

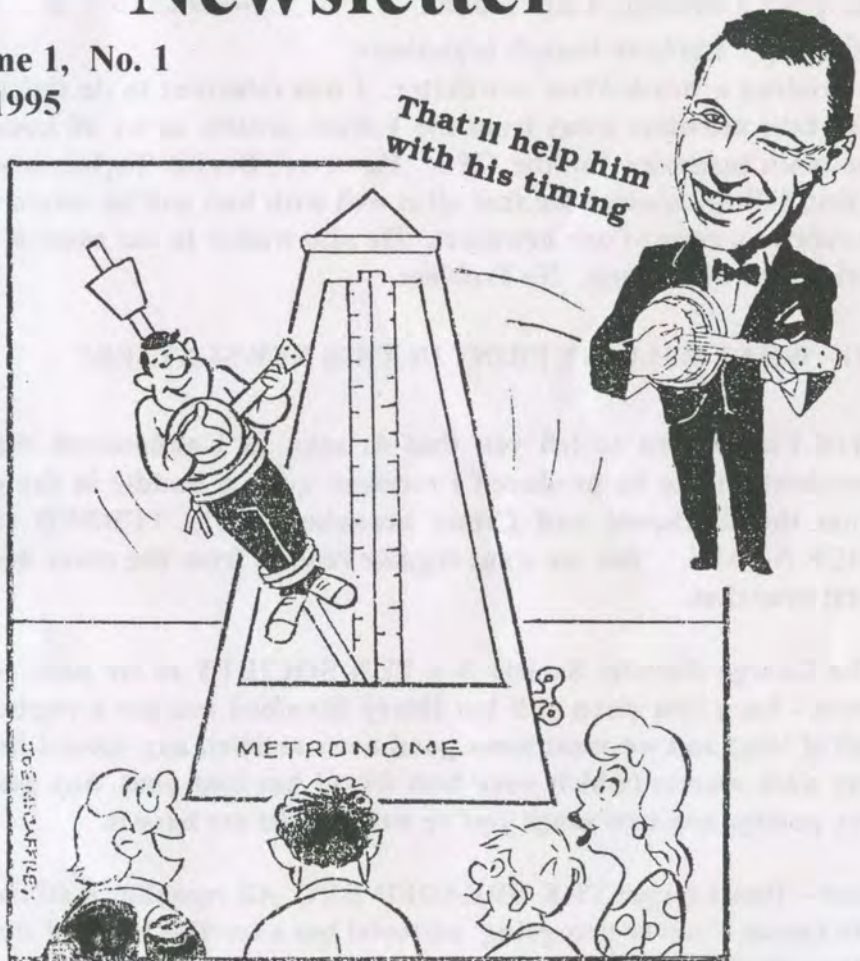
The North-West

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter

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Produced specially for the
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Welcome



to the very first edition of our North-West Newsletter. Over the past 3 months I have been asked, by various branch organisers, to produce a North-West newsletter. I was reluctant to do this as it may take attention away from the Vellum, which, as we all know is the main magazine for the GFS. However, Dennis Taylor, who is acting Editor, assured me that all is well with him and he would like to receive a copy of our newsheet. He also wishes to use some of the articles for his Vellum. No Problem.

SO - WHAT WILL WE PRINT IN THIS NEWSLETTER?

Well I'm pleased to tell you that as soon as I announced that a newsheet was to be produced I received quite a bundle in the post from the Blackpool and Crewe branches. **IT'S TURNED OUT NICE AGAIN.** Now we want regular reports from the other north-west branches.

The George Formby Society is a **FUN SOCIETY** so we need some jokes - keep 'em clean (I'll bet Harry Stanford has got a cupboard full of 'em) and we want some good news articles, any special items, any dark secrets (which your best friend has told you), any gossip, any poetry, any new songs you've written - let me have it.

Now - Don't forget **THE DREADED BIN.** All rambling - all round the houses - 'never gets going' editorial has a terrible habit of sliding off my desk - straight into the bin - so **KEEP IT BRIEF.**

Thanks to Joe McCaffrey for the excellent front page cartoon. Brian Edge, Eve & Charles Stewart, John Taylor and Anthony Mason for contributing to this Newsletter. Now we want to hear from members of Liverpool, Mold and Sale for the next issue. **GET CRACKING** - or else I'll set Harry Stanford on to you!!!!

Article By Charles Stewart.... Dear Stan, I'm pleased that you finally decided to produce a North-West Newsletter. There is a lot of activity in this area and it needs someone on the spot - like yourself to gather it all. Here's my first article for you from the local newspaper.

A 14 year old boy stood watching the film crew at work. Everyone recognised the star - it was George Formby the famous funnyman. When the Director asked the boy if he would like to help out in the production, he jumped at the chance. And that's how Siv Joensen became a film star.

"One of the best things about it was the money. They gave me two guineas (£2. 20) for a morning's work. At the time I got 16 shillings (80p) a week.

The film Siv appeared in, **Bell Bottom George**, was not mentioned, but the wartime production - typical of George's numerous efforts to boost morale in those dark times - was big news in the Fleetwood port at the time. George then lived at Berydene - a large house at Singleton on the Blackpool to Garstang road. He was in the Home Guard and he often rode to Fleetwood on official duties on board a military motorcycle. He liked the town and frequently visited the docks with the rugged characters of the fishing industry.

In the film, "**Bell Bottom George**," an actor was told by the director to ride a bicycle along Dock Street without holding the handlebars while George rode alongside at a furious pace.

Siv recalls: "This chap couldn't ride a bike so I got the job. George was great. He put me at my ease and joked about the scene. He even lent me a pair of shoes to wear instead of my clogs. The Fleetwood Sea Cadets took part in the film - pretending to be sailors in the Royal Navy - and some out-of-work trawler men were recruited to leap from the North End landing stage into the River Wyre.

The film was shown at the old Art Cinema on Lord Street and they gave away free tickets to people who'd been in it. Half of Fleetwood saw the film for nothing but when the celluloid hit the silver screen, Siv was a little disappointed. The head of the original actor had been spliced on to his body for the thrilling cycle scene. *Very nice article Charles. We are pleased that George is so well remembered in Blackpool. I'll bet Alan Yates will be up and down Dock Street looking for landmarks. What is happening with the Pleasure Beach GF Statue? I hope they have not changed their minds.*

Wonderful.....

I was stood at the back of the room in the Wintergardens, watching and listening to the Group Thrash, and I thought to myself "Haven't we progressed well over the past few years!" It sounded really GREAT and everybody was in harmony.

Going back a few years these thrashes sounded dreadful, but now we are sounding more like a rehearsed orchestra. I wonder what we will sound like in another 5 years.

We are very fortunate that we have tremendous support from our band who work throughout the entire week-end on the stage. Dickie Speake, Charles Peacock, Derek Simpson, Dennis Mitchell and that other fellow who plays the bones - his name has just escaped me but I'll think of it before this book is finished. Wasn't it nice to see Mike Kitts again. He played drums.

Charles, who is waiting to go into the hospital, was feeling terribly tired over the weekend so he went home early. Dickie appealed for a substitute to play the Bass Guitar and wasn't we surprised when Gordon Markendale jumped on to the stage. He is a man of many talents. Our Society is very unique so it must be preserved at all costs. Stan Evans..... Wish I could think of that feller's name who plays the bones.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

This great little branch is desperately in need of more players. We never fail to have an enjoyable evening and the newly decorated venue is excellent. The hosts give us a great welcome and nothing is too much trouble for them. It's a small audience so it is the ideal place to get started. Hope to see you there. Every 2nd Friday.

Channel 4 TV rang.....Can you find an outgoing family, (Mum, Dad & Kids) from the North-West, that is prepared to appear on TV for about 10 minutes every morning. They will be found a house in London for the week. Well I rang around and discovered that it is a more difficult task than imagined. Anyone fancy a week on TV?

THE WINDOW CLEANER by Brian Edge.

These days it is a highly competitive industry. It has its own National Trade Federation. It also has its own National Championships where teams from all over the country compete under 'The Guinness Book of Records Rules' for large prizes.

It was our George who gave the industry the biggest publicity boost that they could ever wish to achieve in spite of all the sophisticated advertising media available to them today.

"Can I clean your winders Misses?" "No!"
"Can I rub your greenhouse glass over then?" "No you can't!"
"Your cold frame perhaps?" "Indeed not!"
"Then perhaps I could give your reading glasses a wipe over!"

Good old George! What he could do with a chamois leather, a bit of elbow grease and a ukulele, it took a lot of beating.

Thanks for your article Brian. I wonder if Guinness gives points for what the window cleaner sees while he's cleaning the windows.

It's Amazing how George keeps popping up on TV.

On August 23rd George - singing "Lancashire Hot Pot Swingers" he appeared in a documentary on Morecambe.

Also his photo appeared on the 6.30pm news on BBC1 - Fred Perry was training to be a tennis champ when George was leaning on his lamp.

Also in "To See Such Fun" on ITV on Thurs 25th August, there were snatches of about 100 different comedy stars and at least 20 of them were of George. It wasn't an interesting show as the clips were too short.

Coronation Street:- Did you know that the last time Jack Duckworth took Vera for a night out was when George Formby was the entertainer - so she said.

George's photo also popped up in the Daily Mirror on the 25th April. He was mentioned as being the most popular entertainer during the war. I'll not argue with that!

Save Our Harry!

We have named this year - 1995 - as "The Joke For Harry Year."

Any articles sent in must accompany a "Joke For The Lad" - because he's running desparately short and, as you know, he is just reaching his prime.

He did very well at Blackpool but some of the members couldn't quite grasp the 75 year old jokes. Don't forget:- Joke For Harry.

PENKETH CARNIVAL

What a great day we had at my local Annual Penketh Carnival on Saturday the 1st July. This was our third appearance there (or is it four) and it was possibly our best. The organisers supplied the usual marquee, generator and seating for about 50 people and we supplied the P.A. equipment. It was a hot sunny day but fortunately we had a cool breeze to keep us comfortable. We put on three shows: 2.30pm, 3.30pm and 4.30pm and on every occasion the tent was full. All shouting "We want Harry and his banjo." "Get back" I shouted "He is not going play that instrument in Penketh."

All thanks to Brian Edge, Wilf Salt, Martin Harrison, Ged Jennett, Ray and Keiran Marshall and also the supporters and wives who came along to cheer us on. These one day events are good for getting experience and there's always one or two disasters to overcome - like Martin Harrison tripping over the lead and dragging the mike half way across the field (half way through Bananas) or when two dozen big bass drums do their march past, Boom, Boom, Boom, followed by the brass band, and every chair in the tent shakes with vibration. I was on the verge of breaking out with "The Floral Dance." I thought I heard the curious tone of the cornet, clarinet and big trombone, fiddle cello, big bass drum, bassoon, flute, euphonium. Far away as in a trance I heard the sound of the Floral Dance. It was all very exciting.

We in the North-West must get ourselves organised. Every time we do a show we struggle with the P.A. equipment and this time was no different. We had a first class system but we still suffered from feed-back and whistling. It was only when we'd almost finished that we managed to get it right. Thanks to Ray & Martin.

What A Trooper Kieran Marshall is. Half way through "Mr Wu's A Window Cleaner" he realised that his uke was in the wrong tuning. He slipped the uke under his arm and just sang to the backing tape, but you could see that he was getting worried as he neared the uke-solo. "What can I do," he was thinking. Fortunately Wilf Salt did a quick re-tune on his own uke and carried out a superb switch of ukes at the right time. Kieran gave a sigh of relief. Aren't we lucky having these youngsters in the GFS?

Anyway, we all enjoyed the day and we finished the night at my house where Eva had laid on a whole pile of butties for the hungry troupe. A grand time was held by all and the members thoroughly enjoyed it. Editor.



Georgie Moore

ABOVE:- The Daily Mail rang for a copy of the song to be faxed through so that they could decide on whether the song is offensive or not. I told them that in my opinion the school was being over sensitive. We are called "Brits" and Limeys" but we don't go screaming from the roof tops, do we?

How dare you do Mr Woo in our school!

By **ROGER SCOTT**

have another one at your door.

'Actually, it's a reference to the blackout with a double meaning,' said Mr Moore.

'I was a bit taken aback because in 30 years of singing Formby songs there must have been some Chinese people listening and no one ever objected before.'

Instead, he regaled Earlsfield primary with the innuendo-laden When I'm Cleaning Windows.

Polly Fowler, one of the event's organisers, said: 'The Mr Woo songs could be deemed insensitive. We have half a dozen or so Chinese pupils. You have to be very careful these days.'

David Gambe, chairman of the Race Equality Council in Mr Moore's home city of Hull, added: 'Only people who have suffered racial abuse can say how it hurts when the songs are sung.'

THE saucy lyrics of George Formby have slipped by the censor with a nudge and a wink for generations.

But one of the star's most famous characters has failed to make it past the eagle eye of modern-day political correctness.

Any mention of Mr Woo — one of Formby's most famous creations, who appeared in at least six songs — was banished from a VE Day celebration performance at a school in Wandsworth, South-West London, because of fears that it might offend Chinese pupils.

Formby impersonator Georgie Moore, 58, said: 'The organiser was particularly worried about a song called Mr Woo's An Air Raid Warden Now.'

It includes the lines: *If you've got a chink in your window, You'll*

NEWS From The BLACKPOOL Branch

Dear Stan, After another wonderful weekend at the Blackpool Wintergardens, the GFS was featured on GMTV, Tuesday 27th June, in a programme about the Blackpool attractions. Alan Yates, from Fleetwood, played 'Little Stick Of Blackpol Rock' on the North Pier in the glorious sunshine. It was rather different to the programme we did two years ago in the pouring rain, do you remember.

Steve King (Jolson impersonator) also very adept with the uke, is appearing at the Royal Pavilion, Blackpool from July to September. Steve, who is one of our GFS members, lives locally and he attends our meetings whenever he is free. Our branch has developed into a very popular night out, we even have a mini bus load coming from Cleveleys.

Charles and I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the faithful members who have continually given their support. We always provide a buffet and a good evening's entertainment in Blackpool so come and pay us a visit. GFS members are charged 50p which includes an excellent buffet.

Thanks for your report Eve & Charles. I was amazed at the large crowd you had at the June meeting. Your branch has come on really well and we always receive a good reception at the door. Wonderful! Your new PA system sounds great! I most certainly do remember the awful wet morning we had with GMTV. It wasn't 'pouring down' it was throwing it down in buckets. That was the time when the lady presenter told us to 'shut up' while she read the weather forecast. We could have told her!

A New Discovery... Francis Collins

Did you see Francis Collins performing at Sale or at Blackpool? What a great little artist. She plays the uke very well but she also does excellent impersonations of various well known stars. She is a natural genius and highly talented. Her impersonation of Coronation Street's Deidrie Barlow and her woeful family was better entertainment than the real thing but the highlight of the night was her Marilyn Monroe and Alan (with a ferret down your pants) Middleton spots. It had them rocking in their seats. Good for you Francis. Carry on the impersonations and someday you'll be a star. I've sent you an Hilda Baker video so let's hear it at Warrington.

George Crowns the Beauty Queen



Irene Kirkpatrick: glam gran

A FORMER beauty queen is still wowing the judges with her shapely figure and sparkling smile — at the age of 78!

And Cleveleys grandma Irene Kirkpatrick is set for another catwalk victory next spring when she hopes to win the Butlin's Glamorous Grandmother 1994 title.

With four grandchildren and one great-grandchild, she has been entering the popular contest for 25 years and has reached the national final three times in the last four years.

Its a long way from her victory in 1934 when she was crowned Miss Skelmersdale.

But the stylish pensioner, of Thornton Gate, said: "I think I look more glamorous now than I did when I was 21!"

"I've lost some weight recently and I am now looking for a long gown for the final."

A retired fashion sales consultant, Mrs Kirkpatrick says she has never lost her interest in the world of fashion and beauty.

"As well as the glamorous gran competitions, I love taking part in charity fashion shows. It is a lot of fun and I have made some great friends as well as met some very famous people," she said.

Accompanying her to the formal grand final at Butlin's in Minehead will be her husband of three years, Robert.

If Mrs Kirkpatrick wins she will not only return home with the coveted sash and crown — but also a prize of £2,500 and a holiday abroad.

She added: "I can't wait. Even if I don't win, it is such good fun taking part."



Miss Skelmersdale 1934 . . . crowned by Lancashire comic George Formby



LEAH ELY

Tommy tests the demon

WIGAN'S George Formby and the Isle of Man will always be linked. It's because one of George's funniest film - No Limits - was set on the island.

Now another well-known Wiganer, dance teacher Tommy Moss, has been to the Isle of Man and came across a Formby-bike-look-a-like at a carnival.

Tommy told Wigan World: "I've been fascinated with George Formby for years and it was intriguing to see the mock-up of his bike.

I was also delighted that the man who had won a prize for dressing up the bike asked me to have a few minutes in the saddle.



Left: A rare picture indeed, as George Formby visits Wigan and shakes hands with the mayor. Note the ever-present Beryl, on the far right.

YESTERDAY'S WIGAN WORLD

KEN GOODWIN as GEORGE

What a great shame that the show was on for only a few days. We could organised a coach trip to give Ken and Steve King some support. Some of the members will have met Steve at the Wintergardens meetings Nice Chap.

Mrs K Flitcroft Wrote In.....

Just a short story for you.
My husband was George's gardener when he lived at Garstang Rd and at Berydene, in St Annes.
One day George went with him to buy some border plants for the garden. While my husband, Frank was looking around for the plants George looked elsewhere and finished up buying a load of Tomato plants. Frank wondered why he had bought them and it wasn't until he heard Beryl calling him a daft idiot that he realised that George had bought them thinking they were flower plants. *Not to worry George, It could happen to anyone.*



COMEDIAN Ken Goodwin has taken his catchphrase "settle down now" seriously - and moved to Spain where he lives in semi-retirement.

That's not to say the man who sprang to fame on The Comedians won't be throwing himself 100% into an unexpected return to the top of the bill at Blackpool North Pier.

The likeable funnyman is back in town from May 25 recreating the sounds of showbusiness legend George Formby in the Jolson, Formby & Crosby Show.

"The act won't all be George though," he says. "There will be plenty of jokes and even a bit of country and western."

Nostalgia

The early season show arrives in the resort fresh from a short run in Great Yarmouth.

Alongside Ken will be Blackpool-based Steve King as Al Jolson and veteran vocalist Dennis Lotis as Bing Crosby.

"It's an idea we tried in Torquay a while ago and it went very well so it seemed worthwhile reviving it," says Ken. "I've always been a Formby fan - my brother and I bought a ukelele and a teach yourself book when we were kids."

For him, the visit will be full of nostalgia. Not only was he evacuated here during the war but he also notched up two summer seasons on North Pier during his heyday.

The first was in 1970 as a guest alongside Jimmy Clitheroe - a comedian he'd always idolised. He then returned three years later to top the bill with Peters and Lee.

"I have happy memories of the pier," he says. "A North Pier gypsy once told my fortune there and she was exactly right - she predicted I'd go to the Palladium and she also foresaw a lot of sadness. Everything came true."

Part of the sadness was the cancer scare which Ken suffered some years back and prompted him to cut back his work load.

He also suffers from osteo- arthritis - which was the main reason for the move to Spain.

"I do a lot of swimming and I've taken up tennis - and I also walk about five miles every day," he says. "At least it means getting to the end of the pier won't seem as bad as it used to!"

In a lather over George

By **ROBIN DUKE**, Entertainments Editor



Ooh Mother! New controversy over one of George Formby's classic songs

LEGENDARY Lancashire entertainer George Formby is at the centre of a controversial battle of the banjos — more than 30 years after his death.

A novelty dance record has been made of Formby's 1930s hit, *When I'm Cleaning Windows*.

And the single, to be released next month, is tipped to become a Christmas Number One.

A rival band has accused the producers of stealing a banjo sound featured prominently on one of their records.

Swamp Thing hit maker The

Grid, fronted by former Blackpool-based keyboard player David Ball, announced they were "morally offended" that they had been associated with fellow Blackpool-based Formby.

But producers Mike Stock and Matt Aitken — who have more than a 100 top 40 hits to their credit and were brought in to do additional work on the new record — have hit back at The Grid.

The new version of *When I'm Cleaning Windows* is being rush released under the name *Two In A Tent* in time for Christmas.

■ Turn to Page 5,

When The Grid heard about the record they threatened to prevent its release, claiming its banjo riff was similar to one they used on *Swamp Thing* and the record infringed their rights.

Mike Stock claims: "Apparently The Grid were offended that they had been associated with George Formby and yet he is a folk hero to millions of people."

Cleaning Windows was a huge hit for Formby in his heyday and even got banned by the BBC because of its risqué lyrics.

"If there were to be any complaints about our record I would have expected them to have come from the Formby camp not from The Grid," said Stock.

He adds: "We were careful to ensure that the *Two In A Tent* record didn't feature any samples from The Grid hit although I admit there are similarities in the banjo riffs.

"However, there was no deliberate attempt to copy their banjo sound."

To combat The Grid's offensive, Stock and Aitken have now re-recorded *When I'm Cleaning Windows* — minus the offending banjo riff.

"It seems to me that The Grid are in danger of losing their sense of humour," says Stock. "Our record was only meant as a bit of fun for Christmas."

This group, The Grid, didn't want to be associated with George. After hearing the tape I'd have thought that it would be the other way round. George wouldn't want to be associated with them. Have you noticed how it rose (slightly) up the charts and then died away. Our George, however, has never stopped singing *Windows*, on radio, since 1937 - 58 years. Unbelievable. The best place for this new tape is down The Grid.

Formby films and the Fylde

I was interested in the articles in the Gazette about films made in Fleetwood and the Fylde.

Whenever George Formby was appearing in Blackpool at the same time as filming, he would request that location scenes be shot in the area if possible.

So Knott End, Hambleton and the country lanes surrounding, were used in his film Spare A Copper.

Fleetwood and Burnley were used in his film He Snoops to Conquer.

I also understand that some of the scenes for *It's In The Air* were shot on the old airport near Stanley Park.

It is encouraging to know that so many areas around the Fylde offer such wonderful locations for the film-maker and have done for all those years.

STEVE KING
Mossom Lane,
Thornton Cleveleys

Tribute for our George

FORMBY FANS KEEP HIS NAME ALIVE

SEVEN of the late George Formby's ukelele's and banjoleles and many of his other possessions were on show at a Blackpool hotel today for the inaugural meeting of the George Formby Society founded recently to perpetuate the comedian's memory.

Among the guests were George's mother, 84-year-old Mrs. Eliza Booth, two of his four sisters and his brother Frank.

Man behind the society, wealthy Carlisle business-man, Mr. Bill Logan, spent hundreds of pounds buying up the Formby ukes and other souvenirs at a sale of the comedian's home and possessions at St. Annes in June and this afternoon he was elected president.

Nearly 80 Formby fans from all over the country have been enrolled as members and the meeting today and tomorrow is being attended by 60 of them.

Old Formby films, including one of his earliest "On The Dole," were being shown and some members who are keen ukelele players were giving turns featuring his old songs.

Said Mr. Logan, who attended nearly every show in which George starred. "There is no sensationalism about our activities. We want to keep the name of George Formby alive in a dignified way. He was a great artist and a most lovable character."

The front page (*Gazette, October 26*) reported that George Formby is at long last having a statue in his memory.

Several years ago the *Gazette's* old "Seasider" column featured my letter about George.

The George Formby Society secretary got in touch with me and invited me to the Imperial Hotel for the annual convention.

It was fun to see several films on the night.

The reason I asked for the statue was because George Formby was the first entertainer in Normandy in 1944.

I asked the late John Lander at a D-Day Normandy Veterans meeting (both of us members) to approach the council.

His reply was "the council thought George had enough accolades".

I sincerely thank Geoffrey Thompson for his effort and I will give to the appeal and hope to be at the ceremony.

GEOFF PAYNE

Rossall Road,
Ansdell



1924 In straw boater for London debut at the Alhambra.

Did you notice the Video Camera that was filming at the Wintergardens? This is for a publicity film for the Blackpool Illuminations. It will be on sale around October and you might be on it.

Honours call for Formby

I CAN hear the cries now ... "Oh not George Formby again..."

But has Wigan World got news for you ... good news and bad news.

The bad news - well not all that bad - first.

The truth is that Wigan-born Formby has never been honoured in

any way at all by his old home town.

But after last week's Wigan World story of a statue of George being erected in the Isle of Man, I now receive news from Stan Evans, top official of the George Formby Society, to say that a street in Holland has been named after "Our George." It's George Formbystraat in Almere-stad.

Stan Evans is right - Wigan has done nothing at all to commemorate the life and work of the son who made a nation smile.

And that's a shame.

There is Formby Avenue at Atherton. And the Formby Hall. But it's doubtful if these are named after our famous son.

Wigan, despite lots of

grumbles, took George Orwell to heart. A brewery named the Pier pub after him. Now there's an estate of new homes in Wigan with the Orwell name tag.

We have a stone plaque to Orwell put up by Wigan Council not far from where the great writer stayed.

And yet in the eyes of us, the masses, Formby is being forgotten by his home town.

OK, he's not everybody's favourite. Nor, I may add, is Mr Orwell.

Come on Wigan Council. We aren't talking mega money here. Even a small brass plaque in the Town Hall would be better than nothing.

Borwick, of London SW3, left estate in the UK valued at £16,957,060 net.

He left his ukelele originally owned by the late George Formby to the Theatre Museum, Covent Garden, London, and £10,000 to the Garrick Club, London WC2, and a further £500 to provide drinks at the club after his memorial service.

ITV Rang.....asking for a copy of George Formby's 'Who Hangs Up Father Christmas's Stocking At Christmas.' "He never sung it" I replied, "Oh yes he did" - "Oh no he didn't" - Oh yes he did" - Oh no - *I can go on forever.* "Anyway," they said, "What Christmas song did he sing?" "He didn't sing any apart from 'Christmas Box For George' and we can't get a copy of that." Well can you recommend anything suitable for David Clarke to sing in the Christmas edition of Stars In Their Eyes? "What about 'Sitting On The Ice In The Ice Rink.'" "Sounds perfect, can you fax a copy through?" Fifteen minutes later the phone rings again - "Perfect."

SPOTLIGHT on Anthony Mason

So what has Anthony been up to this last few months? Well he has certainly come along well since his break into showbiz at the Midland Hotel with the GFS. He is gradually climbing up the ladder of success and doing it in George Formby fashion. A few months ago his agent, John Baxendale, told him to take up the guitar as he will never make it with a uke. I am pleased to tell you that Anthony is still plonking away and his audiences are loving it. A young George Formby is reborn. Alan Randall has a different style. He starts with a dash of George and finishes on the Vibes or the Keyboard. Anthony is 100% uke playing Formby - with a few war-time medleys thrown in. It goes down great! What is more he is handling the Hecklers well and they appreciate it.

These are some of the venues he has appeared in:-

Manchester Free Trade Hall.
Manchester Albert Sq.VE Day
I. O. Man, Villa Marina.
Guernsey, several spots.
Blackpool Tower
Blackpool North Pier
Blackpool, Yates Wine Lodge
London, Olde Tyme Music Hall
Eastbourne, Cavendish Hotel.
Liverpool Empire Theatre
Liverpool, Yorkshire Imperial
Liverpool, Anfield F C
Anglesey, Minstrel Lodge
Warrington, Parr Hall
Charnock Richards, Park Hall
Morecambe, Midland Grand
Morecambe, Gala Bingo
Wigan Police Station
and many more,

British Legions, etc. Plus loads of appearances on TV, Radio and for various charities. He has also worked about 100 spots with the Editor on our popular "Talk & A Song" on the life of George and his family. Plus 4 months at the Warrington Museum Exhibition. This is not bad for someone who is breaking into new ground. Well done Anthony. Keep the Formby Flag Flying.



Two Formby Banjos For Frank WIFE BUYS THEM AT GEORGE'S SALE

Auctioneer Edward Fielden banged down his hammer at the end of the bidding for Lot No. 449 at the George Formby sale yesterday, he asked: "Name of the buyer of this banjo please?" . A women's voice replied: "Formby." Then there was handclapping as 300 heads turned in a giant marquee pitched on the lawn at Beryldene, St Anne's Lincs, and found that the successful bidder for the banjo George strummed on his road to stardom was his sister in law Mrs Joy Formby.

She bought it with, later, another for the total of £175 "I came specially to this three day sale of George's house and personal effects to bid for the fifteen ukes and banjo's so that my hubby Frank - George's younger brother, can use them in his act, she told me.

In A Show

Frank Formby is appearing in "Summer Spectacular of 1961" at the Happy Valley Theatre, Llandudno, North Wales.

One of two banjo's Mrs Formby bought was the golden one which George recorded "Chinese Laundry Blues". She outbid rock and roll singer and skiffle group leader Lonny Donegan who stopped at £105, she got it at £110

Six banjos and ukes were bought for the George Formby Appreciation Society by its President Mr William Logan, 35 of Brampton Rd, Carlisle.

A "Mrs Murray" bought George Formby's sea front house Beryldene for £9000. The auctioneer refused to give any other information about her.

Quite a number of members have asked about the ukes that the GFS bought at the auction. The fact is that the GFS doesn't own any of George's ukes so we can only assume that Bill Logan bought them for himself. These ukes are slowly being released to various members and the prices are going up. The last one to be sold fetched £12,000. 00. And others, sold a couple of years back, fetched between £1400, 00 and £4,500. 00.

Tales are being bandied about that George Harrison bought George's Ludwig for £25,000, 00.

Brian Edge Reports.....Crewe Branch

Members of the South Cheshire "George Formby" Ukulele Society gave Stan Evans a great reception when he eventually arrived at their June meeting some 45 minutes late. Although Stan's roots are in the Crewe and Nantwich area he somehow got lost en-route.

Master of Ceremonies Jonathan Baddeley welcomed Stan to the Society. Brian Edge later pointed out that Stan was also a magician and that he should be carefully watched especially if he was asked to draw the raffle! Indeed later in the evening Stan was seen turning a small wad of plain paper into real banknotes. Fantastic! Why bother with the lottery!

The Society experimented during the evening with Des Redfern's drums. Des is an excellent drummer and the backing was really great particularly when Jonathan Baddeley experimented with some Dixieland on the clarinet. There were teething problems however, as Des could not hear the backing tape for the ukuleles and it was pure guesswork keeping the beat. However, Des and Steve Hassall seem determined to solve the problem for the next meeting. Des has made great progress since he picked up a uke for the first time 4 weeks ago. He got up on the stage and played three George Formby numbers and it must be said he performed creditably. Des's auntie, Mrs Mary Atkinson had a great time strumming away on her Dallas E. Mary (82) had not played her uke for many years and now she can't put it down. She's been given a new lease of life since joining us.

Tom Peddie as usual did an excellent job of collecting the subs and clearly loves to strum along with the thrashes. We'll get you up on stage one night. Malcolm Rigby, a regular visitor to the Blackpool Convention, came for the first time and had a thoroughly good night. Malcolm does not play, but as a listener it is clear that he knows the words of all the GF songs. Derek & Barbara Ball both expressed their enjoyment at the proceedings. Wilf Salt fresh from his holiday in the Fatherland was on great form and his duet with Steve Hassall "You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming" was a great hit with the audience.

Norman Walsh, one of our regular 'listeners' would certainly enjoy this number. Norman, who is a serious lover of classical music and travels widely to see all the best orchestras, was once a professional musician and back in the late 'thirties' his signature tune was no other than "You

CONTINUED

Can't Stop Me From Dreaming" Some time ago Norman suffered a very serious illness but he has fought back very well and is now improving all the time. It is incredible how someone who is so interested in classical music can get so much out of our meetings.

Members will be interested to know that "You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming" was recorded in Berlin by Karl Schwedler in 1941 as a Nazi propaganda song. They called it "You Can't Stop Germany Beating You".

During the evening Stan Evans performed the World Premier of a new song that he had written "Is Everybody Happy" and afterwards he entertained with a medley of songs finishing with - well you guess! Yes! You are absolutely right - BANANAS. They all loved him. Talking of World Premiers I don't know which sounded the worst Stan's World Premier in Crewe or George's World Premier in Burslem!

Dennis Lee, Martin Fowell and others from the Mold contingent were in good voice and as usual enjoyed every minute. Cliff Royle 'the lad from Frodsham' made a good show with his comic songs and Brian Edge actually managed to attempt two GF numbers with *Pleasure Cruise* and *Daring Young Man*.

Jonathan & Pam Badelley entertained with "Banjo Boy". They sounded great and Jonathan is developing a very relaxed style and beginning to give us a little smile, a sure sign of the way he is enjoying entertaining us.

So, thanks to everyone who contributed in any way to the success of the June meeting, whether as players or just listeners, particularly if not mentioned in the notes.

Thanks for your bundle of editorial Brian. I'll save some for the next issue. We had a grand night at your meeting (nobody got drunk) and I was overwhelmed with the greeting. I thought I'd won the pools.

You are right! The title South Cheshire "George Formby" Ukulele Society is a little too long so I've come up with a shortened one for you. What about South Cheshire Ukulele Meeting? You could abbreviate it using only the initials. It'll go down well with your members. See you in July.

Ocean Full Of Sharks

That's what one of the big Music Record Directors said of the Recording Business.

On the 7th of June 1989 I started collecting George's old 78s with a view to producing a library of GF tapes to sell to the members. As you are aware, some were very difficult to find and unfortunately there were no tapes on the market then. In fact there were none on the market until I starting spreading the news, to the publishers, that we were launching a GF 30th Anniversary Exhibition in Warrington. At first they didn't want to know and their usual comment was "George Formby, he's dead isn't he?" However, due to TV coverage, on the exhibition, the publishers started to bring George out of the cupboard. Armed with sufficient material to start the library I contacted a studio who set about producing the tapes for me.

Within a few weeks the first of the tapes began to roll off the line but little did I realise that the producer was also supplying these very same tapes to the "Cheap and Nasty" markets in Blackpool.

Also I didn't realise, at the time, that they were preparing to produce the whole set of ten tapes with entirely new sleeves, and - due to the fact that all the hard work had been done for them - they could sell them cheaper than I could. Apparently it's a cut-throat world in the music business.

At first I threatened to get an injunction against them producing my tapes. And then I thought "What The Hell, it's not worth the hassle, I might as well let them get on with it and at least the public will get a better chance of hearing George if his tapes are on the market."

To cut a very long saga down. I have agreed that they can produce the tapes for their own outlet and, in future, they will supply me with stock.

IT'S A CASE OF, IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM, JOIN 'EM!

I still have a quantity of the old stock (which is now reduced to £2.99) for anyone who wishes to complete their library. **HOPE IT ALL TURNS OUT NICE FOR GEORGE!** Stan Evans.

July & August N.W. Meetings.

All in order so you can tick them off.

JULY 1995

July 1st, Sat, Blackpool Branch - Wainwright Club

July 7th, Friday, Mold Branch - Ex Serviceman's Club

July 14th, Friday, Liverpool Branch - Broadgreen Conservative Club.

July 21st, Friday, Sale Branch - Sale Hotel

July 25th, Tuesday, Crewe Branch - Wistaston Memorial Hall.

July 28th, Friday, Warrington Branch - Alliance Social Club

(Uke Practise Only)

AUGUST 1995

August 4th, Friday, Mold Branch. Dennis Lee on 01244 544799

August 5th, Sat, Blackpool Branch. Eve Stewart on 01253 768097

August 11th, Friday, Liverpool Branch. Tom Bailey 0151 228 9769

August 18th, Friday, Sale Branch. Martin Harrison 0161 962 3919.

August 25th, Friday, Crewe Branch. Brian Edge on 01270 69836

August 25th, Friday, Warrington Special Meeting. Stan Evans on

01925 727102

The usual times are around 8pm till around 11.30pm. Entrance is 50p.

WARRINGTON MEETING. Due to the number of meetings being held in the N.West we decided to hold our Concert Meetings every 3 months only. (The other two months will be used for uke practise and uke tuition) But we want the Concert Meeting to be a Bumper Special and hope that surrounding branches will give support.

UKE TUITION MEETING

This is getting to be quite a popular night run by Anthony Mason and John Shreeve. Already we are seeing improvements in 'split strokes' and 'rolls' etc. Jack Skelland (dark horse) sounds better than George! When he's had a drink.

GEORGE FORMBY EXHIBITION

We are currently discussing the possibility of holding a George Formby 35th Anniversary Exhibition at the Alliance Social Club in 1996 - depending on the availability of the club. I am suggesting that it could be held over a two week period and a concert at the beginning and end of the show. More details later. Many new members didn't see the Warrington Exhibition in 1991 so they will be delighted.