

The North-West

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GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter

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2 Welcome to Book 4 of the N.West George Formby NEWSLETTER

It really is a nice surprise when the letters come in from the members and from the Branch Organisers. I manage to visit almost all of the N.West branch meetings and on every occasion I am met at the door by members with bundles of articles for the next issue. This is very encouraging and it makes the job worthwhile when the members show their appreciation.

There is always something new we can learn about George and after receiving a letter from Ella, George's sister in America, I am led to believe that our young Warrington Celebrity, Ashley Lynch, might be related to George. Anyway, I hope to have more news on this later. Ashley was chuffed to little doll-rags when we suggested that he might be.

Talking about our young Ashley. You will recall that he was chosen as our Warrington Branch Celebrity for 1995 - 96 and he is working hard giving the GFS loads of publicity wherever he goes. He has been to Blackpool, Rhyl, Llandudno, Fleetwood and many other places. He has also been to Lytham St Annes to take a photo of George's house, Beryldene.

Three Cheers For Ashley

Well we can't have our celebrity going to all these places, publicising the GFS, (like Ashley does very well) without pocket money, and without new clothes, can we? So our members have had a few whip-rounds to find some pocket money for him. To date we have collected £650 from the sale of the N.West Newsletters, Wintergardens Raffle and Contributions. Many, Many Thanks to all who helped. I am pleased that we have a very caring society.

Anthony Mason is now living in Warrington and now and again he pops in for an hour or so. One one occasion he called in and said, "Do you mind if I use your phone?" "No problem" I replied, "Carry on." About half an hour later he said "I've ordered that uke." "Oh" I replied, "Where from?" He thought for a few seconds and said "Er, from America." I am now waiting for the phone bill to come and then I will have him.

Sept Meeting at the Wintergardens

What a great meeting this was - EXCELLENT - and the large Spanish room was ideal for the happy crowds of members that turned out. George's songs were buzzing through the air and every member was keen to get on with the concert. The band was in full force, Dickie Speake on Keyboard, Charles Peacock on Bass Guitar, Mike Kitts on Drums and George Cheetham on Bones. They sounded great. We needed improvements with the Sound System however, as the large room was far too big for the two speakers that were placed either side of the stage. Perhaps a couple of speakers half way down the hall may do the trick???

As I've repeated many times over, our members are improving every time we meet and more and more members are taking the stage in the thrash sessions. No less than 50 on a couple of occasions and I'll bet we could have scraped up another 50 if we'd tried. I'll also bet there is nowhere in the world that you will see so many uke/banjo performers on one stage so perhaps we should apply for Guinness Book recognition.

The Junior Competition was, again, one of the highlights of the meeting with Andy Eastwood, Jenny Cronshaw, and Tom Cutler competing in the "16s and under" while Kieran Marshall, Mark Allen, Clare Moody and Mark Walsh were attempting to win the "12s and under" title.

The judges, Wilf Salt, Ray Neal and Martin Hosmer had a tough job trying to decide which of these great young artists (oozing with talent) had won but finally they came up with the two winners: Andy Eastwood and Kieran Marshall. I particularly like all these kids because they are always great friends irrespective of who wins the trophies. Wonderful!

A.G.M.

The only boring part of the September meeting appeared to be the AGM, and apparently the majority of members were thinking on the same lines as the room was almost empty. It looked like an exhibition of empty chairs! This is a great shame as, previously, the AGM has been one of the major parts of the September meeting and usually the air is alive and buzzing.

It was apparent that during 1995 there has been no stampede of members wishing to join the committee as only 5 members sat at the table. The N. West branches

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What About Some Snippets of News for the Editor?

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showed absolutely no interest, which again is a great shame, especially as we field six branches, and the only N.W member, John Walley, stepped down from the committee. One member, however, was voted on and he wasn't even there. Very unusual!

There was a slight buzz that there might have been a little excitement as one or two members turned up to insist that a particular expelled member was reinstated. This was quickly squashed as it was explained that all "Other Business" or "Complaints" were to be sent to the Secretary, for the Committee's attention. My opinion is that before any consideration can be given to this member being welcomed to the fold, there has got to be a lot of apologies for the harm and damage that was done. Only the committee, at that time, was aware of the full facts, so we must respect this.

The committee is "as was" with a couple of additions: Peter Pollard and Dickie Speake.

Personally, I don't see how this "Other business" and Complaints" to the Committee will work as I wrote, about three months ago, complaining that the "members list", which for 32 years had been available to members (and for 30 years printed in the Vellum) has suddenly been made "illegal" and no member, apart from the committee is allowed access. Now, in my opinion, this is "nonsense." These lists are essential to members, like myself, who receive as many as three or four enquiries per day asking for information about the GFS. Every branch organiser should have access to his/her own area, at least, and my biggest disappointment was when I tried to contact every member around the Warrington area to explain the reason for our Very Special Meeting recently. Unfortunately this was impossible to do as my members list is about 3 years out of date.

After my letter I was relieved to receive a "There is No Problem" phone call. But I'm still waiting for the members list.

After the meeting (shortest on record) Dickie struck up the band and the air was alive again with what the members had come for, George's songs.

I don't suppose that the members will be concerned if we don't hold an AGM. It's a great pity!

What About Some Snippets of News for the Editor?

Well I've never known anything like it, I'm having a reet load of fun
Having a shop at the meeting is the best thing that I've ever done
Wi me cups and me tapes and me stickers, and tee-shirts with George and his lamp
And me boxes of books underth' elbow, straight up the stairs I will tramp

And Eve says "I've got thee a table, right near that door painted black
Tha can catch a few members throot' doorway, and catch 'em again coming back
Now Christine and Jeffrey are martyrs as they help me to set up the shop
They stick all the boxes undert' table, and stack all the stock on the top

Well the members are reet glad to see us and they purchase a badge and a tie
And maybe a mug with our George on, that's why he's a twink in his eye
He's pleased 'cos he's not been forgotten, as he watches the kids coming in
And come to the shop for a chatter, or ask for a photo of him

"Ee lad" George says, "Me and Beryl, are chuffed at the things that we see
To think that we've got all these members, and they've all bought a book about me
And a tie, and a badge and a blazer, and a tape and a catalogue book
And what about all them tee-shirts, with a picture of me and me uke"

Well I go home that night feeling wealthy, as I count all the cash that's come in
I must pay the chap who makes tee-shirt, with six kids I've got to pay him
And I'll send off a cheque tert' suppliers, who sold me a box full of books
And I musn't forget Andy What'sits, I owe him for two wooden ukes

I can see all the cash slowly dwindling, as I pay all me debts, feeling bold
Must send a cheque to Charles Peacock for the badges and ties that I've sold
Then low and behold there's some profit, and I dance in the air with a skid
After 28 hours at the meeting, I've managed to make 30 quid

"Oh no, you've not" shouts the missus, as she grabs the last notes from me hand
"I got a big bill here fo't electric, tell Charles and he'll understand
And what about all them phone calls, tha's ringing 'em up all the day
Doesn't tha get any expenses? Tell Charles that he'll have to pay

Then George looked down from his heavens, and gave me a bit of a grin
"I know how tha feels lad, don't worry, with a woman tha never can win
Just keep a broad smile, grin and bear it, and if someone should give thee stern looks
Just think of the joys you are giving, with your tapes and your mugs and your books

Them trophies will move many thousands, thro the years they will touch many hands
And give umpteen joys to the millions, of members, throughout the broad lands.

Milton Keynes Meeting:-

I've Just Received a dreadful letter from Jeffrey Formby Booth. (George's nephew) It was full of horrors and spelling mistakes and smudges and Eva & I took about 3 hours trying to read it. It was worse than Alan Richardson's and that's saying something. Jeffrey is as good at typing as he is at playing the uke. That will give you some idea of how bad it was. May he hang his head in shame.

Well it appears that Jeff has booked the **KINGFISHER HOTEL** again for **SATURDAY MAY 4th** and it looks as if it is going to be very exciting.

There will be a buffet laid on at £3 per head and Dickie is usually there on the keyboard, in which case we will have Dennis Mitchell there as M/C. So the meeting will go with an almighty swing.

Jeffrey has promised that there will be no problems with the heating this time as everything is under control. The hotel has been taken over by a large group.

Now you must get there early otherwise you will miss Jeffrey's little speech at the beginning. That alone is worth £3 per head! You can ring Jeffrey on 01908 571443. More in a later issue on this exciting trip to Milton Keynes.

P.S. Anyone wanting to stay the night can ring the **Shires Hotel**, phone number of which Jeffrey has forgotten to include. Star Reporter? - Ugh!

Liverpool Meeting. Well it all started off very well with a room full of members but some had to leave early and, as usual, it left us with few members to perform. In fact, we were extremely pleased to see Dennis Lee and Martin Fowell - otherwise Jim Bramwell would have had to perform the group thrash on his own. That would be a novelty!

However, as usual, we had a great night and everybody went home smiling.

A Joke for Harry.. Chap asked for a room at a hotel.

Receptionist: "Sorry sir, we are fully booked up"

Man: "I must have a room I am very tired"

Receptionist: "Sorry sir, we have no rooms for the night"

Man: "I must have a room I have been travelling for the past two days"

Receptionist: "We are very sorry but you can't have a room."

Man: "Now look, if Prince Charles asked for a room what would you say?"

Receptionist: "Oh that would be different, he could have a room"

Man: "Well he's not coming so I'll have it."

Any more
jokes for
Harry?

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We had another good meeting at Penyfford with an attendance of about 45 - and this on the night before the Blackpool week-end! Admittedly a few of these wandered in from the room next door but it all added to the atmosphere. Stan Evans appeared again and treated us to one of his magical miracles. Anthony Mason also came and played a number of requests. The irrepressible Wilf Salt and Brian Edge represented the Crewe branch together with Tom and Colin. It was nice to see Cliff Royle enjoying himself on stage. Tommy Teapot made a great effort to attend and loved every minute of it. Rock On Tommy! Many thanks to all the regulars who make the meetings go with a swing and thanks also for the raffle prizes.

At the end of the concert we were invited to play and sing in the bar for the regulars. There must have been 70 or 80 people in there and four or five of us played to thunderous applause.

PLEASE NOTE - Our next meeting is on THURSDAY 5th Oct. At 8.30pm
Thanks Dennis for your report. Your North Wales branch meeting is really coming along very well and I am surprised at the large number you have learning to play the uke. Wonderful.

AND FROM MARTIN FOWELL of the N. Wales Branch....Stan,
How about a library of sheet music both Formby and Sing-a-long, so that individual members don't have to spend hours fiddling about with Busker type song books, transposing chords suitable for the uke?

You can bet your life that somebody has already done it so all it would need is for the Branch Organisers to collect the music and pass it on to a holding library and a suitable charge made for photocopying. All we need is someone to run it - how about the chap that sings Bananas?

Thank you Martin. As you know I have produced GF song books for the members and I did intend extending it to general sing-a-longs until a certain ex-member reported me to the London publishers. Since then we have had several inspectors nosing round keeping a check on all activities. One of them rang, posed as a member, and asked for a copy of my sales list to be put in the post. A few days later he called at my house, with the sales sheet, to check that all the items had been licensed. I tried singing "You Don't Need A Licence" but he wasn't amused.

Now, individual song sheets is not a practical idea because it would mean taking out a license for at least 40 of each song and some of them would be left on the shelf. Others would sell more quickly.

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I have produced a "Raw Beginners Book On The Ukulele" and that includes 14 very easy sing-a-longs with keyboard backing. These songs are out of copyright as the composer has been dead for 50 years.

None of George's songs will be out of copyright until the year 2007, however, I have just been informed that the EEC Government may be lifting the period to 70 years. We can't win!

These songbooks are expensive to license but, due to the fact that we print Words & Chords only, and also we are limited to membership sales, the publisher will usually give permission at a reduced price. I will look into producing a few books of general sing-a-longs in the near future.

What about some very remote songs like "Don't Go Down The Coal Mine Daddy, There's Plenty Of Slack In Your Pants" or "Don't Go In The Wheatfields Nelly, You'll Be Working Against The Grain" or "You've Worked All Your Life For Us Dear Mother, Now Go Out And Work For Yourself" Or there is a more up to date song "She Was Only A Sergeants Daughter But She Knew What Regiment" All these are excellent songs that should never be forgotten They'll go down well in N. Wales!

Great News from the Editor.....

For nearly 10 years I have been asking Anthony Mason to make me some decent backing tapes to enhance my performance. At long last - I am pleased to report - he has produced the goods and they sound excellent. In fact they are better than my act! "Bananas" with backing - How's That?

Talking about Bananas: There is a magic trick on the market called Banana Repeat. The magician has one banana which multiplies repeatedly each time he puts one in his pocket. I have scoured the country to buy this but unfortunately, due to demand, it is completely sold out. I keep telling you that "Bananas" is more popular now than it was when George sang it! Someday it will be our National Anthem.

Did You Know???

that one of our N.West members, Cliff Royle, who often pops up at Sale and the N.Wales meetings, wrote a book on life in the Village of Flixton (between Warrington and Manchester). The title is "This Was My Village - Boyhood Recollections of Flixton 1922 - 38." ISBN 1 85216 092 6 and the cost is £3. 50. There are about 70,000 words and many old photographs. Cliff's interest in the uke started when, as a youngster, he performed in a Minstrel Show and one of the cast played the banjo. This was around 1930 but Cliff didn't make a start until he met us a few years back.

Young Wally Cronshaw

What a hard man he is to track down. I've been trying to ring him all week but he has been out and about buying all sorts for a family wedding. Anyway I finally caught up with him and he told me that everything went well with the wedding and he is now getting ready for a holiday in Scotland.



Well Wally, on behalf of the members, I sincerely hope that you and Alice have a wonderful holiday in Bonny Scotland. It is the most beautiful country in the world and we hope that you come back refreshed and ready to fight Frank Bruno. In fact, if you stay a week longer you'll be ready for Harry. Have a wonderful holiday.

FORMBY SONG QUIZ NUMBER THREE - by Brian Edge.

Just how well do you know George's songs?

1. Who knocked down policemen and ran over 14 dogs?
2. During which song did George sing "Heaven help the sailors on a night like this?"
3. Who made George's spare parts twice the size?
4. What was a disgrace to George's home town?
5. Who chased the curate with a carving knife?
6. To whom did the girl give a gold watch?
7. What did one need to do to obtain a bunch of bananas?
8. What happened at ten minutes past eight?
9. Who would give you the frozen mitt and a cold?
10. What sent a happy feeling through George's heart?

Regrets at Warrington Branch - Some of the members will know Maurice, who served behind the bar at the Alliance Social Club. A few minutes ago I received a phone call from Eric to tell me that he had been taken into hospital with a heart attack. He was immediately put on a life support machine but, unfortunately, this didn't save him. Maurice passed away peacefully.

10. How To Play The Uke by Masterstroke Part 1.

As I've always said, and I suppose that someone will have to say it or nobody will know that it exists. The very first step to be made in playing the uke is purchase one, otherwise you will look a bit of a fool stroking your belly button and no sound coming out. So let us start where we should.

Tuning The Uke:-

Now this depends on where you are playing as different tunings are acceptable in various towns - especially after 10.30pm when half the audience are so drunk and bleary eyed they don't even know if you are holding a uke or not.

Setting out:-

Now, how are we to go about taking the first steps into playing the instrument? Naturally it has got to be at the beginning otherwise if some set out at the end, and some at the beginning then, no doubt, there will be an almighty clash in the middle. That is not the sort of discord we are looking for. We can create discords even if we don't try so there is no point in setting out deliberately to find them. Even if they are not there to find.

Holding The Uke:-

Now, this is debatable as Great Masters like Wilf Salt stress that, in his younger years, and especially being in the forces, there was far better things to do with your hands than hold a uke. So, during the war years, we saw the birth of the string round his neck. No doubt the uke was there to accompany whatever he was doing at that particular time, and the capo helped him with his quick change routine so that he could get back to the job.

Now some play left-handed, and some play right-handed. And some don't play at all so you can see that the picture is well and truly balanced. Now anyone who plays right-handed will know that their feet are firmly set in the paths of George Formby who never stayed long enough, in one spot, to know where his own feet were. This is very important and I hope you comprehend the question.

Now you will have recognised that this is an over riding event, and if so, does this mean that it is well and truly over ridden and requires an M.O.T? Let's hope not, especially as Christmas is just around the corner.

Choice Of Uke:-

Now Bob Drinkwater's debate goes on - Should we play the Banjo Uke or should it be the wooden ukulele. Well I can assure that it is pretty near impossible to play them both at the same time unless you have four arms and you learn to play one round the back. In this case you will need to tune up to the one at the front, which is all very easy if you can stay on speaking terms with the uke player on the other side.

Strumming The Uke:-

Go to any George Formby meeting and you will hear the continuous drone of "Up Up Down - Down Down Up - Up Up Down - and so it goes on. Some members strum upward while others strum down, and there are those, like Harry Stanford, who stay in the middle and never move from the spot, and rightly so. As he said "If I move from the spot I may lose my seat and I've paid 10 quid to get on the front row." Good for you Harry. Don't let 'em pick on you. If you keep your cap on they'll never recognise you.

And so we come to the finale. I sincerely hope that you have gleaned a few tips from part one of my ukulele course. Next month I will explain the fundamental movements of the Quick Flash Stroke coupled with the Jack Jones's version of the 6 Fingered Somersault - Be early.

P.S. Would anyone wishing to ask Masterstroke any special questions on the playing of the uke please send your queries to the Newsletter Editor.

Thank you Masterstroke for your excellent lesson on how to play the uke. We look forward to next month. Very enlightening.

yrrah drofnatS si eht tseb evif gnirts ojnab reyalp ni eht yrtnuoc - tub yletanutrofnu s'eh ton hcum doog ni nwot!



JOE M'CAFFEY

Next year - March 6th, 1996 is the 35th Anniversary of George's death.

"OLD HARRY CERTAINLY WOWED 'EM LAST NIGHT!... ONE OF HIS JOKES WAS NEW!!"

12. Bob Drinkwater on Banjos and Banjo Ukes.

Everyone likes the sound of the banjo. It carries a fascinating 1920s, ragtime sound and it is an instrument that I'd dearly loved to have played. But, unfortunately, it was not to be.

Having taught myself to play the ukulele I was naturally interested in the banjolele hoping it would be a second best banjo, but it was not the case.

Ever since the nineteen thirties, up to today, I have waited to hear a clear banjo sound coming from a banjo uke but I've never had the pleasure.

I watched Peter Moss play at the Reading Banjo Festival, on video and live at Stourbridge and Digswell and I thought he left the Banjo players standing. Nevertheless, in spite of playing a couple of high class banjoleles, with wonderful skill, we never heard the banjo sound. This is nobody's fault but a fact of life. During the past 60 years I have never heard a uke banjo with a distinctive banjo sound!

With a few stringed instrument manufacturers about today I'm sure someone could come up with the explanation. However, I do know that that the longer fingerboard and steel strings - together with the larger banjo head - make a large contribution to its magical sound. No doubt there must be other factors!

The banjo uke I've owned since 1938, has never been out of my possession. The name plate reads: A O Windsor, Maker, Castle Works, Newhill St, Birmingham and it cost just £2.10 shillings.

Windsor's made excellent banjos but without the banjo sound. Their works was burned down during the blitz in 1940 and they didn't start up again. This is a pity as the Windsor is still rated highly in the banjo circles.

Maybe Mr Markendale or Mr Cartwright may have the answer.

Thank you Bob. I'm sure that the main reason for the huge difference in sound is due to length of the arm. My long scale Will Van Allen (George's) has a longer t-w-a-n-g than the normal uke. Someday we must experiment with a set of wire strings. Keep sending 'em in. How are your pupils progressing?

Members:- Send me a photo of yourself with your uke for the Newsletter.



All Smiles from
N. Wales - Why Not?

Formby kind of guy

By Gerald Williams
Daily Post Staff

GEORGE Formby fan Brian Williams shaved off his moustache to look the part for last night's wartime musical variety show by the Caernarfon-based Red Dragon Theatre group.

And, although he usually parts his hair in the middle, the ukelele-strumming singer changed his hairstyle to a left parting for the show.

Retired dentist Mr Williams, 70, of Cefn Rhos, Bethel, near Caernarfon, said: "I've had a moustache since my student days at the Liverpool Dental School, and I've only once before shaved it off for a carnival.

"People I know well have passed me in the street at Caernarfon because they didn't recognise me."

He volunteered to take part in last night's sell-out revue at Theatr Seilo, Caernarfon, because he read that Red Dragon Theatre wanted a George Formby character.

"They already had people to play Churchill, Hitler and



□ Brian Williams:
Shaved off moustache

Vera Lynn and were looking for someone to sing some of George Formby's songs," he said.

Born in Holyhead, he was given his first ukelele when he was 10 and has always been a George Formby fan.

After National Service, he practised as a dentist with his father, but later returned to the RAF



GEORGE FORMBY



And there's no mistaking
Jack Sharp

14. Professional Artist Steve King -



My parents were divorced when I was three years of age and most of my childhood was spent being brought up by my auntie, grandma and uncle. My mother had been one of the famous Bluebell girls long before she met my father, who was a draughtsman at a well known engineering firm in Hull. He had worked hard as a trainee engineer in the workshops working himself up the ladder to become the senior draughtsmen and much later a director.

His hobbies were motorbikes, cars, shooting and model engineering. He was three times President of the Hull Model and Engineering Society and he loved making antique clocks or copies of the original ones.

The house was full of antiques and lathes of all descriptions, no wonder he had little time for me, a complete duffer at school. I once remember showing him my school report, when I was twelve, all marks scored were nil out of one hundred. My father almost had a fit. "Well at least I'm consistent", was my excuse.

My mother married a few times and one of my stepfathers was Denny Dennis who some of the readers may recall was a leading dance band singer with such bands as Roy Fox, Ambrose, Jack Hylton, and Sid Phillips. But the most outstanding event was being the resident singer with the Tommy Dorsey orchestra for two years in the States. Originally he had been approached by Tommy in 1939 along with Paul Whiteman and Benny Goodman who also wanted him. However with war breaking out he couldn't get a VISA so Tommy Dorsey took an unknown singer, Frank Sinatra. It wasn't until 1948 that Denny was invited back again and what an exciting time it was. But more about that some other time.

I was one of the first evacuees to leave Hull after the war broke out. Along with many others, I was evacuated to Melborne a small village about 6 miles from Pocklington. It seemed as if I was not wanted in the village, I moved to about seven or eight addresses before being shipped home in 1943. It was just after the 1941 blitz on Hull that I returned for a short holiday. I think the real reason was to put our minds at rest because a week before we could see all the sky lit-up over Hull and we were told all that of Hull was on fire. In actual fact it was the city centre where nearly everything was raised to the ground. The father of one of

the evacuees, I was sharing with, was picking him up to take him to Hull for weeks holiday. Strangely enough he lived in the same street as I did, so my Aunt had arranged for me to be picked up to. I still remember being hustled into the back of the car about 10pm at night the next thing I remember was waking up in the lounge on the settee. My own room was being used some theatre people. My Aunt and Uncle had opened their house as a theatrical guest house, as most of the hotels were out of action in the city centre. I was told to be on my best behaviour as they had two very important people staying for four days. Imagine my surprise when down to breakfast came George Formby and Beryl. They both made a big fuss of me and I was instructed to address them as Uncle George and Auntie Beryl. In fact, I grew up thinking they were my real Aunt and Uncle. My Aunt had known the Formby family from well before George started making films.

My Uncle was an engine driver and one day George persuaded my Uncle to give him a ride on the footplate. On that particular day, my Uncle was taking passengers from Hull to Withernsea and back all day. George came back with a black face, wearing a fireman's hat and jacket. He was like a little kid as he told us of having a traditional fireman's breakfast cooked in the boiler of the engine, on a shovel. He also explained about being left on the engine, by himself, as my Uncle and his firemen pushed the engine around on the turntable. George also drove the engine off the turntable to the water crane. This upset Beryl and she said "if a bomb had been dropped" which was quite a reasonable assumption "and they had been killed or injured, no one could have claimed compensation." George said "if a bomb is going to land on me it would make no matter where I was or what I was doing" I didn't really understand the conversation until it was all explained many years later. One thing I do remember, quite plainly, was every night, after they had tea, and before setting off to the theatre, George would open a packet of Navy Cut and put some in his gold cigarette case. He would then give Beryl the remainder to put in her handbag. He also would give her his wallet to put in her handbag and she would give him change. Without fail, he would look at me and say "always remember, whenever you go out make sure you've a rattle in your pocket" Continued over.....

16. Continued.....

It was a wonderful week for me because I had learned of the strong family ties between the Booth's and the McGills (my family). George was big box office and nearly every week a George Formby film would be showing at one of the 48 cinemas that Hull boasted of in those days. Ethel, Ella, Louisa and Frank also stayed with us. The only one who didn't stay was Mary whom I would adopt as a mother, many years later, when she left the circus.

I hope the readers will be interested in my story of my first encounter with the Formbys and I can tell you some more interesting stories, on other visits from them, and the time when my grandmother and aunt took me to one of the many Beryldenes, But some future date perhaps.

Steve is just finishing a "Formby, Crosby and Jolson" season touring with Ken Goodwin and Dennis Lotis. He sings and plays like George and on other occasions he has played the role of Al Jolson. Over the season they played Blackpool, Douglas I O Man, Porthcall, Hull City Hall (Wartime George) Darwin, Workington, Consett Co Durham, Bournemouth and back to the Music Hall Tavern Blackpool. *Thank you Steve for an excellent story of George & Beryl.*

Did you Know that Harry Stanford writes his own verse?

Well he does and here is a sample from the pen of the genius.

With friends to Broadgreen, Blackpool and Sale meetings we go
Where they all do enjoy my 5 string banjo
To my very own Warrington meeting I go
But not for Stan (the top man) can Harry play his old banjo....BANNED!!!

Who is the celebrity boy named Ashley
Why! He belongs the George Formby Society
You ought to hear him play the uke
His name should go down in Aspel's Big Red Book....THIS IS YOUR LIFE.

*Well thank you Harry for your verse, they'll all enjoy it so
Now practise on your banjo uke and sell your old banjo
'cos Ashley is our big red chief who tells us what to do
He said to bring your banjo uke - and bring dear Lottie too.*

And he also said "Keep sending 'em in Harry"

Oh Dear! It appears that every time Phil Forris drives 17
down the motorway the police are waiting to nab him. Only this time it was the
speed camera that caught him, near Wigan. Knowing Phil, I'll bet he smiled at
the camera. What some members will do to get their "Photo In The Press"

Uke For Sale:- Peter Ianson is selling a Genuine 1920s Gibson UB2
uke/banjo with original case. Great sound, Perfect condition and the price is
around £700. You can ring Peter on 0113 2822898

A Few Memories

From Jeffrey Formby Booth (George's Nephew)

Whenever we stayed with Uncle George & Auntie Beryl (as we had to call them
in those days) Michael (Ella's son) and I were never allowed to drink tea or
coffee - only orange drinks or lemon squash. Beryl was always very kind to us
and we had great respect for her.

When we stayed at 4 Alexandra Drive, Liverpool, there would usually be four
cousins there, Georgina, Michael and Sheila (Ella's children) and myself.

And we would organise concerts in the cellar. Quite often George & Beryl
would visit his mother there and he would come down in the cellar to entertain
us. He always had a small wooden uke in the back of his car. Our special
request was The Lancashire Toreador, which he would sing for us.

George always loved an audience and sometimes we would be sent to bed early if
we didn't applaud him.

In later years, Ella's son, Michael, was due to get married to a vicar's daughter,
and on his stag night he went out with the lads for his last fling. That night,
when being driven home - flat out in the rear of a van - the driver, who was over
the drink limit, smashed the van and all three were killed.

School Exams:- It is an utter disgrace that 75% of the school leavers
failed their Maths Exams while the other 15% only just scraped through!
Think about it

What About Some Snippets of News for the Editor?

Shaun Hits The High Spots at Crewe.

Dickie Speake and Dennis Mitchell made their first visit to Crewe in August and they got a very hearty welcome. How great it was to have live music.

Colin Wood responded magnificently to the society's Amplification System Fund by making and selling 12 garden birdtables. What a great effort. There is doubt that every member will benefit from your great effort which raised the unbelievable sum of £120. Thanks a million Colin.



Shaun Larcombe

Shaun Larcombe has been Hitting The High Spots - again! He entered a local club talent competition and took the first prize of £300. Shaun is now hoping for an early delivery of a Markendale uke! Our raffle organiser, Peter Healey, had just made a super name board for the society when disaster struck. He dislocated his hip and as a result he had a spell in hospital. Get well soon Peter.

We really had looked forward to seeing Wally Cronshaw. Alice and Jenny in August but unfortunately they couldn't make it. Special thanks to Lesley Lee, Pam Baddeley, Tom Peddie and others who helped out when we were hit with illnesses.

Our Master Of Ceremonies, Jonathon Baddeley, gave us a preview of a Formby song which he had been practising for Blackpool. "John Willie's Jazz Band" was the number and he really took great care in putting the song over.

S.O.S - songs wanted.....Pete Smith, who with his wife, Jenny and son, Adam, come regularly to the Warrington and Sale meetings, is chasing some GF words and chords. **CAN YOU HELP?** He is particularly looking for Horoscope, It Serves You Right, Middle East, Saving For Sally, Growing Lad, Mr Roosevelt, and They Can't Fool Me.

If you have a spare copy would you please pop it in the post to P. E. Smith, 104 Allestree Lane, Derby DE22 2HT.

From Pete Smith..... Dear Stan,

'Once a month just isn't enough'. (not the title of a songyet ?)

Now let me say , first of all , that Geography has never been one of my strong points but by my reckoning there are many places to the South and East of Derby therefore it must lie in the North-West. Even if no one agrees with this logic we are still going to attend NW meetings as often as possible.

We are regular attendees at Loughborough and thoroughly enjoy the meetings organised by Kevin Selby & Co. but as the title of the note says 'Once a month just isn't enough'.

During the school holidays Jenny , Adam and myself were able to attend a variety of meetings including Wakefield , Mirfield , Sale and Warrington and enjoyed each and every one. These trips sometimes involve eating burger and chips at service stations in the early hours of the morning but we all have to make sacrifices from time to time.

Sale and Warrington meetings are always 'on the cards' due to their Friday night slot and the fact that the 1995 Celebrity attends Warrington makes it doubly enjoyable.

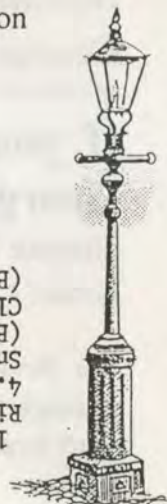
As we've only been members for just over a year we have not had exposure to Harry's full repertoire of jokes but I've got a couple which he may not have used including one about a 'pig with a wooden leg' and another about a 'three-legged chicken'. If he thinks they're 'up-to scratch' he's welcome to use them 'any time'.

We'll see you in the near future even if our North-Western adoption papers have not been signed.

All the best ,

Pete Smith (on behalf of the Smith family).

1. Frank (with his tank). 2. Sitting on the Ice in the Ice Rink. 3. His lady gym instructor (I'm Making Headway Now).
4. A little Wigan garden. 5. The vicar's wife (In My Little Snapshot Album). 6. Andy the Handy Man. 7. Queue (Blackpool Prom). 8. George's ladder broke (When I'm Cleaning Windows). 9. Frigid Atr Fanny. 10. Every plink plink (Banjo Boy).



Oct & NOVEMBER. N.W. Meetings.

All in order so you can tick them off.

OCTOBER 1995

- Oct 6th, Friday, N.Wales Branch - British Legion , Penyfford.
- Oct 13th, Friday, Liverpool Branch -Broadgreen Conservative Club.
- Oct 14th , Saturday, Blackpool at the Wainwright Club
- Oct 20th, Friday, Sale Branch - Sale Hotel
- Oct 24th, Tuesday, Crewe Branch - Wistaston Memorial Hall.
- Oct 27th, Friday, Warrington Branch - Alliance Social Club

NOVEMBER 1995

- Nov 3rd, Friday N.Wales Branch. Dennis Lee on 01244 544799
 - Nov 4th ,Saturday, Blackpool Branch. Eve Stewart on 01253 768097
 - Nov 10th, Friday, Liverpool Branch. Tom Bailey 0151 228 9769
 - Nov 17th, Friday, Sale Branch. Martin Harrison 0161 962 3919.
 - Nov 28th, Tuesday, Crewe Branch. Brian Edge on 01270 69836
 - Nov 24th, Friday, Warrington - Stan Evans on 01925 727102
- All times are around 8pm till 11.30pm. Entrance is usually 50p.



WARRINGTON MEETING

Once again we were pleased that members came from all over the country to be with for our special occasion. We will continue holding these special meetings and trust that our CELEBRITY - Ashley - will be able to attend. What a real treat he is. Next Meeting Friday 27th October.

Deadline for the next issue is the 15th of October - so as George would say - GET CRACKING

If you wish to receive regular copies of the George Formby N.West Newsletter just send a cheque for 50p plus 25p. Or £2. 25 (inc post) for the next three issues - Payable to Stan Evans, Address on front cover.

Or Branch Organisers can order a minimum lot of 10 for £3 plus 60p postage and you are welcome to sell them to help raise extra funds for your branch.