

TheNorth-West

5

# GEORGE FORMBY

## Newsletter

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Ashley & George  
Together

Produced specially for the  
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## 2 Welcome to Book 5 of the N. West George Formby NEWSLETTER

**ASHLEY LYNCH** 1983 - 1995

This is a very sad Newsletter. On Saturday the 14th of October our young Ashley passed away.

We have known for the past three months that poor Ashley's days were numbered but we were unable to publish it. The only consolation is that Ashley is no longer suffering from the terrible head pains caused by three brain tumours.

What a wonderful boy he was. Even towards the end he had a pleasant word and a smile for everyone who visited him.

Only a few days before his death he watched a three hour run of GFS publicity on TV and he was amused when he saw Anthony Mason as a young boy.

A couple of months ago the Warrington Branch chose him as a "Special Celebrity" for the Year and we raised funds so that Ashley could go on short holidays. Wherever he went he would wear his large badge and tell everybody that he is a member of the GFS.

Ashley loved George's music and his comic songs. He also loved watching George's antics on video. As Denise, his mother, said "It was George who made him laugh after his operation."

Ashley appeared with Alan Randall on Morning TV with Anne & Nick, and also on BBC TV News, as the young boy who received help from George Formby to start laughing again. The Bella Magazine also published a full page report on how George helped Ashley to overcome his ordeal.

Our Ashley will be greatly missed at our Warrington meetings where he always occupied the front table.

## Ashley's funeral - The

cortege left his home and around 200 neighbours gathered outside the front door of his home. The service was held a few minutes walk from the house at St James's Church, Old Hall, Warrington and around 250 - 300 mourners filled the church. Not one of them had a dry eye. It was a very moving moment for all.

Anthony Mason did an excellent job in producing recorded material for the service. He taped four songs including George singing "Goodnight Little Fellow" and Ashley & his mum singing "Leaning On A Lamp Post." This brought a deluge of

tears. Ashley's school friends were deeply upset as they hugged each other for comfort. The Rev. David Long gave the service and the songs were introduced by Sharon and Anthony. The hearse then travelled to the Warrington Cemetery, passing Ashley's school on the way. The huge crowd walked past George's grave to get to the place where Ashley was to be buried. This was a very moving moment as Denise helped to lower her son into the grave.

Over 80 lots of flowers were laid at the side of the grave and three wreaths were in the shape of a uke banjo. Alongside Ashley is buried his gifts of Manchester United Kit, a woollen George Formby - which was knitted by Paul Corbet's mother, and his large badge which was presented to him by the Warrington Branch when he was chosen as "Celebrity of 1995"

At the Alliance Social Club, new landlords, Eric & Carol Skillander, laid on an excellent spread of food. We finished with a light-hearted concert for Ashley.

Denise lost a daughter, Yvonne, who died from cot death 15 years ago at the age of 5 months. She has two other sons, David, aged 19 and Stephen, aged 15.

I would like to personally thank the many members who came to give their support, especially Dennis & Pat Taylor, Dennis Mitchell, Jack Sharp and the N.Wales representatives who came a long distance.

Ashley will be missed at our Warrington and Blackpool meetings.



Ashley surrounded by his GF memorabilia

**FC Willmott Writes.....** I cannot say that I was ever in his audience, but, I was responsible for transporting George to Normandy on, or around, July 18th 1944. At that time the build up of troops was considerable and entertainment was vitally needed for units waiting for the delayed advance. No branch in the Armed Services could spare the transport or take the risk of transporting E.N.S.A. parties.

It was suggested, unofficially, that individual artists, who could be self-sufficient, might be taken over by Units willing to co-operate.

At the time I was serving with 12 Air Formation Signals and, in addition to combat duties, I was the Entertainments Officer. As an Army Unit attached to the RAF,. We were not subject to the direct command of either. Our Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. T W Norrish told me that it was not an order, but he would like me to take an E.N.S.A. entertainer to Normandy as a passenger in my Jeep aboard a vehicle landing craft.

I agreed and it was not until we arrived at the embarkation point that I quickly recognised the identity of my passenger. I was, however, somewhat disconcerted when I saw that Beryl was there as well. With our equipment and a batman driver, my jeep was well laden and, apart from space, we were a male outfit with no consideration for the needs of a lady in our midst.

There was no opportunity for George to entertain en route but he certainly did so during the two days that we waited in our vehicles at the port of embarkation. We slept in our vehicles, but George & Beryl were readily accommodated in a neighbouring house. We were not told the name of the port, but it must have been Gosport or Southampton. George sang, quite literally, under a lamp post at the corner of the street to while away the tedium of our waiting.

However, we did complete our obligation and we handed over our guests at a command post on the Arromanches Beach. We did not see the Formbys again.

Ten years ago I was giving a talk to a local W.I. when I made reference to the fact that George had spent a brief apprenticeship as a jockey in the town of Middleham. A lady in the audience was able to add some extra detail as George had been lodged in her father's farm house.

I am old enough to remember seeing George's father so these associations have a special interest.

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Sometimes I'm completely gobsmacked when I walk into the N. W. Meetings. Suddenly an avalanche of eager members will meet me at the door with all sorts of snippets and articles for the newsletter. The following article was thrust into my hand at the Crewe meeting by Wilf Salt. Some say "Good Old Wilf "  
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## I Was On The Same Bill as George Formby

by Norman Walsh

From the late 1938 to the start of the year I played piano and accordion on the stage touring Britain and Scandinavia. I met, and was on the same bill as, many famous artists but probably the most exciting was when I was in the same show as George Formby and my name on the bill was the same size as his. This is how it happened.

I was born and brought up in Bolton, Lancashire. There were 3 live theatres up to 1945 and some of the larger cinemas had a stage. A local by-law prohibited Sunday performances so to get round the law Charity Shows were presented, performers giving their services free, but some professionals receiving generous expenses.

When I returned to Bolton at the outbreak of war I continued to perform in a semi-professional capacity. I knew Alfred Booth, Manager of the Grand Theatre, and the Theatre Royal which was next door (both now no more) from my friendship with his son, Ronnie. In Spring 1941, when I was 16 he asked me to do a solo spot on my accordion in a Sunday evening charity performance at the Theatre Royal. When I agreed, with enthusiasm, I thought that George Formby was wonderful.

Posters advertising the show were displayed throughout the town and because it was a charity show all names were printed the same size, though, of course George's name was at the top. I was very proud of this but I didn't get a handbill to keep.

I recalled that I played well and received respectable applause. However, George, as usual brought the house down. He played favourites like "Cleaning Windows" and "Leaning On A Lamp Post" and several other numbers and the audience were reluctant to let him go.

Afterwards he kindly gave me his autograph (I still have it) as said a few words of encouragement. I had previously appeared with such stars as Frank Randle, Sandy Powell and Florrie Ford, and many others, but most are now forgotten though not George. Norman Walsh.

*May thanks to Wilf Salt for handing in an excellent article. Have we any more?*

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# Have You Forgotten The ?rotide

**6 Uke Banjo For Sale** - Chris Middleton, remember him, Star of Channel 4s Big Breakfast - Has a Dallas "B" uke banjo for sale in very good condition. Nearest offer to £120. You can ring Chris on 01925 32574.

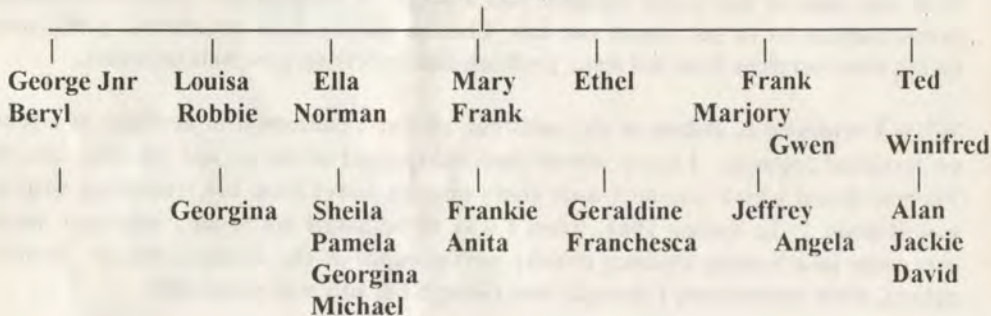
Have you anything to sell? If so, drop the editor a line and we will try to sell it for you. I wonder if Harry wants sell his 5 string banjo?

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**Formby Family Tree** George's parents, Eliza (Hoy) and James Booth had 12 children but only seven survived. George was the oldest of the seven. Of the seven only four now remain. Louisa is in an Artists Home in London. Ella is living in America. Ethel lives in South Africa and Ted lives in Oxford.

James Booth (George Formby Sen)

Eliza Hoy



The above tree of the Formby Family was sent in by our good friend Jeffrey Formby Booth who is George's Nephew - you'll see his name above. New members might not be aware that Jeff, and his wife Christine, have been members since 1991 and they regularly attend the Wintergardens meetings. They are pleased that they managed to acquire the Dallas E model uke that was owned by George, Frank (Jeff's father) and later by George Harrison of the Beatles.

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**Did you see** - "This is Your Life" on TV on the 11th of October? Tony Warren, wrote created "Coronation Street" was the subject and he mentioned that George Formby gave us the language of Music Hall

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Emahs - emahs - emahs - fi uoy t'nevah tnes na  
elcitra rof eht rettelswen - !!!EMAHS



**HAVE YOU  
FORGOTTEN  
AN ARTICLE FOR  
THE EDITOR?**

☆TO fill in the many hours he now had to spare, Formby undertook lengthy foreign tours

## What Is Anthony Mason up to???

Well you'll be pleased to know that he has been working on some auditions for two TV companies.

The first audition was filmed in Blackpool on a tram. The show is called "Don't Give Up Your Day Job" which involves various artists doing their spot while a panel of judges tear them to pieces. Anthony and his manager could see that it was to be a rough trip so they sat down and wrote a new song (Mod Formby style) to suit the panel's image. It is X rated so George Formby members are not allowed to view. Well OK, if you insist. It will be screened in December on BBC2.

About two years ago Anthony wrote a song called "Don't Give Up Your Day Job" which he is working on in the hope that they may want to use it.

The second audition, filmed in Liverpool, is for a film called "Free As A Bird" which is based on the 9 volumes of un-recorded Beatle songs that have recently been discovered. In the film the Beatles fly from Liverpool to London and along the way they come across George Formby. Isn't he doing well?

## And what has Ashley been up to?

By Anthony Mason

It was doubtful if Ashley would be fit enough to make the journey to Blackpool but he gets a great thrill from looking from the outside of George's houses so I made arrangements with Mr & Mrs Brierley of Beryldene, (now named Kirkstiles) Singleton, nr Blackpool, for Ashley and his mum and I to pay a visit and look round the house.

The following Monday morning came and I went to pick them up. Ashley didn't want to miss the opportunity to visit George's house so off we set. The journey was quite good for Ashley and we finally arrived.

Ashley had difficulty walking the few paces to the front door but he was determined that he wasn't going to miss the tour. We were very nicely received by Mr & Mrs Brierley and given tea and biscuits and a brief history of who has owned the property since George & Beryl.

We were then given a tour of each of the rooms and we saw where George sat in his easy chair. Ashley struggled to climb the stairs but with determination he managed it. The tour of the rooms was followed by a walk round the garden.

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## Under the hammer

The row over George Formby's will meant that all the property at Berydene had to be sold off. The house and contents were auctioned in June 1961 and thousands of fans and gawpers turned up at the large marquee. Many wanted to see inside the house - but were banned.

The house - it had a panelled hall with a parquet floor. A framed thank you letter from Montgomery in the lounge.

The auctioneer began the sale with Item No 1 - a pottery wall vase depicting a goose in full flight. It went for £1.50. A barometer was knocked down at £4.

The auction continued throughout the afternoon. George's electric shaver was knocked down at £5.

George's sister-in-law bought two of the comedian's ukuleles for £175, actually outbidding Lonnie Donegan. Six were bought by the George Formby Appreciation Society.

George's Bentley went to an Isle of Man businessman. The GF1 number plate went to the owner of a mini car.

☆ **Next week, in the final article in the series, we look at a young man who is carving out a career as George Formby the Second.**



George's sister, Louisa, has now left Warrington and is now living in an Artists Retirement Home in London. Her niece, Geraldine, (Ethel's daughter) rang to say that she is looking better than ever.

### CONT...

We went inside George's heated garage, where he kept his 2 Rolls Royce cars, and also in his greenhouse. We finished with having our photographs taken.

Although it tired him out terribly, Ashley thoroughly enjoyed his last trip.

*Anthony has done a great service in helping Ashley over the past few months. He has also made tape recording of Ashley and his mum singing Lamp Post. It came out very well. Anthony told me that he attempted to arrange for Ashley to visit the Berydene house, at Lytham St Annes, but he understands that the Faircloughs (who have been to our meetings) have sold the house to Russell Grant, the Astrologer, and apparently he is rarely at home.*

## From K R Eastlake.....

I was travelling down to Portugal last year and was staying a couple of nights in Segovia. On my first full day I was feeling somewhat frustrated and disappointed as I was unable to explore this beautiful medieval city due to a downpour of rain. I was therefore consoling myself with a cool beer at a city centre bar, when, my train of thoughts was interrupted by an American voice asking me to take a photo for the two young students.

The answer to my question of "How did you know I was English?" was self evident, there not being too many white haired old boys in Spain.

Being quite a keen photographer I was arranging them in the best position to embrace both of them and the city centre square, with the cathedral in the background, when one of the young chaps asked me to "Hold on a minute fella, I want a photo with my instrument in my hand". Taking out the instrument he held it high on his chest. His next question was "I bet you don't know what this is". I assured him I did - "It's a ukulele banjo". "How do you know that" was his next question. Because George Formby played one!" Slightly taken aback he said "Hell man, you've heard of George Formby? Well I'm the President of the George Formby Fan Club in the States".

My next comment really set them back on their heels. "Not only have I heard of him but have actually shaken him by the hand". All thoughts of taking photos were now forgotten as they pressed me to tell them when and where I met their idol.

Having now a captive audience I settled back with another beer, pressed into my hand by an eager young student. "Well fellows, it was like this. I was a young guardsman during the war in the Guards Tank Brigade when we were ordered to the Ardennes to help the Americans straighten out their line in the Battle of the Bulge. George Formby and his ENSA group entertained our battalion just behind the front line. At the end of his show our CO thanked George for his hard work in keeping up the morale of the troops and commiserated with the Left Flank Squadron who had missed his show as they were 'at the front'. George requested transport to take him to the squadron 'at the front'.

That is how I met George. In a cramped shallow dugout, between the tracks of  
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our Churchill Tank with a couple of smoky oil lamps for illumination, a mess tin of sweet compo tea and George plucking away at his ukulele and singing 'When I'm Cleaning Windows' but with much more risqué words than the public had ever heard! A lot more even risquer jokes followed. After lots of hand shaking and back slapping George left to slide down into the dugout below the next tank, leaving a very happy crew.

The next morning we discovered that George spent nearly all night out of one dugout and into the next, until he had entertained the whole squadron.

When I had finished relating my wartime experiences of George Formby these two young Americans grabbed the nearest Spaniard, handed him their camera with a request for him to take a photo of their new found "English Old Boy and themselves.

*Wasn't George wonderful? It is unbelievable that he actually crawled under each tank to entertain the full squadron. I'll bet that today's stars wouldn't do it What a great little wartime story. I am making an effort to trace this person and also the President of the American George Formby Fan Club - sounds interesting! More in a future issue.*

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**The Blackpool Meeting** - After a 9 week absence from the Wainwright Club we were getting withdrawal symptoms, but it all turned out nice again on the 14th when the 'old faithfuls' turned up, in spite of illuminations traffic. Jack Jones has kept asking me 'When's your next meeting' and then he missed it, and we missed you - shame!

The Yates/Helme family have no more transport problems now that Alan can chauffeur them, he's got his wings now! It was great to see Karl Collins again and hear his progress on the uke. He did a good job on the raffle, as usual.

Harry claims I taught him at school - cheek! Tell you what Harry, there'd have been some fun and games trying to control you.

Thanks to everyone who came and contributed in any way, it was certainly a night to chase away the blues. Don't forget to send Stan any snippets of news for our North - West Newsletter, we want to know about all your activities, such as Alan Yates entertaining on a double decker bus whilst going through the lights. See you all soon. Eve & Charles Stewart.

*Thanks for your letter Eve & Charles and also for an excellent night at the Wainwright. I think your sound system is really superb. The thought of young Harry, in short pants, sat behind his desk is enough to put anyone off their tea.*

**Just Received a letter from Edwin Bancroft** who wishes to thank the Sale George Formby members for the Get-Well Cards and good wishes. He hopes to be at the meeting in the near future.

*Thank you Edwin. They're a grand lot at Sale - every time I go to Sale they are filling a get well card in for someone. Hope you enjoy the Newsletter. Send me an article.*

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**How Do You Like The Newsletter?** We launched the book to specially publish all the nitty gritty bits of information and gossip that goes on in our N.W. Meetings. Perhaps you can suggest a few improvements that can be made. Any comments you can offer will be appreciated.

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**These Kids Are Great!** Let's hope we have some wonderful news. Five year old GFS member Jamie has Cerebral Palsy so

therefore he is unable to move around like other children. His mum & dad took him along to the last meeting at the Wintergardens and he thoroughly enjoyed every minute. He went home with a George Formby Tee-shirt and even though he can use one hand only he still has ambitions to play the ukulele like his hero, George.



Jamie with his little brother Sam

In school, when they have concerts, guess who sings the loudest? He has the whole school singing all George's songs. This is when he proudly wears his tee-shirt. Anyway, here is the good news - we hope. In the near future - funds permitting - he will be going for some special treatment. Apparently there is a new treatment which consists of a person being put into a decompression chamber which, hopefully, awakens the part of the brain which is dormant. It has proved successful with some children. I will keep in touch with you regarding Jamie's progress. Marion Southern, Jamie's Grandmother. *I gave a report, in the Vellum, on Jamie 2 years ago. Marion told me that he loves watching George on the TV and whenever they go out in the car he insists on hearing George's tapes. We wish him tons of good progress.*

# Liverpool Branch by Tom Bailey

We had two notable absentees at our September meeting. Joe McCaffrey and Bill Pope. When I phoned Joe I learned that he and members of his family had been in a car accident and the car was a write off. OUCH.

Thank God no one was hurt. I phoned Bill Pope's home continuously and finally achieved success. Bill had been taken ill on his way home from holiday and had to be driven straight to Broadgreen Hospital. Thankfully after 5 days he was sent home much to the relief of the nursing staff. It had been said he had been telling Harry Stanford's jokes and the intensive care dept couldn't cope.

On a serious note Stan. I would like to thank all the stalwarts who attend the Liverpool meeting and keep it active.

Harry, Lottie, Jack, Jim & Joan - who never miss - John Shreeeve, Doris & John, Anthony Mason and your good self. Thanks also to Cyril Palmer and Sheila, and the overseas (across the River Dee and the Mersey) colleagues Dennis Lee and his N.Wales friends, Ged & Joe who travel from Widnes - Hope I've not forgotten anyone. But where are all the Liverpool members???

My wife and I keep praying for Ashley to get better.

*Thank you Tom for your report. Actually you have given me an idea that would rapidly improve the Health Service. I suggest that Harry is put on the National Health. He could be transported from one hospital to another with his five string banjo to give concerts. You will soon hear the cries from the patients "GET ME OUT OF HERE." Must drop a line to John Major.*

*Actually, I think that Tom Bailey's parents slipped up. Imagine how popular he would have been if they had christened him Bill.*

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## GF Poser For You - name the following song ....

E A S T  
E A O U T S T  
E A S T

Answer on Page 16

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**Don't Forget To Send your Article for the NEWSLETTER**  
or Harry, with his 5 string banjo, will be knocking on your front door.

**Just Had a Call From** Chris Webster who is now working in Croydon working as a Treasurer for a Bingo company. He has just finished doing a season at the Bridlington Music Hall Theatre impersonating that good old favourite, G H Elliot, who was known as The Chocolate Coloured Coon, which wasn't offensive in those days. After the first night the management received a complaint so he is now known simply as G H Elliot.

He mentioned that they book some top class stars at the Bingo Hall and shortly they hope to have Ken Dodd appearing there. Chris is hoping to do a spot in the show so that he can boast that he has appeared with Ken.

*Hope it comes off OK Chris. Best of luck.*

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**I've Just Been Speaking** to George Cheetham on the phone and he told me that he has only two problems in life: Getting a woman to share his life and fitting the new Polyskin on his uke! So if there are any single ladies out there who can sort his two problems out will you please give him a ring?

We have had one or two members who have struggled trying to fit the new Polyskins so we have now changed to a lightweight sheet. "No Trouble Now" says George, "If I can fit one, anyone can." *Good For You George. We'll have the ladies queuing at your door!*

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### FORMBY SONG QUIZ NUMBER FOUR - by Brian Edge.

Just how well do you know George's songs?

1. Who was 'nt afraid of talk of an invasion?
2. Where did George play tiddley-winks?
3. What was it, that was "underneath where she was sitting," and who was brave enough to remove it?
4. Who had great difficulty in gaining entrance to the Albert Hall?
5. "One evening as an L.D.V.". What was an L.D.V.?
6. What was a .F.A.N.Y.?
7. Who ran like the devil and grabbed the rest?
8. Who pulled her bed clothes down?
9. Who had beautiful knees?
10. Who lived on rice, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 19 - No Cheating Harry

## N. Wales Branch - All Our Yesterdays by Don Donnell

The excellent George Formby concerts bring back a flood of memories. When George was at the height of his popularity in the 1930s we youngsters would look forward to his radio broadcasts and flock to the cinema to see the many hilarious films he made.

Like many youngsters in the 30s I used to spend a lot of time playing the harmonica. It came in very handy at parties where we would provide our own entertainment and enjoy a sing-song.

On joining the RAF at the outbreak of war, I always carried my faithful old mouth organ in my kit and on arriving at the Blackpool RAF training centre I was delighted to learn that our Wing was to form a Harmonica Band! I could not volunteer fast enough. As our stay at Blackpool was brief, the band, under F/Sgt Parsons was formed, rehearsed and ready to give concerts within a couple of weeks.

We were about 30 strong and used to really enjoy ourselves giving charity concerts at many Church Halls in the area. I particularly recall how we used to play with great gusto the many Savoy medleys made famous by Carl Gibbons and his Band. Our soloist, Aircraftsman Jock Frail, was a real wizard, and used to play many pieces in the true Larry Adler style.

The success of our venture must have been noted in the right quarters because quite suddenly we received an invitation to appear on the RAF show "Contact", which was broadcast nation-wide each month from The Wintergardens. For security reasons no-one outside of Blackpool knew where the broadcasts came from.

Now here comes the point of my story. Appearing on the same show was Aircraftsman George Formby who, like the rest of the lads, was an RAF recruit.

It certainly was a great honour, and an experience I shall never forget, to share that famous stage with such a wonderful artist. George played his usual repertoire and many of the War-time favourites which we enjoyed in our Sing-along at St John's with Rhona.

Thanks to The George Formby Society for the memory and for your support which helps to make these concerts such an outstanding success.

*Many thanks to Vince Evans for handing in the article at the N.Wales meeting.*

**BANJOS & BANJO UKES** by Billy Grady of Warrington...



I'd like to thank Bob Drinkwater for his article in the recent Newsletter regarding banjos and banjo ukes. I have always liked the banjo since my teens but could never get the hang of it. I turned my attention to the guitar which I found very easy to master. I stayed with the guitar for the next 40 years until in 1990 my wife bought me an A.O. Windsor banjo uke. It is a 1932 Popular Model 4.

The chords are very similar to the guitar and I found that I could adapt to playing the banjo uke straight away. The Windsor has given me pleasure every day since I had to give up work through ill health.

Many thanks to all who showed interest in my Windsor at the last Warrington meeting and especially to Jack Sharp who made the evening even more enjoyable for me and my daughter. Thank you all. Billy Grady.

*Thank you Billy for your article. Now I know that you are an excellent player with the guitar so we want to have you on the stage at the next Warrington meeting. Don't forget to bring your guitar - and your Windsor uke.*

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Out In The Middle East - It was dead easy but Anthony Mason didn't solve it.

E A S T  
E A (O U T) S T  
E A S T

Answer to GF Poser

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**A Snippet from Harry:-** Bob Drinkwater states that everyone loves the sound of the Banjo! I wonder??? A certain person - no names mentioned- has actually BANNED the Banjo from his branch and NOW he is suggesting that we experiment with wire strings, on the uke, to achieve the banjo sound.

**And Another Snippet from Harry:-** I would like to thank Masterstroke for noticing my strumming. Like Sinatra, "I Do It My Way" and that is being Frank.

**And Another:-** I hope Wally Cronsnow enjoyed his short holiday in Scotland. With regards to Wally & Bruno, if I was the referee I would hold Walley's arm up everytime as a "Winner".

**He's Still Rambling On:-** I liked Joe McCaffrey's cartoon. His humour and drawings are first class. Keep up the good work Joe.

**Good Lord, We Can't Get Him Off the Stage!** I would like to thank Skipper Brian Edge and his crew at Crewe for the welcome they gave us (Lottie, Joan, Jack & Jim and myself) We had a good night and Jonathon Baddeley did a good job as MC. Everyone had a good night.

*Now don't be modest Harry. You had 'em rolling in the isles with your antique jokes at Crewe and it was all going very well until you brought the 5 string banjo out! Then there was a rush for the door and everybody made the excuse that they had to be home early. Even the caretaker left you the key to lock up? Anyway, keep sending your articles in.*

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## At the Blackpool Meeting

John Wilson told me that he had been getting on his wife's nerves constantly practising his uke banjo in the house.

She suggested that, so that it won't be so loud, he should sit on the front doorstep to play it - which he did. He started to play away merrily and a few minutes later he felt the door close shut behind him. His wife had locked him out and he was still there hours later in the dark and almost frozen stiff.

*Thanks John for your excellent snippet. I rather gather that your wife is not too keen on uke banjos. Have any other members got a similar a type story?*

# 18 Oh Mr Porter, Let's All Go Down To Crewe!

By Garry Marsh

The South Cheshire Branch, ably supported by their North Wales friends had a great day at the Wistaston Duck Derby. Held alongside a brook in lovely open land the race had 500 competitors and even the "little brown hen" had to agree with "the little white duck" that it was a great day out. The society had three bric-a-brac and book stalls which, after a lot of extremely hard work, raised £128 for society funds. Whilst Lesley Lee, Pam Baddeley, Tom Peddie and Christine and Colin Wood were slaving away on the stalls, Denis Lee, Wilf Salt, Jonathon Baddeley Martin Fowell, Ian Simon and Brian were standing on the hillside above the crowds belting out Mr Wu etc through the powerful PA system. Mike Gaffney said he could hear it clearly in his garden nearly 3/4 of a mile away! Society supporter Kath Banham's duck won the race together with the prize of £50. Connie Edge provided the sandwiches and Carl Basford videod the event. Special thanks to all who donated goods for the stalls.

The Society's September meeting was a smash hit nearly 50 attending. Harry Stanford, whose long arm banjo is banned from most venues had star billing and his act was well received. Jeff Formby-Booth travelled all the way from Milton Keynes to be there and he videod the concert. (Tapes will be available soon). Jeff brought along George Formby's gold plated Dallas "E" and made it available to anyone to play on during the concert. A wonderful gesture.

Early gremlins on the the sound system were quickly ironed out but poor Eric from North Wales had a real rough time during his performance. He nevertheless soldiered on and did a fine job. Sorry Eric. Carl Basford deserved another mention for his pleasant rendition of "LADY IS A TRAMP". In fact all performers were champion!

During the final thrash Dennis Lee sidled over and whispered "can we keep going until the end of the tape?" He is such a persuasive person so what could I do but agree. As a result the meeting overran by 3/4 of an hour. "Dont worry" said Dennis "you can always blame it on Harry!"

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**Don't Forget - An Article for the NEWSLETTER**

26th Oct, 2pm to 7.30pm - Return to the Forties War-time Show, Civic Hall, Stratford Upon Avon.

Oct 9th, Old Mother Riley Music Hall, Library Theatre, Darwin, Blackburn 7.30.

Oct 27th, Return to the Forties War-time Show, Appleton Thorn Prison, Officers C

Nov 3rd, The Al Jolson & Bing Crosby War-time Show, Civic Hall, Maryport. 7.30.

Nov 12th, Cabaret Spot at Pontins Holiday Camp, Ainsdale, Southport.

Dec 16th, Opening at The Hull New Theatre, Jack and the Beanstalk.

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**From Albert Seaborn.....**In 1940, at school we were asked to draw a war-time poster in our art class. I drew a large front head and shoulders of George in his police flying squad uniform complete with his uke. The caption was "Spare A Copper" for the (can't remember) fund.

"Spare A Copper" was showing at the local cinema. So my poster, which was a good likeness of George, was instantly recognised and it got me top marks.

In the late 30s uke strings were made of cat-gut and they broke very easily when tightened. I used to walk 2 miles from our school in Dukinfield to Jones's Music shop in Ashton-u-Lyne where I could purchase a single string for 9d - about 4p. Then I would have to walk 3 miles back to my home. I'm keenly interested in my uke and George Formby always. My little snippets are true.

*Thank you Albert for your contribution. I heard a comedian on radio in the war years and he said that the reason why the strings snapped easily was because the cats didn't have any guts in those days. Hope you are feeling better. Keep smiling.*

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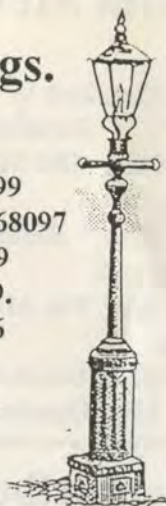
1. The Landgirl (Get Cracking). 2. In a police cell (Mother what I do Now). 3. A bumble-bee, removed by no other than Dare Devil Dick. 4. Baby Buntly. 5. A member of the local Defence Volunteers (later known as Home Guard). 6. A member of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. 7. Lady William Hamilton (Why Don't Women Like Me?). 8. The charming senorita in the Lancashire Torador. 9. The Darling Young Man (he'd muscular arms and legs too!). 10. Dennis Lee!

# NOV & DECEMBER. N.W. Meetings.

All in order so you can tick them off.

## 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.



## DECEMBER 1995

- Dec 1st, Friday, N.Wales Branch - British Legion, Penyfford.
- Dec 8th, Friday, Liverpool Branch - Broadgreen Conservative Club.
- Dec 15th, Friday, Sale Branch - Sale Hotel
- Dec 16th, Saturday, Blackpool at the Wainwright Club - NOTE CHANGE
- Dec 21st, Thursday, Crewe Branch - Wistaston Memorial Hall.
- Dec 29th, Friday, Warrington Branch - Alliance Social Club

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**WARRINGTON MEETING** - Now that we have moved into a permanent venue (Alliance Social Club) we will be holding regular concert meetings. The last Friday every month.

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

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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.