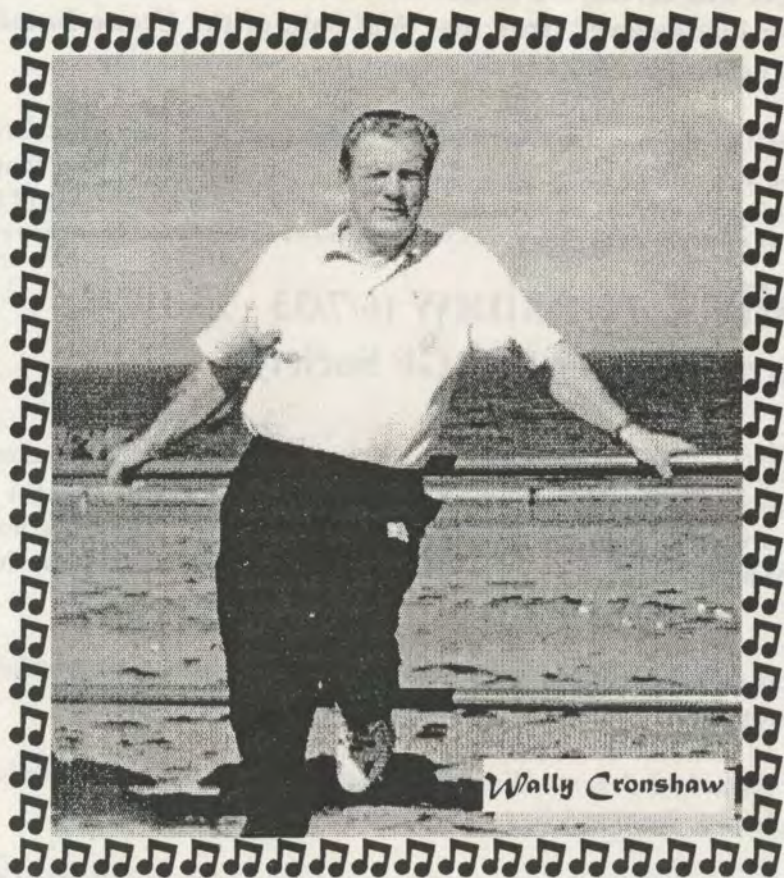


THE NORTH - WEST

# GEORGE FORMBY

## Newsletter 6

Volume 1, No.6  
December 1995



Wally Cronshaw

Specially Produced for the  
North - West Branches of The George Formby Society  
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## 2      **Welcome to Book 6 of the N. West George Formby NEWSLETTER**

**What a dreadful time we are going through in the N. West.** Sadly we have had 5 deaths in two weeks. First we lost Ashley, and then Wally Cronshaw, Chairman of Sale. Joe Collins of the N. Wales Branch, The Warrington members lost Maurice, who served the drinks at the Alliance Social Club, and now we have just received news that Wilf Salt, of the Crewe Branch, has lost his dear wife. What a disastrous time we are having.

On behalf of the members we sincerely hope that Wilf and Alice Cronshaw have the strength to carry on and still attend our meetings. Wilf thoroughly enjoys himself and, as he has said many times "It's like a new lease of life."

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### **Wally Cronshaw (6/7/33 - 23/10/95) Chairman of The Sale GF Society.**

**Wally** went to Langworthy School, Salford and spent more time in the headmaster's office than he did in the classroom. At the age of eight his only relatives were, a mother, stepfather and a half brother. He left school at 14 years of age to train as a butcher. He met his future wife, Alice, at the age of 16.

He went into the national army service - Royal Signals, as a butcher/driver and always got the best jobs in exchange for the best cuts of meat.

He & Alice had 3 sons, Wally, Alan, and Steven. Also 4 grandchildren, Mark, Karen, Jenni and Ryan. He was very much a family man.

In 1968 they emigrated to Australia where he was very well thought of by his many friends. They returned in 1973 and eventually built up a business of 5 butchers shops. Wally was forced to retire in 1984 due to ill-health -

The Film, "No Limit" is 60 year old and still a firm favourite with the public. Especially on the Isle Of Man.

The film was made in 1935. The Producer was Basil Dean, and the Director was Monty Banks. The story was written by Arthur Greenwood, who wrote "Love On The Dole." The two main stars were George Formby and Florence Desmond. In



1986, there was a broadcast on the Manx radio on the making of the film. It was the first full length film ever to be made on the isle. Many of the locals gave their story.

The late **Harold Rowell** appeared on the radio show. He was one of the riders in the film and he gave talks on his experiences about the making of the film. Our thanks have gone to his widow for supplying a copy of his lecture sheets.

Harold Rowell recalls:- You may be disappointed that I can tell you very little of the non-motorcycling parts, but you see, when there was no filming to be done we all went back to our own jobs - remember the film was made during the peak weeks of the holiday season.

George Formby was the right man for the job, and, I believe that the film did more to further George's career than any other of his films. There is no doubt about the amount of good it has done for the Isle Of Man.

How did I become involved in this caper? Well it was needs must! The machine I had arranged to ride in the Manx Grand Prix turned out to be a complete flop in the T.T. and I urgently needed a goodly sum of money in order to buy a four year old Rudge. My financial position was, in fact, considerably worse than that of our hero in the film.

Then, out of the blue, here came, what appeared to be a golden opportunity. The late Ernie Vick, father of the island's present Surveyor General, introduced me to the director of a small film unit who was making a film on how the Post Office Telephones helped the T.T organisation. It was suggested that I dress up as a racer and spend the next few days flying round corners while they filmed me. The pay was

## Sadness at Warrington Meeting

- It was very difficult trying to get into the Formby swing at the October meeting. The front table, which is usually taken up by Ashley, was unoccupied throughout the whole night and this left a feeling of emptiness. We just felt as if we wanted to sit down and talk rather than sing songs.

The meeting was opened by Ashley's mum, Denise, who bravely stood up in front of the members to give thanks for the support. It was a heart felt occasion as she read from her "Thank You" card.

"Hello everyone. I feel that I had to come along tonight, even though Ashley is not with me, not in body anyway. You are all very special people, not only the Warrington Branch but all over. I can't believe the amount of love and warmth you have given to us.

When Ashley first came to the meetings I was very nervous, not knowing anyone, but you made us so welcome.

You are all special to me, but there are two who I would have been lost without. First - Stan, he made sure that Ashley got all the publicity to prove how brave and courageous he was. He gave him tapes and videos, encouraged him to learn to play the uke, and told him all about George.

Then of course, I can't forget Anthony, he is like one of the family now and I know that Ashley loved him dearly.

Thank you all for being so caring and loving to Ashley. Thank you for his wonderful send off, there were lots of tears shed, and I'll bet that he and George were having a good laugh at us all - perhaps telling better jokes than Harry.

You haven't seen the last of me as I hope to carry on where Ashley left off and perhaps learn to play the ukulele. Love to all, Denise & Family."

*And thank you Denise for being so brave to take the floor. The only consolation we can offer is that poor Ashley is no longer in pain. We sincerely hope that you and your family will have the strength to put the past three dreadful years behind you and get on with living your life. Dear Ashley will wish it that way. He will be sadly missed by all.*

# From ADAM'S (Smith) Family

## THINGS THAT GO CRACK IN THE NIGHT

Dear Stan, A major incident occurred in the Adam's Family household a couple of weeks ago. It was 4.30 am and we were all fast asleep when Adam appeared in our bedroom in quite a distressed state. "My Vellum's bust - Mother What'll I Do Now?"

He assured us that he wasn't playing the uke at the time but I'm sure in my dreams I could hear the uke solo to "Bell Bottom George."

The following days were quite traumatic as we came to terms with being a one-uke family. The medical profession just didn't know how to treat such severe depression.

Having arranged for a new vellum to be fitted we very slowly found a way of coping. It was quite a simple arrangement - Adam's uke was bust so I went without a uke!

The uke is now well on the way to recovery so things are now getting back to normal (fat chance in our house)

May I say what a splendid night we had at Crewe the other night. It was our first visit and I must give a special thanks to Brian Edge, along with Pamela & Jon Baddeley.



We are gradually getting to all the N. West meetings and hope in the future to visit Liverpool and N. Wales. They are a shade too far to travel there and back in an evening but perhaps we could combine them with an overnight stay in Chester during the Summer. We'll get there in the end.

Finally, many thanks to all who helped us with the chords for the songs mentioned in a previous newsletter. Best Wishes, Jenny, Pete & Adam Smith.  
*Thanks Pete for your article. I felt a right Charlie when you gave me the list of songs you wanted. "No trouble" I boasted! But when I arrived home I found that in my file I couldn't find one of the songs you wanted. I couldn't believe it! Anyway, I'm pleased that the members are digging them out for you. Keep writing in. P.S. The sudden skin burst is due to either a change in the weather or temperature in the home. Avoid storing near a radiator.*

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 EVAHUOY NETTOGROF EHT ROTIDE? - TEG GNIKCARC

**What A Reception** we got at the Crewe Meeting on October 25th. It was unbelievable! Anthony & I arrived late due to a huge traffic hold up (45 minutes and tons of rain) on the M6 and when we finally got there every seat was taken up. We stood at the rear of the hall for a few minutes and suddenly we were descended upon by no less than five willing workers who were concerned that we had nowhere to sit. Two of them brought a large trestle table and three others turned up with arms full of chairs. It was like a well rehearsed army manoeuvre and within seconds we had the best seat in the house. It started the night off well and an excellent meeting was had by all! Must go there again!

The branch has now invested in a PA System and it sounded G R E A T  
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## Video - Crewe Meeting.

Jeffrey Formby Booth - George's nephew - has produced a video of the Crewe Meeting on the 22 Sept 95. Price £8. 50 + £1 pp. You can ring Jeffrey on 01908 571443 or write to him at 5 Denmead, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes MK8 8HY

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**From Jon Baddeley...** Dear Stan, I am still looking for the following George Formby records/tapes/LPs etc. so would you please put an appeal in the Newsletter? - Please ring Jon on 01782 680587

78 rpm RECORDS.. I Parted My Hair In The Middle

All Going Back

With My Little Ukulele In My Hand (Decca F3615)

John Willie Goes Carolling

The Decca ABC

CASSETTES..

The World Of George Formby

“ “ “ “ “ Vol 2

The Best Of George Formby (One Up)

DOUBLE CASSETTE

Leaning On A Lamp Post (EMI TC - MSP 1032)

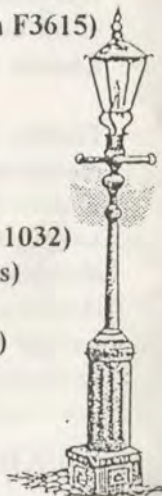
The Man With The Ukulele (World Records)

CARTRIDGE

The Best Of George Formby (One Up)

DOUBLE LP

Leaning On A Lamp Post (Decca RECDL4)



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# Talking about Ashley

- Anthony Mason and I are producing a new Thrash Tape Backing and it is titled: "Dedicated To Ashley."

In the past we have received slight complaints because all thrash tapes are set to "D" tuning and some of the songs, like "Windows" and "Blackpool Rock" are far too high to sing.

Well, this new tape consists of 8 songs set to "D" tuning and if you switch over you will find the same 8 songs set to "C" tuning. Great idea by Anthony - which is a novelty because it's not very often he gets one - must be beginners luck.

This is the first of the thrash tapes to be produced with excellent "Orchestra Sound" backing, and it sounds really G R E A T.

The tape, subject to getting it licensed, will be on sale at Blackpool - or before.

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## N. Wales Branch - from Kevin Blanchfield

The reputation of the GFS (N Wales) is spreading rapidly with recent shows at Buckley, Penyfford and Prestatyn.

The event at Buckley St John's proved to be a huge success and thanks are due to Dennis Lee, whose organisational skills (blackmail & brute force) and to our friends from Crewe who added their unique skills to the evening.

On 10th November, the branch played to a packed house at their home venue, Royal British Legion, Penyfford, and raised nearly £100 for the Poppy Appeal. Formby songs and Sing-a-longs were received by an appreciative audience and it enabled the branch to give something back to the club who allow us to use their splendid facilities free of charge.

Monday 12th November saw the branch at Ty Caradog Civic Hall, Prestatyn, performing to another packed house, which included the Mayor.

Now financially healthy, the Branch have consistently invested in high quality sound equipment and this is reaping rich rewards. We are all developing presentation and performance techniques but we still don't know how or when to get off!

*Thank you Kevin for your report. The best time to get off stage is when they start throwing missiles, or when they've all gone home. If you want any further advice, ask Harry. He stays on all night, and we all go home!*

## G & B on a Crusade....

Actually George & Beryl got themselves in hot water, with other stars, when they complained that too many variety stars were staying at home and playing the West End when they should be over there entertaining the fighting forces. He also complained that some stars were too concerned about dressing room facilities etc. George said, "We don't need dressing rooms, these lads are risking their lives and they need entertainment!"

George & Beryl were ordered to appear at the Waldorf Hotel in London to face a barrage of questions. They were grimly serious during the first part of the conference. George said "My conscience is clear, I just wanted to get the boys the best entertainment". George scored when he explained that the complaints had originally come from General Montgomery when they met. He wanted more stars but couldn't get them.

George jokingly said "I had to do my first show to earn our lunch with Monty". He also suggested that theatre managers should waive their contracts if the artists wanted to go over.

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## George Formby Diary.....

For the past two years I have been searching for dates, places and activities so that we can compile a George Formby Diary. This would be very useful as it would help us to slot his life together like a jigsaw puzzle. So has anybody got any dates to offer - keep it simple - here's a few examples!

Mon, May 23rd 1938 George's last week at The London Palladium.

Oct 1st 1952 G & B moved house to Berydene, Knocksinna, Blackrock, Co.Dublin

Wed. Oct 7th 1953 GF started Billy Cotton Band Show at The London Palladium.

Sat, Sept 6th 1958 GF at London BBC Studio recording "Formby Favourites."

Please send any dates in to Stan Evans.

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**Uke Banjo for Sale** - Chris Middleton has a DALLAS "B" for sale. It is in good condition, with case. Price nearest offer to £120. Ring Chris on 01925 32574

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## George's Niece - in - Law, Christine writes...

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Dear Stan, I look forward to receiving your N.West Newsletter and on Oct 31st it popped through the letterbox. I had to read it straight away before I started on the newspaper crossword. It put me behind with my housework and walking our dog, Ciska.

*What a wonderful life you house wives have got. Us poor men are slaving away trying to keep our heads above water and you lot are sat down reading and neglecting the housework. It's time we had equal rights!*

*Anyway, keep writing in - I wont tell Jeffrey!*

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## *Ode to Wally Cronshaw by Harry Stanford...*

I'll never forget Wally and the others at the Warrington show  
Supporting Harry and his old five string banjo  
I will think of Wally every now and then  
And wish sincerely he was back once again  
Now Wally, no doubt, was one of the best - Yes!  
But now, sadly, he is eternally laid to rest! "God Bless"

.....



Thanks Eve & Charles of the Blackpool Branch, especially about the teaching at school and the controlling of Harry. **Control Harry, Even Eve Kan't**

Stan doesn't have to worry about the sight of me in my shorts turning him off his tea (in the last issue) I'll be wearing my long pants.

To Tom Bailey, Terribly sorry to hear about Joe McCaffrey and the others in the car crash. Hope they are all well. Also hope Bill Pope is back to normal.

I was pleased to read that my five string banjo and jokes will drive them out of the hospital. Well there's no place like home! Thanks to Garry Marsh, Crewe Branch, who said that my five string banjo gave me top billing. I thought I saw Stan Evans applauding but it must have been an optical illusion! Am I overdoing it Stan? *Thanks young Harry for your article. You are better at writing articles than you are at playing the five string banjo, so keep sending 'em in.*

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**Dallas "D" (or similar) Wanted:-** Jimmy Crane is looking for a uke banjo similar quality to a Dallas "D" If anyone has one for sale please give Jimmy a ring on 01695 723025

**“Don’t Give Up Your Day Job.”** I reported in the last issue that Anthony Mason would be appearing on this BBC2 TV programme and, after seeing him pop up on the trailer about 6 times, many of you stayed stuck to box till midnight waiting for him to come on.

We were holding our meeting at Liverpool at the time and we stopped the show to cheer him on. Unfortunately, although we saw him running round the studio a few times, we never saw him perform. **WHY:-** Because the show was a load of RUBBISH and Anthony felt very uneasy about appearing on it. His manager, John Baxendale, asked for him to be withdrawn from the list.

All the members I have spoken to (except Jenny Cronshaw) were of the same opinion that the show was THE PITS and they were very surprised that the popular Jim Bowen, of “Bullseye”, appeared on it. They couldn’t understand why someone with his talent should appear on a TRASH programme.

The show was a type of “New Faces” programme with new talent attempting to become famous. Three judges had a button to press which quickly exited the artist from the programme. In many cases they didn’t get through the first few lines and they were embarrassingly ejected. Apart from being a tenth rate show it was riddled with filth that shouldn’t have been allowed on TV. Jim Bowen should have walked off the set.

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## **Barrymore Show “My Kind Of People”**

Did you see Norman Wilcox, GFS member, performing on the show?

Well, Norman did very well as he stood there singing and wearing his Grandad’s Flannelette Nightshirt. He walked on all dressed for bed with his lit candle and his uke. But, as usual, Barrymore took the Mickie out of him and started to fool around to get the laughs. Norman only managed to get though the first first bars before Barrymore played to the audience. He felt the heat of the candle pushed up his nightshirt, turned to Barrymore to ask him what he was doing and Barrymore got his (tape recorded) laughs.



Barrymore may have considered poking a lit candle up Norman’s nightshirt a big laugh but this is not the type of humour that should be shown to children. Norman wasn’t pleased. Anyway, Richard Whiteley, of Yorkshire TV, is currently presenting a regular stars show and he’s invited Norman to do an audition. Hope it turns out OK for you Norman.

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**Man in restaurant:** Waiter, this chicken has got one leg longer than the other.

**Waiter:** Well, what are you going to do. Eat it, or dance with it?

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## Chris & Lilian Plaice Wrote in.....

Dear Stan, I have been a Formby fan for as long as I can remember. I also know that he had connections with Yorkshire and that he loved horses.

Now, to digress. I have been trying to research my family tree, both on the "Plaice" side and also my great, great, grandfather, Simon Peter Store, who lived in Prospect House, Middleham., and who was a race horse trainer.

Now I'll bet that you are wondering what all this has got to do with George Formby, well, my wife and I went on holiday to Tunisia last year and we got talking to a lady and gentleman. In our conversation with them we found that they had connections with George, in as much as the man's grandfather owned the racing stable in Middleham. It was called Warwick House and they showed us a photo of George taken there with his horse next to him. He had a brush in his hand so naturally we assumed that he was grooming the horse.

On the back of the photo it said "George Formby - Apprentice Jockey, at Warwick House, owned by George Drake (George Smith) Bookmaker, of Leeds."

I discovered that Prospect House (where my grandfather lived) adjoins Warwick House, so it is almost a certain bet that my grandfather, and possibly his daughter, (my grandmother) Cecilia Hannah Storey, worked at the stables where George would visit. This thought gave me quite a thrill.

I went to Middleham for the first time, last week, and saw both the houses referred to and even saw the window, in Warwick House, beneath which, George's photo was taken.

Will you please put an appeal in your Newsletter asking for any more information regarding George's time at Middleham. It will be gratefully appreciated.

*Thank you Chris & Lilian for your interesting letter. We will keep you up to date with any information that comes in.*

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**Warrington Publicity Video.** Ron Lee of North-West Videos, filmed our G F meeting. But, due to disco noise from the next room we were unable to use the filming. However we got several shots of George's photos filmed and publicity for the GFS. The videos will be for sale in the Warrington shops and the Mayor was presented with a copy. The theme tune for part of the film is: "I Wish I Could Play The Ukulele Just Like George Formby Used To Do" and it came over very well. Even the Mayor was tapping his feet.

## Blackpool Branch -

We had a great turnout on Nov. 4th at the Wainwright, when Dickie Speake, Dennis Mitchell and Peter Pollard arrived from "over the hill" to set the ball rolling, by 7pm. It was lovely to have Alice Cronshaw and her wonderful family in our company, and I'm sure that Wally was with us in spirit. Folk from Derbyshire, Coventry, Manchester, Warrington, Southport, Morecambe and Darwen all arrived to contribute their special brand of personality to the gathering. It's this exchange of members from the different branches that enriches and enlivens our brand of fun.

There we were, all breathlessly awaiting Stan's latest N. W. Newsletter, when he arrived to tell us, after five minutes in the car park trying to find them, that he'd left them on his doorstep. Not to worry - we'll catch up at the next meeting.

On behalf of the Blackpool Branch, Charles & I send our deepest sympathy to Wilf Salt on the recent loss of his dear wife. Also our best wishes to Charles Peacock who is going into hospital on the 20th November for a long awaited heart bypass operation. We all hope for a great improvement in his condition.

We wish to thank everyone who helped and supported our last meeting and made it so enjoyable. PLEASE NOTE that our Christmas Party Night will be on December 16th, because of the Wintergardens meeting being at the beginning of the month. Hopefully we will see you then. Eve & Charles Stewart.

*Thank you Eve & Charles for your report. I felt a right fool when I turned up at the Wainwright and found that I had forgotten the Newsletters. Especially as I'd worked till mid-night, the previous evening, printing extra copies. The reason why I stopped in the car park for five minutes was because I couldn't believe what I'd done. I felt a right Banana!!! Must be going senile!!! I couldn't even blame it on Anthony.*

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**And the reason** why I couldn't blame it on Anthony was because he was very busy working at the Blackpool Tower on that night. Good for you Anthony - we hope you make it to the top (of the tree, that is, - not the Tower)

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**Don't forget** to send the Editor an article for the Newsletter, or I've warned you - Harry will be playing on your front doorstep.

**A G Neville** writes....George & Beryl Formby visited us - an RAF Mobile Signals Unit on Ramree Island in the Bay of Bengal in 1944. In the company was Marie Burke the actress.

Two ambulances were used as dressing rooms. Beryl obtained for me a Japanese note signed by George. I had to wait for it as George was resting due to being exhausted.

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## **Martin Fowell has had a Dream-**

Stan - I've been inspired from the heavens above! A "Harry Stanford Appreciation Society!" What about it? It'll be a winner without doubt!

Mind you, there'll have to be a few conditions before enrolment. Such as: -

- 1) It is essential that all members are tone deaf.
- 2) They must have plenty of time to follow Harry throughout the N.West
- 3) Have remarkable endurance to listen to Harry's jokes
- 4) Answer the following questions: What year was Harry's banjo last tuned? Was it 1919, 1925 or 1938  
Where did Harry get his jokes from? Was it from his dad, his grandad, or his great grandad? Or did he pinch them from: Tommy Handley, Arthur English or George Formby senior?
- 5) Guess which year Harry told his longest jokes - and how many months did it take?

P.S. Actually, I am a Harry Stanford fan.

*Thank you Martin. What an excellent idea. We could sell "I Love Harry" tee-shirts, to raise funds, and Mugs, Car Stickers, Photos, Badges etc. And the members will flock to buy them! We must put it into action immediately. Now I'm not sure of the year that Harry last tuned his banjo but it most certainly wasn't 1995 at the Crewe meeting. Also I'm not sure of how long it took him to tell his longest joke but I do know that on that particular night they gave him the key to lock up.*

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## **Just received a phone call** from Rapido TV Ltd.

John Kennedy is looking for a Japanese ukulele player for a special programme. This is something to do with a TV Show based on various nationalities changing from their tradition type of instrument to the type used in other parts of the world. I told him that I could find him a Chinese player but not Japanese. "No use" he said, "Got to be from Japan." So if you know any Japanese plonkers give me a ring. Editor.

# From George's Nephew

## Jeffrey Formby Booth



## THE WESSEX BRANCH AT WINCHESTER

by  
Milton Keynes star reporter  
JFB

Saturday October 28th. 1995. A mild sunny day, what could be better than a trip down the M1, along the M25 and onto the M3. Two hours and your there, Winchester.

This is the venue of the Wessex branch, with the meeting to be held in the Guild Hall and King Alfred to oversee the members. 2pm. and we all enter the Saxon Suite. Andy Eastwood and his dad Walt unpacked the PA equipment while the ladies prepared the refreshments. With approx 60 seated and uke's being tuned and plonked, the concert was under way.

Andy Eastwood opened and acted as MC for the first half, young Martin Allen followed with Sgt. Major and what a treat it was to hear this lad. Francis Terry was in fine form, with her Wigan Boat Express outfit. Noted members were, Martin Hosmer, David Crane, Ray Neal, Reg Goldsmith, Peter Harper and many more.

With Lampost, Windows and Mr. Wu the afternoon soon went and to end the concert, a first time on stage, two of George's uke's together. The Gibson (owned by Les Moore) and played by Ray Neal, the other, the gold plated Dallas (owned by Jeff Formby-Booth) and played by Andy Eastwood to no other than " Leaning on a Lampost ".

The thrash was to end the perfect day, with plenty of hand shaking and see you in Blackpool, we headed back the way we came, so we thought, but that's another story.

Jeff - You might be our star reporter but what has happened to your lamp post logo? George's face is all bashed in at the side. Has he had an accident?



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Never try to keep up with the Jones's - Drag 'em down to your level.

# Just Received a Harry Stanford Joke -

Harry (with his five string banjo) and his local vicar arrived at the gates and St Peter met them. He explained to them that everybody has their own personal time-clock in heaven, which has a huge big hand. He went on to say that every time you upset an audience the big hand would shoot forward five minutes. The vicar's big hand shot forward five times but Harry couldn't find his clock. He went up to St Peter and asked him the whereabouts of his clock and St Peter replied, "I think they must be using yours in the office for a fan."

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## From our Much Valued ex-Treasurer and Bass Player - Charles Peacock....

Dear Stan, After months of waiting I have now been given a date to have a bypass operation. I go into Manchester Royal Hospital on Wednesday the 15th of November and have the operation the following day. However, I still have to ring on the morning to see if they have a bed available..

I will be in the hospital for 10 days and off work for about 3 months, so I have sorted out plenty of books to read and GF videos to watch. I should be OK for the March meeting, but I may even see you at a local branch meeting before then. Charles.

*I rang Linda on the 20th and the latest update is that he had his operation and everything is well - as expected. He had his operation on the 16th and there are no problems. He is quite cheerful but he isn't serenading the nurses yet. He should be moved to Birch Hill Hospital, Rochdale on the 21st. Great News.*

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### WU FOOLS!

A GEORGE Formby impersonator has had his VE Day act censored by school chiefs because his songs about Mr Wu might offend Chinese pupils.

Georgie Moore, 58, had to drop six songs, including Mr Wu's an Air Raid Warden Now, from his show at Earlsfield Primary School in Wandsworth, London.



### SUNDAY SPORT SAYS

IF George Formby were alive today he'd be turning in his grave.

After 50 or more years some politically correct cranks have decided his Mr Woo songs are offensive to anyone of Chinese origin.

What a bunch of ah so's!

### Two Ukes For Sale

Martin Fowell rang. He has been asked to sell the two uke banjos, owned by Joe Collins who, as reported, passed away recently.

One of the instruments is a Keech and the other is a German Musima.

If interested please ring Martin on 01745 854390

## N. Wales

Martin Fowell sadly reports the loss of one of their members.

Joe Collins passed away on the 18th of October, aged 67 years. Joe, who joined 18 months ago, was a very popular member who had a superb sense of humour. He always had a smile and a good word for everyone. For 32 years Joe worked for Fords at the Hale factory and for 10 years he played the Banjo at a club. He enjoyed fishing and started to learn the uke banjo about two years ago.

Joe will be sadly missed by his fellow members.



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**Hee Bar Gum** - the phone's been red hot tonight - Nearly every N.West GFS member has rung to tell me that the popular TV show "Schofield's Quest" is looking for a room full of George Formby Look-a-likes for a new Stock Aitken & Waterman tape which they intend launching for Christmas. I tried several times to get through but found the lines jammed. In the end I gave up.

### CON. TRICK?

And then, it suddenly dawned on me. Why would they require a room full of look-a-likes for a tape? The company know about us, as they have rung several times for different bits of information, so why haven't they called us for the look-a-likes? I came to the conclusion that Stock Aitken & Co are not really looking for anyone but using the TV show to advertise their new tape.

If it's anything like the one they produced last Christmas - "Two In A Tent" singing "Cleaning Windows" - they can find their own look-a-likes. George didn't even get a mention in the credits.



# Crewe Society

## Perform in Olde Tyme Music Hall



The Bunbury Good Companions invited the Crewe Society to have a couple of spots on their annual Olde Time Music Hall. The show ran for three nights. Shaun Larcombe and Steve Hassall entertained on the Thursday, Denis Lee and Ian Simon of the North Wales Society on the Friday and Jonathan and Pam Baddeley on the Saturday. They all did the G.F. Society proud and their acts were well received in what was a very colourful and well produced show.

We were very pleased indeed to hold our first concert with our own newly acquired sound system. An excellent achievement considering that we have only been in existence for eleven months. In addition we have built up a good library of George Formby backing tapes in a variety of keys and tempos. The use of these will certainly enhance the quality of our concerts. Our Musical Director Steve Hassall will be pleased to show members what tapes are available to them.

Our playing strength seems to be improving rapidly due to lots of practice and enthusiasm that our members are showing and our improvement classes have certainly helped.

The month ended on a very sad note as our friend Wilf Salt lost his dear wife Joan quite suddenly. Ken Ratcliffe and Cyril Palmer represented the Sale Moor Society at the funeral at Wistaston Parish Church, Pete Healey, Tom Peddie, Connie and Brian Edge representing the local Society.

Wilf has asked me to sincerely thank everyone in the George Formby Society who wrote or sent him cards or personal messages of condolence. He said that they meant a lot to him and that he hoped to see everyone again in the not so distant future. We all look forward to that too Wilf.

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**Distressing News** - I've just heard on the grape vine that Harry's 5 stringed banjo has got 6 strings. He's an imposter - ger im off. I think he's been stringing us along all these years

## CONTINUED

narrowing of the arteries - and he was always at high risk of having a stroke. However he ignored the doctor's advice and lived his life, to the full.

Wally was known locally as "The Children's Toffee Man" as he loved kids, and he would tell them that he had donkeys on Blackpool beach. He would also joke that the reason for his occasional limp was because one of the donkeys had trodden on his foot. Always the joker!

Wally was not scared of dying but he was concerned that he would be missing out on life. He loved his life, and his family. He particularly loved his Rugby League and all his life he supported his local team, Swinton. Also he enjoyed a flutter on the horses.

We wish to thank the members of the George Formby Society for their immense kindness towards our family. Their support was appreciated and Walt was very proud to have such good friends. Alan Cronshaw.

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I will always remember Wally as the man who hounded me to start a N. West Newsletter. So, if you enjoy reading it, then you have dear Wally to thank. Stan Evans, Editor.

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## From Walter Arries...

I first met Beryl & George in the manager's office at the Newcastle Empire one Monday evening in 1938. It was about 6pm and Beryl was demanding the money up front before she would allow him to perform

The next time we met was at 107 Mill, an RAF Station on the Bitter Lake, Canal Zone, Egypt, where my unit leagued, after 2 years in the desert, on the way to Berlin.

I told George that while I was stationed at Gosport, in 1941, I had seen his film "It's In The Air" at a cinema, where my companion, a Land Army girl, and I were the total audience.

He never came to Burma, though Vera Lynn, Elsie & Doris Waters and an alcoholic comic called Stainless Stephen did. He was crude and the Waters sisters had dysentery. Who didn't?

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Man in restaurant: Waiter, this chicken has got one leg longer than the other.  
Waiter: Well, what are you going to do. Eat it, or dance with it?

£2.10.0 (£2.50) per day. I was proud to have been selected until I found that they had tried all the good riders first.

This job terminated rather suddenly. 1935 was the last year of the old hump-backed Ballig Bridge and some of you may remember that it was extremely narrow. I practised quite a lot on hairy long jumps at Ballig and once we were satisfied, we stuck a piece of paper on the road to show my usual landing point. It was agreed that the cameraman would lie in the road about a foot to the side of the mark. When I arrived on the bridge for the actual shot to be taken I saw, to my horror, that he was actually lying on the paper. Fortunately I swerved one way and he rolled over to the other, just in time. I managed not to fall off but I hit the hedge and about £200 pounds worth of damage was done to the camera. I was sacked on the spot and sent back to financial gloom.

A few days later, brother Bertie, and I, received a call from a man called SZABO. He invited us to join a bunch of motorcyclists who were involved in the making of the film. Quite a few of them were members of the Peveril Club but as time went on they gradually drifted back to their regular jobs.

Part of the filming was done during the T.T. Race weeks and Monty Banks got permission to take shots of the crowded Grandstand. He ran up and down the road dressed in a canary coloured sweater, white plus fours, black and white chequered stockings and Rosemary shoes. The crowds were instructed to turn their heads like they do at Wimbledon and within a few minutes he had taken some wonderful crowd scenes - all for a small donation in the hospital box.

I must admit that the first day on the road, with the unit, shook me rigid. Our first location was supposed to be at the Quarter Bridge, and never have I seen so much confusion. Paddy Johnson and Jock Fairweather had arrived from the Falcon Cliff Hotel to tell Monty Banks that he couldn't hire, or borrow the T.T. New Imperial motorcycles for his stunt men. This caused chaos. Everybody was talking and nobody was listening and poor Monty was getting nowhere.

In the middle of the chaos someone decided that I was too slim so, in order to make me look bigger, and tougher, SZABO and Jack Blyth pushed sheets of felt inside my leathers and orange peel between my gums to make my face look fatter.

Monty decided that nothing was being achieved so we moved to Snugboro to make a few test shots. It was here that Jack Fairweather, Paddy Johnson and I dropped a man sized clanger. We were sitting on the hedge with a little bloke who was wearing an old fashioned brown leather suit. We told him about the lack of organisation and got round to asking him who the fool was that was starring in the film. "I am" - and that's how we met George Formby, bless him. CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

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## **New Tape by Andy Eastwood - "Pleasure Cruise"**

15 songs in Formby style. Price £5 including postage. Write to Andy Eastwood, 81 Glenville Rd, Walkford, Dorset BH23 5PX

# December NW Meetings

## DECEMBER - 1995:

- 1st, Friday, N.Wales Branch - British Legion - Penyfford  
8th, Friday, Liverpool Branch - Broadgreen Conservative Club  
15th, Friday - Sale Branch, Sale Hotel  
16th Saturday - Blackpool Branch - Wainwright Club **NOTE CHANGE**  
21st, Thursday - Crewe Branch - Wistaston Memorial Hall  
29th, Friday - Warrington Branch - **NO MEETING**

## JANUARY - 1996:

- 5th, Friday, N.Wales Branch - Dennis Lee - on 01244 544799  
6th, Saturday, Blackpool Branch - Eve Stewart on 01253 768097  
12th, Friday, Liverpool Branch - Tom Bailey on 0151 228 9769  
19th, Friday, Sale Branch, Martin Harrison - on 0161 962 3919  
26th, Friday, Crewe Branch - Brian Edge - on 01270 69836  
**WARRINGTON - NO MEETING** Stan Evans - on 01925 727102  
All times are around 8pm till 11:30, Entrance is usually 50p - £1



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**WARRINGTON CANCELLED** - Due to the passing of young Ashley, the Warrington branch will now revert back to the original plan of holding **SPECIAL MEETINGS ONLY** in the large Alliance room. More information will be given in a later edition.

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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS  
THE 15TH OF DECEMBER - SO AS  
GEORGE WOULD SAY:**

# Get Cracking

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## FOR A REGULAR SUPPLY OF THE GEORGE FORMBY N.W. NEWSLETTER

Just Send A cheque for 50p plus 25p postage. Or £2.25 [inc post] for the next three issues. Payable to Stan Evans - Address on front cover.

Branch Organisers can buy a minimum of lot of 10 for £3 plus 60p post and sell them to help raise extra finds for the branch.

## ReTtEISwEn RuOy TrOpPuS