including his OBE, and a collection of his original test-pressing recordings.

In 1974 Randall co-wrote with Ray Seaton an acclaimed biography of Formby, and with the TV comedy script writer Vince Powell he wrote the musical *Turned Out Nice Again: The George Formby Story* which toured the UK. He also featured in the closing scene of the historic Beatles reunion video for their last hit single, *Free as a Bird*.

He continued to appear in concert in Britain and the US throughout the two past decades and in 1984 appeared on the same bill with Eric Morecambe at the Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, on the night that the comedian died of a heart attack after coming off stage.

Randall is survived by his wife Mary, and a son and a daughter.

Alan Randall has passed on



Alan Randall, musician, entertainer and impersonator of George Formby, was born on June 10, 1934. He died on April 9, 2005, aged 70.

John Baddeley Emails - Hello Stan, Very sad to hear the news about Alan Randall. Although I only met him two or three times, I feel that the Society owes Alan a great debt.

When George passed away in 1961, only one LP had been released. Of course, there were no videos at that time and therefore it would have been very easy for George's popularity to diminish very quickly. Thanks to Alan this was not the case and we have all benefited greatly from Alan's efforts particularly in the early days.

George Mumble, Yorkshire's most henpecked husband, died yesterday. By the terms of his will, his ashes will be scattered all over his wife's new carpet.

Formby Programme Wanted—Richard Howard on 01603 871245 has phoned asking if anyone has a George Formby programme, a poster, or any information on a Formby Show at the Windmill Theatre, Gt Yarmouth in August 1959. If you have he will be very pleased to hear from you.

They took the vanity from the peacock and the cunning from the fox
The brain from a jackass and the jawbone from an ox
The venom from a viper and the stinger from a bee
Stuck them in my old woman, and bunged her onto me.

Charlie Smith always drinks Whisky and Horlicks together.
When it's his turn to pay he's fast asleep.

Andy Eastwood's Latest CD—I had a treat in

the post today, Walt, his father, had sent me a copy of Andy's "We'll Meet Again" war time disk and what a great compilation it is. Andy has included all the usual war time favourites like: Kidding Mr Hitler, Windows, Goodnight Sweetheart, Ma I Miss Your Apple Pie, Our Sergeant Major, Smile All The Time, Sweet Sue, and many more. Plus tributes to Glen Miller and Al Jolson, finishing with a great medley of patriotic songs and marches that made Great Britain great. Top rousing songs like: The Dambusters, Colonel Bogey, The Great Escape, Hearts Of Oak, Sailor's Hornpipe, The Irish Washerwoman, Scotland The Brave, We'll Keep A Welcome In The Hillside, There'll Always be an England, and Rule Britannia. All good stuff and Andy deserves a big round of applause for his selection.



And Here Are Some Of Andy's Dates from May 2005

- 07 Sat We'll Meet Again, Coronation Hall, Ulverston, Cumbria
- ✕ 13 Fri We'll Meet Again, Albert Halls, Bolton, Lancashire
- 14 Sat We'll Meet Again, Tameside Hippodrome, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancashire
- 15 Sun We'll Meet Again, North Wales Theatre, Llandudno, North Wales
- 17 Tue We'll Meet Again, Town Hall, Dudley, W Midlands
- 23 Mon We'll Meet Again, Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon
- 29 Sun We'll Meet Again, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire
- 30 Mon We'll Meet Again, Pavilion Theatre, Rhyl, Denbighshire, North Wales

June 2005

- 9 Thu We'll Meet Again, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire
- ✕ 12 Sun We'll Meet Again, Floral Pavilion, New Brighton, Merseyside. 7 pm
- 22 Sat We'll Meet Again, Opera House, York, Yorkshire
- 25 Sat We'll Meet Again, Villa Marina, Douglas, Isle of Man (2 shows)

July 2005

- 01 Fri We'll Meet Again, Theatre Royal, Nottingham
- 04 Mon We'll Meet Again, Embassy Centre, Skegness (2-30 pm & 7-30 pm)
- 05 Tue We'll Meet Again, Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
- 06 Wed We'll Meet Again, Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
- 07 Thu We'll Meet Again, Majestic Theatre, Retford, Nottinghamshire (matinee)
- ✕ 09 Sat The Ken Dodd Happiness Show Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham
- 16 Sat We'll Meet Again, Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire

18 Mon	We'll Meet Again , Embassy Centre, Skegness (2-30 pm & 7-30 pm)
19 Tue	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
20 Wed	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
21 Thu	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
23 Sat	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
26 Tue	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
27 Wed	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
28 Thu	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
30 Sat	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
31 Sun	Cinderella , Embassy Centre, Skegness

August 2005

02 Tue	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
03 Wed	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
04 Thu	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
06 Sat	Classic Car Rally , Rawcliffe Hall, Over Wyre, Preston, Lancashire (Marquee)
07 Sun	Cinderella , Embassy Centre, Skegness
09 Tue	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
10 Wed	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
11 Thu	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
13 Sat	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
14 Sun	Cinderella , Embassy Centre, Skegness
16 Tue	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
17 Wed	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
18 Thu	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
20 Sat	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
21 Sun	Cinderella , Embassy Centre, Skegness
23 Tue	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
24 Wed	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
25 Thu	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
27 Sat	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
28 Sun	Cinderella , Embassy Centre, Skegness
30 Tue	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire
31 Wed	We'll Meet Again , Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire

Here are some phone numbers but please check as dates may be subject to alteration

Albert Halls, Bolton, Lancashire. 01204 334400

Tameside Hippodrome, Ashton-u-Lyne, 0161 308 3223

North Wales Theatre, Llandudno, 01492 872000

Town Hall, Dudley, W Midlands. 01384 812812

Theatre Brycheiniog, Brecon. 01874 611622

Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, 01782 213808

Pavilion Theatre, Rhyl, Denbighshire, N Wales 01745 330000

Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire. 01952 619020

Floral Pavilion, New Brighton, Merseyside. 7 pm. 0151 639 4360

Opera House, York, Yorkshire. 01904 671818

Embassy Centre, Skegness (2-30 pm & 7-30 pm). 01754 768333

Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, Lancashire. 01253 292029

Majestic Theatre, Retford, Nottinghamshire (matinee). 01777 706866

See website
www.andyeastwood.com
 for a more comprehensive
 list.

Bumper Special Extra

And Another Death!

Having reported in this issue on the deaths of Alan Randall, Walter Langshaw, and coach trip supporter Margaret Volp, we now report that one of George's leading ladies has passed on. At the age of 90 Kay Walsh died on April 16 2005. She appeared with George in two films, "I See Ice" and "Keep Fit."

Of Irish parentage Kathleen Walsh was born Aug 27 1919. Her grandmother, who had moved from Ireland, raised both Kay and her sister Peggy in a small Pimlico flat though her idea of responsibility consisted largely of dumping them in the local picture house while she toured neighbouring hostels, her favourite being The Six Bells on Kings Road.



With virtually no education, Kay began to earn her living as a dancer in the back row of a chorus in Andre Charlot revues.

Cliff Royle Emails

I was in discussion with John and Barbara Maddock who are associated with Claire House Children's Hospice for whom we subsequently raised £900 for their Charity Fund. They were at their caravan in Fairbourne near Barmouth and noticed a young lad continually singing Formby songs and pretending to play a non existent uke. Barbara does some entertaining and has been responsible for organising some excellent concerts in Frodsham, so having an ear for talent she asked the lad, Christopher, if he had a Uke. Apparently he did not and had no idea from where to get one. The lad's Grandfather was there so she asked him if she could help by getting some information and a cheap uke for him.

She rang me for information and I put her in touch with the GFS from whom she got a cheap uke and some dots or whatever. These she passed to the young lad. She is now thrilled to bits to hear of his success, and is looking forward to him performing on the Paul O'Grady show on 9th. May. And I had no idea until I called at their home today. Imagine my surprise.

Brian Edge Has Ukcs For Sale

—Lovely old wooden soprano ukulele labelled inside Jose Alvarez of Barcelona complete with case. Must be 75 years old. Complete and ready for playing VGC. £65 + pp.

WOODEN CONCERT UKULELE. Labelled (inside "The Largest Piano House Est 1834, Horne Thompson & Co. Station Street Burton." Good condition ready to play with fibre case. £50 + pp.

GEORGE FORMBY DALLAS "E" Model VGC. Powerful loud plunkly tone, great for your solos. Nice original chrome plating. £380.

WANTED TO BUY. Any accumulation of old coins, or old war medals. Fair price assured. Contact Brian Edge 01270 569836

Email From **Brian Edge** TV Personality To Entertain At Crewe

Don't forget to watch the Paul O'Grady show on Monday the 9th of May the date scheduled for the appearance of the eight year old ukulele player Christopher Napier of Stafford. Christopher hopefully will be entertaining us at Crewe's May meeting and that is something for us all to look forward to.

At the funeral of actor John Mills, his grandson (Hayley's son) Crispian, former lead singer with Kula Shaker, played the ukulele which his grandfather had taken up after blindness had ended his piano playing.

Margaret Moran was a chuffed as little gum drops when she rang me. Her daughter, Gwen, has passed the X Factor Competition and is ready for the next round. She was also pleased at the fact that Gwen got through with an old Gladys Knight song, "You're The Best Thing That Happened To Me" instead of a modern pop song.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6— After the interval the Salford Swingers came on to entertain us as the Andrews Sisters dressed in superb ladies American Army uniforms (apparently self made by the group) and sang? Don't Go Under the Apple Tree etc, and Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy from Company B. They were so great that "More" was requested, so they had to repeat the act. Then followed Jim Knight (The Unicorn with Banjo Accompaniment, and Twelfth Street Rag on the bones with the support of the other Bones Players. It was however noted that one bones wit was following the music on a music stand); Alan Newton with a gorgeous tie presented to him by an admirer at the back of the bike shed (Nothing Proud about Me, and a Medley from the War Years); Brian Edge (Robin Hood and His Merry Men in memory of Walter Langshaw the writer of the song who died recently); Self (Bless 'Em All and Swimmin With the Women); Daniel Smith (Back on the Farm); Des Redfern, now a blonde (Count Your Blessings and Smile and It's In the Air); Jonathan Baddeley (You'll Be Far Better Off In a Home); The Three Tenors that lovely song (Blackpool Belle); and Alan Newton (Ooh Ooh Ooh whatever that means). The evening ended with a THRASH which was followed with the waving of many flags to the singing of Land of Hope and Glory. A real rousing finish to an excellent night.

Thanks to all who gave raffle prizes, helped in any way, and supported us. And to the Newsletter from the North Wales Branch may we say "Good Night Little Fellow Good Night". *Many thanks Cliff for all your speedy reports.*

Haworth 1940s Weekend.

There's not much space left to report on this most excellent show, but it was by far, the busiest show The Pastits, along with, Anthony Mason, Alan Chenery and Margaret Moran have ever experienced before. Thousands of people were continuously pouring in through the shopping street and completely blocking all traffic when they arrived at our band stand. Thanks to Alan Chenery we had a top quality sound system that could be heard all over Howarth, and we were honoured with a visit from dear old Winston Churchill who delivered a most excellent speech from our stage.

Anthony Mason performed like a true professional and Margaret Moran filled in perfectly with war time songs originally performed by ladies. Thanks to all who supported.



"We will fight em on the beaches"

A Poem from Eddie Bancroft

Just a line to say I'm living, and I'm not among the dead
Though I'm getting more forgetful, and mixed up in my head
I've got used to my arthritis. To my dentures I'm resigned
I can cope with my bifocals, but ye Gods I've lost my mind

Sometimes I can't remember, when I'm standing on the stair
If I'm going up for something, or just coming down from there

And before the fridge so often, my mind is full of doubt
Now did I put some food away, or come to take some out

So remember, I do love you, and wished that you lived near
It's time to post this letter. So I'll say goodbye my dear
I stand beside the post box, and my face—it sure is red
Instead of posting this to you, I've opened it up instead.

Blackpool Night

Hi Stan, It turned out

another good night although it started off a bit thin with only three artists to perform. However, we ended up with eight entertainers Ben Halliwell, John Shreeve, Stan Evans (Half a Pastit), Charles Stewart, Des Redfern, Paul Kenny, Jimmy Bowtie and Alan Chenery.

CHARLES THE STAR—But what about Charles's performance. It's very rare he does a solo spot, preferring to

serve in the background, however he did an excellent tribute to one—who shall be unnamed—with "I Do Love Me", which is a song we've never heard before. He also sang the comedy song, "Fifty Percent Of It's Mine". Great Stuff!!!

Charles has got hidden talent with songs like these, so let's hear more of them Charles. You must have loads of em. We had about 8 new faces who all said they enjoyed the night, and the catering was done by Hazel Astin, and Doreen from the White House. Just to make your mouths water we had meat & potato pie and cheese & onion pie, dished out by our usual helpers along with Freda. It was an excellent night, so many thanks to all who contributed. Just look at the joy in Jimmy Bowtie's face as he sings Lamp Post to his Teddy Bear. We are very pleased for you Jimmy.

Margaret Volp



Sad Loss—After reporting recently that Margaret was making great progress with her cancer battle, we regret to report now that she has recently now passed on.

Margaret was one of our regulars on the annual coach trips and thoroughly enjoyed all the old songs.

Another loss—oh dear!!! When will it end?



Smiling Jimmy Bowtie

Barrie Cordingley Emails: - Hi Stan, Just a quick line to thank you for all your hard work over the years preparing the newsletters, they really have been great fun to receive and will be sorely missed, Your newsletters helped to keep George's memory alive, I have enclosed a little poem that I wrote about George's passing, perhaps you might like to use it in your final publication

GOODBYE GEORGE by Barrie Cordingley

There came a knocking on the pearly gates, and a voice said, "Ee let me in"
And when they opened the door, there outside, stood a man with a toothy grin,
St Peter said, pray tell me your name, and your standing down on earth,
My name is George Formby, came the reply, and I filled the world with mirth,
The man was then asked to enter, and to sign his name in heavens tome,
Then they gave him his very own cloud, and said, just make yourself at home,
Next they gave him some wings and a harp, but the wings were all he took,
Then out of a box that he'd kept by his side, he took out his old banjo uke,
The angels looked on in amazement, as George sang them a comical song,
Some even began to join in on their harps, while others just sang along,
It was magic up in heaven that day, way back in Nineteen-Sixty-One,
While on earth we sadly realised, that the lovely George Formby has gone.

The Dicky Hart and the Pacemaker group

of Liverpool, are certainly starting to make it big in the music world. These lads enter all the local events and on one occasion they entered "The Most Likely Not To Win" competition, and they won it. What an achievement!



BOB MUIRHEAD NOW EMAILS—

Hi Stan, The Stewardess at St Georges Club was approached by a member of the "Union of Catholic Mothers" last week who asked " do those men who play here on a Monday night take bookings" Rita said that we don't normally play elsewhere but that if she had a function in mind she would ask us.

"No" said the lady "I want a happy Funeral and was wondering if, when I fall off my perch they would lead the coffin out of church as it's such a happy sound." Our business card now reads Available for Parties, Masonics, Bramitzvahs, AND FUNERALS.

WOW—Well you are certainly making it big Bob. Let the undertakers know and they may include you as part of their service.

Ken Ratcliffe—Please save your used postage stamps for Ken Ratcliffe of the Sale Meeting. He collects for the Guide Dogs. Ring Ken on 0161 430 8290

Sale Report by Hilda & Vera



There was a wonderful atmosphere in the Timperley Liberal Club at our 'Forties' celebration. We had members of the forces, firemen, nurses, spivs and even a 'young' refugee. The V.I.P. visitor was no less than 'General Dwight D. Eisenhower' himself, still looking as good as ever. Ken Ratcliffe welcomed us all and especially new members Sheila and George Morris from Flixton and Hilda and Alan Southworth who had returned from their holiday 'down under'.

It was also good to have Margaret Royle with us again after her unfortunate accident. The thrash group played wartime medleys to get us into the mood and Dick Eaves was the M.C. As is customary, Eddie Bancroft opened the show with Lancashire Toreador and The Window Cleaner, followed by Cliff Royle with Bless 'em' All and Putting on the Style which got us all singing. Next was Jonathan Baddeley with When the Waterworks Caught Fire and Our Fanny's Gone All Yankee. Jim Knight, with his array of black-market goods, gave us Somebody Stole My Gal and a yankee bones medley with Walter Kirkland, Alan Newton and Alan Chenery followed by the ever smiling Walter and Happy Go Lucky Me. The next act was quite different with the Andrews Sisters, a.k.a. Hilda and Vera, 'singing' a medley, Apple Blossom Time, Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree and The Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy. Alan Southworth was next with Thanks Mr. Roosevelt and then he sang along with a tape of Billy 'Uke' Scott playing A Hero in the Family. Margaret Moran kept to the war-time theme with Lilli Marlene and (with Les Pearson) a Vera Lynn Wartime Medley - all lovely sing-along songs.

Marjorie and Dick drew the raffle and then Marjorie presented Cyril with a beautiful desk lamp and Sheila with lovely flowers and thanked them for their hard work in running the Sale branch for many years. The meat and potato pies and cheese and onion pasties and peas provided and served by Anne Ratcliffe were brilliant.

The second thrash was another wartime medley and then Alison Nadin did her fabulous ventriloquist act with Alf and 'they' sang When You're Smiling. Alan Chenery was next with Side By Side Medley and then Stan Evans, after exchanging banter with Connie Edge, sang Have You Ever Been Lonely. Pam Baddeley did another song from the forties era You Are My Honeysuckle and Brian Edge was Guarding the Home of the Home Guard and a Daring Young Man. Margaret Moran, Vera Eaves and Hilda Southworth sang The Wedding especially for Marjorie and Gerald who will be getting married on 7th May. Alan Newton came next with It's Turned Out Nice Again and The Barmaid at the Rose and Crown, followed by Brian White (complete with appropriate hats) singing Madame Moscovich and Our Sergeant Major. Bryn Evans gave us Just One More Chance and Did You Ever See a Dream Walking on his wooden uke. David Rhodes rounded off the action packed evening when he walked onto the stage in a flannelette nightshirt. No prizes for guessing his song! The final song of the night was David singing Mr. Wu's a Window Cleaner Now.



Ike Eisenhower ex-American Commander and President was flown out to the Sale meeting to hand out some gum

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14—Our thanks to all involved in the entertainment and especially to Marjorie and Gerald, Anne and Ken, and Sheila and Cyril for an absolutely wonderful evening. Our thanks are also due to the members of other branches who always come to support us.



Two of the Andrews Sisters were flown in and they were in excellent voice with some of their favourites.

Stan, may we also take this opportunity to thank you for all your hard work in producing such great newsletters over the past ten years. We will miss them, and especially those cheeky little quips you usually put at the end of the articles! Hilda and Vera. *Thank you ladies for doing a fine job, as always — hee you do remind me of Pinky & Perky.*

Ken Dodd's Overtime Show from Tom Bailey (Daily Mail)

Comedian Ken Dodd OBE, 77, who is touring the country to celebrate 50 years in show-business, clearly believes in giving value for money. His one-man tour de force, *The Happiness Show*, ran for a staggering five-and-a-quarter hours this week at Lowestoft. "The first half ran for three hours," says a theatregoer, "We didn't get the interval until 10.30pm, when there was a stampede for the toilets. We finally tottered out at a quarter to one in the morning." *Thanks for the news cutting Tom, and many thanks for keeping me supplied over the past 10 years.*



"How tickled I am Missus"

Anthony Mason (who was 30 on April 26th) - My the

years go very quickly. I received a phone call from his car— "Stan, I'm desperate, I need to borrow your P.A. equipment quick—I'll be at your house in 10 minutes." He was booked for a show in Stockton Heath (George's home village) and at the last minute remembered that he'd left his equipment at another venue.

"No trouble," I told him. "Get down here and I'll have the stuff near the door ready for you." He arrived (in a last minute sweat) and was dashing back and to filling his car when Eva shot out. "I've just seen a man on the monitor stealing your equipment and loading his car." Now Eva's not been able to move for the past three weeks, with back pain, but she certainly broke all records when she thought we had a burglar. God help him if it had been.

It's great to see how these youngsters have developed over the years. Good luck to em

Martin Thomas Emails: - Hello Stan , So the last newsletter is soon to be no more. Over the many years, I have received this super read with many interesting articles and lots of great jokes!!! Plus you get a taste of what happens on a typical GFS night . May I take this opportunity to thank you for all your hard work and to wish you and your wife all the very best for the future. Regards Martin Thomas.

And many thanks to you Martin. You have given me wonderful support scanning Ebay and the internet for anything Formbyish. Great Stuff Martin.

Frank Randle's Uke Banjo is For Sale

George Moore, a George Formby impersonator, is selling his Abbott Monarch Uke Banjo. This is the one which Frank Randle played in the film "Somewhere In Camp" and was later owned by our own Jack Jones.



For sale at £5,000 or nearest offer.

It was actually owned by Robbie Vincent (Enoch) and later by Harry Korris (Mr Lovejoy) who starred in the radio series Happidrome. GFS member Harold Fallows, was asked by Harry Korris, (who was coming towards the end of his life) if he wished to buy the instrument. He bought it, not for himself but for Jack Jones.

One day, Jack was arriving home when a burglar ran out of his home and escaped down the road. He'd stolen the Abbott along with other items. This upset Jack deeply. Some months later, Joe Tafe, of Liverpool turned up at the Wintergardens and was happily showing off his new purchase from a second-hand shop, when Jack shouted, "Hey, that's my uke." I remember it well, the air was tense that afternoon. Joe, in good faith had purchased the uke so how could they settle the matter?



Ray Bernard and John Croft made a special appeal to the members asking them all to chip in to raise the money that Joe had lost. It worked out fine and Joe sent a letter of thanks to the Vellum magazine.

Happidrome was an imaginary variety theatre which opened its doors on 9.2.41 under the management of Mr. Lovejoy (Harry Korris). His stage manager was Ramsbottom (Cecil Frederick) and gormless callboy was Enoch (Robbie Vincent) whose catchphrase was "Let me tell you." (Ah I can hear it now!). Lovejoy's reply was "Ee, if ever a man suffered!"

George Moore's phone number is: 01482 712222

Peter Brown Emails—On Tuesday

12th April 2005, I attended H & H Classic Car Auction at the Pavilion Gardens, Buxton. It was the viewing day, the actual sale taking place the following day. I bought a catalogue and had a good look at all the cars and couldn't help noticing an Alvis Speed 20 saloon, first registered in 1936 to a George Hoy Booth, who was, of course, none other than George himself. I had a sit in the car and couldn't help thinking that the great man had sat just there himself. A lovely moment. The car was sold the following day for the tidy sum of £20,500 plus commission. No doubt the new owner will have many happy years of motoring with the car, and, if he is a George fan, think about George actually having driven that very car. Peter Brown.



ISN'T IT A SMALL WORLD? I was just inserting a report from Neil Forshaw re. George's Alvis car being sold by auction and suddenly Peter's Email came through.

Peter Brown carries a coffin on stage "Well" he said, "I often die on stage."

ALSO—I'd just opened a contract from the Pavilion Gardens, Buxton, and Peter mentions it in the same Email. The Pastits are entertaining there on Tuesday October 25th (1pm to 2.30pm). Well it is a small world!



Alan Chenery with George's Alvis car

Here on the left we have George's Alvis which was sold at the auction for £20,500. Alan Chenery with his uke comes as an extra.

This photo was taken when we entertained at Hogton Hall, Preston, for the Alvis Society, last year.

Hilda Southworth emails Hello Stan, Thank you for all your efforts over the years, and best wishes and good health to you and Eva. Here are a few one-liners you might like -

YOU SPEND the first two years of your child's life teaching him to walk and talk, then you spend the next sixteen years telling him to sit down and be quiet.
 BE NICE to your children. They will choose your nursing home one day!
 NEVER use an electrician with singed eyebrows, or a plumber in wellington boots.
 YOU KNOW you've had too much to drink when you can't find your pockets.

Apology from Bob Hodson

Dear Stan, I am writing in advance of my reply that I have inserted in the Oct 05 issue of the Syncopator, U.S.G.B. magazine.

Quote:- I am sorry Stan misinterpreted my comments on backing tapes. I did not wish to imply that the GFS used backing tapes and not live bands.

The fact was, I got the impression, (like a number of U.S.G. B. members) that our members who attended the Blackpool meetings, suddenly turn up at Digswell with their own backing music, for which we are un-prepared and cannot accommodate them to their satisfaction.



With regards to your last bumper issue of the George Formby Newsletter: It is a crying shame that no one is taking on the task of continuing this essential organ, or am I wrong and someone will be taking over from you Stan? If the Syncopator International failed to exist the U.S.G.B. would collapse overnight. It is the "life line and the back bone" of the society.

Thank you Stan for your great contribution to the institution of George Formby, the ukulele and banjolele, which is the world's greatest little instrument, and no longer the Cinderella of the string instrument family. Good luck on your retirement. On behalf of the U.S.G.B. Thank You (Ukulele) Bob.

Thank you Bob. My goodness you are an expert at dodgology! After your comments in the Syncopator I envisaged the GFS live band turning up outside your bedroom window at 3 in the morning and blasting out "It Serves You Right".

Regret nobody is interested in taking over the GF Newsletter. It is a 'labour of love' that I've enjoyed doing over the years, but it also takes up more than half your life: gathering info, taking photos, typing, receiving post, producing masters, printing, collating, stapling, packing, dispatching mail orders, taking to the meetings and then, back to gathering more info for the next issue. It's like the painting of the Firth of Forth (or is it Forth of Firth) bridge. Finish at one end and start again at the other. But I've received great satisfaction from producing it and learnt a lot from it.

ANY GF INFO That comes in after this issue will be Emailed to members with an Email address. These are: Brian Edge ; Andy Eastwood ; Alan Harris ; Alan Southworth ; Alison J Nadin ; Alison Tyrer ; Anthony Mason ; Barrie Cordingley ; Beryl Eisens ; Brian White ; Chris Webster ; Cliff Royle ; Colin Wood ; Dennis Lee ; Des Redfern ; Dolwyn SHONE ; Don Horton ; Geoff Shryhane ; Jack & Ann ; Janet Hawkins ; Jonathan BADDELEY ; Jones, Phil ; Malcolm Palmer ; Martin Thomas ; Neil Forshaw ; Paul Woodhead ; Peter Brown ; Phillip Huges ; Ray & Rita Marshall ; Ray & Karen Bernard ; Robert Muirhead ; Steve Evans ; TAG ; ukeleleman@fsmail.net ; Alan Chenery ; Chrissie Bussingham ; Tony Thornton and Jim Bramwell.

SEND ME YOUR ADDRESS IF YOU WISH TO BE INCLUDED, AND PLEASE PASS ANY NEWS ON TO THOSE WITHOUT AN EMAIL ADDRESS.

Jack Jones Tribute to be held by Pat Ralston on 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. Tickets are £3 which includes an excellent buffet. Please ring Pat on 01925 655215 or write to 6 Waterways, Gt Sankey, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 1HA.



Paul Woodhead at ROOSTERS

July 23rd, 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@supanct.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.

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 Comper DES REDFERN—Excellent Buffet included.

Bring your ukes and play for your supper
(Residents only)

Last artist brings the milk in.

Doreen and her twin sister are George Formby fans and attend our Blackpool monthly meetings at the South Shore Cricket Club.



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 Ken Ratcliffe 0161 430 8290 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:

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 which links to George Formby or The Pastits E Mail: stan@stanevans.co.uk



Well it all started with you Wally so you might as well finish it off. May we say many, many thanks to all who contributed to Wally's Newsletter. It has been a wonderful 10 years and we've enjoyed every minute. Goodbye to all and God's Blessing to dear Wally Cronshaw.