

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY Newsletter 8

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Specially Produced for the
North - West Branches of The George Formby Society
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2 Hello again and Welcome to Newsletter No. 8.

Many thanks to all the members who sent in articles and news items. It is always a pleasure to receive them. We are particularly interested in any snippets of news about your branch members - any little GF stories - any jokes for Harry - in fact anything interesting. Keep sending 'em in.

Wonderful!

We are going through another phase of attracting youngsters to the GFS and they are popping up in the N. West area. As soon as the Wainwright Meeting got started, seven year old Christopher Hill, of Blackpool, jumped onto the stage to perform with the lads in the opening thrash and you could see that he was enjoying every minute of it. Christopher got hooked on George when he saw him on the South Bank Show and he has been besotted ever since.

There is no doubt about it, Christopher is a natural entertainer and although he's only owned his uke for a couple of weeks he is already mastering "Windows" and amusing anyone who will listen. He is also a very keen swimmer and recently reached his Silver Award. You must learn "Swimmin With The Wimmin," Chris. G R E A T.

It's A Great Shame but we are losing our style in the GFS. About 5 years ago we saw the growth of the Blazer and Badge with the official GFS Tie, and we were beginning to look like a well established and respected society. Outsiders looked upon us with pride as we strode the streets of Blackpool carrying our little ukulele cases.



Alas, at the last few Wintergardens Meetings, and also the Branch Meetings, it's been noticed that, apart from a few members, no-one is wearing anything that indicates that we are a society. One member said, "Yes but, we are more comfortable in jeans and open neck." Well I agree but we must remember that George never appeared on stage looking like an unmade bed. He was always extremely immaculate with his dress when he performed. Stan Evans

London Wednesday -

George Formby, the stage, screen and radio star, has been

granted a licence to ride under Pony Turf rules. He expects to

have his first mount on September 3rd, when hurdling is resumed at Northolt Park.

Until the winter of 1920 George was apprenticed to R P Botterill, the Malton trainer, and since he retired from the saddle he has retained his riding ability by turning out in the early morning for gallops. He is planning to concentrate on riding work until Northolt's hurdling season begins. He goes to scale at 10st 3lbs.

March 3rd 1938

GEORGE'S GESTURE

Famous Comedian to Join Tower - Gardens Staff Revels.

A famous comedian will show in a practical way this week appreciation of the men "behind the scenes" at Blackpool.

The comedian is George Formby, and he has promised to be present at a masked fancy dressed ball which is planned as the biggest ever Tower and Wintergardens Companies annual staff ball at the Tower on Friday night.

When officials of the company were arranging the affair they got in touch with George and were delighted when he said that he would be along. "And shall I" he added "Bring my uke?" No need to say what the answer was to that.

George is on holiday at his home in Singleton this week, but he has to go to London at the end of the week to do some recording. So he will have to race back to Blackpool to be in time for the ball.

But George doesn't mind. He would do more than that to do a good turn to the "boys" on the stage. So George and Mrs George will be there and, together with stars from the "Red Hot and Blue Moments" revue, at the Palace, will judge the fancy dresses, the parade taking place shortly before midnight.

The Chairman of the social club is Mr Arnold Lomas, and the Secretary Mr Malcolm Pearson.



Just Received a Phone Call from

Alan Randall and I

must say that he is sounding very well and back to his normal self. You will recall that, about two years ago, Alan was touring the country with his "Turned Out Nice Again" show when he was rushed to hospital due to a heart attack. He rang a few days later and sounded very weak. Well, I pleased that he is back in the saddle again and keeping busy.



He has just arrived home from a months playing in the Caribbean and was in Barbados on Christmas Eve, swimmin with the women at 90 degrees. He was asked to perform on last few shots of the Beatles Anthology Video, with his Gibson uke.

The Director, an American who had only seen George once thought that he was always dressed up with a flat cap and plus fours, so he arranged for Alan to do the same. Alan is hoping to do another record shortly.

Soon he will be playing golf for Sky TV in Portugal, in the Jimmy Tarbuck Competition. The following day he will fly to San Francisco to entertain. After that he will be doing interviews, on George, in New Zealand and Australia.

So the lad is busy and the best of luck to him. Alan has been a wonderful ambassador for George and kept his flag flying.

From Eve & Charles Stewart

We sadly announce that one of our old established members, Frank Bennett, has lost his dear wife, Irene. This came as quite a shock to Frank as she had only been in the hospital for a few days. Our kindest thoughts go out to him and our hopes that he is able to be with us at our meetings. Frank and Irene have been members since 1970.

Eve and I had an enjoyable meeting at a venue on Blackpool Airport. It was in aid of "Children in Intensive Care" and was organised by our two latest

Snippets Wanted For The Newsletter

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE - Bah Gum.

members, George & Angela Hill. Christopher, their young seven year old son, played his uke and sang "Leaning On A Lamp Post" and other entertainment was provided by a group of youngsters performing circus acts, stilts, one wheel cycling and juggling. They were very good.

We were introduced to Christopher's uncle Alister Hayworth and he related that, as a thirteen year old, he went around the corner to George's house on the promenade and sang carols, he was then invited in for a drink and George played Lamp Post for him. Alister's verdict - "What a lovely man."

Blackpool Meeting at the Wainwright. What a wonderful night we had at the January meeting. Eve & Charles do us proud as they sit at the door and make everybody welcome. Anyone who has not been to the Wainwright is missing out on a really good night. We don't have many entertainers there so this is your chance to get up on stage. Our thanks to Eve & Charles and their helpers for a wonderful evening and a great buffet.

On the way to the meeting, and all the way back home, I was treated to the most horrible sound from the cassette player, presented by Anthony, Two hours of non-stop - full blast - Beatles Anthology. When I arrived at the Wainwright - and also finally got to bed - my head was alive with dreadful banging of drums, twanging of guitars, and four lads shouting. How on earth they ever made it to the top has me beat completely. However, I will admit that they wrote some beautiful music. Unfortunately they didn't play it that night.

Regarding the Beatles Anthology, I'm a bit confused. Some time back I received a phone call from the company asking if I could supply them with someone who could sing and play like George. I gave them the phone number of Anthony's agent and a few days later he went to do an audition. A few weeks later, Alan Randall rang to tell me that it was him on the tale end of the video. Since then I have received several calls from members who claim that the piece at the end of the video was played by George Harrison. I've not seen the tape so I've no idea who it was played by. Have you anything to offer?

Knock at the door two days before Christmas:-

Good Morning sir, I'm the man who empties your dustbins.

How do you do? I'm the man that fills them!

Don't Forget An Article For The Newsletter - or else

From Our Star Reporter From Milton Keynes - George's Nephew - **Jeffrey (Formby) Booth** - ably supported by Christine, and his zimmer frame.

It appears that they travelled off to spend a day with George's sister, Louie, over the Christmas hols, and were pleased to find that she is looking well and in very fine fettle. At the ripe old age of 87 Louie, who is now resident at the Artists Benevolent Home, Brinsworth House, can still hold a good conversation and relate to all the past 80 years chit - chat. She still has many memories and will reminisce to anyone who wishes to hear. Before parting, Louie and Christine had a farewell dance and left knowing that she is looking as fit as one of George's ukes.



Louie De Hailes - George's sister - born 2 years and a day after George.

Jeffrey reports that Brinsworth House is a fantastic place. All the residents give a warm welcome and the staff are first class. Louie is in the Michael Barrymore room.

Well, I'm very pleased Jeffrey that she is well. But disappointed that you didn't take your uke for a duet with Louie. It could have been a modern version of Anne Zeigler and Jeffrey Booth. Maybe next time..

Isn't It Amazing?

Many times I look at my collection of material and think "There's not much here to fill the Newsletter." And then, as if by magic, articles by post, and fax, and phone calls begin to come in and suddenly I've got just sufficient to fill the little 20 page book.

"Grandad - There's a man at the door with a wooden leg."

"Tell him to hop it."

John Shreeve - Well, you'll be pleased to know that his job, with an Airline Contractor, has been extended for a further period but, unfortunately, he has had to move to a hotel on the Isle Of Man. We will certainly miss him at the meetings.

New Brighton Rock Museum

Received a phone call from Tom Reed today.

Tom helps to run the World War Two Historical Society, which is an organisation that is growing all over the country.



On the New Brighton Rock they portray service men and women in period uniforms, Naval, Army, Air Force, Allied and Axis Forces. Their aim is to promote New Brighton Rock as a major centre for WW2 and create a living history museum dedicated to all who fought in the war.

They are very active in charitable fund raising and this year they are holding a couple of charity shows on March 1st to 3rd, April 12th to 14th, July 5th to 7th and August 16th to 18th. It'll be an "all dressed up uniform" job.

Now the reason for ringing is because he hopes that we could help him to put a show on. Apparently George's tapes are being played there quite regularly and he feels that it would be better with the real thing. If anyone is interested in performing at the New Brighton Rock would you please give me a ring.

Brighton Rock is situated on the sea front in the New Brighton main area and during the Spring and Summer they get very busy with visitors. Sounds Great! *Who do you think you are kidding Mr Hitler?*

And More From The Blackpool Gazette

April 24th 1938

STAGE STAR'S NEW PLANS

Two well known stage stars, both of whom have their homes in the Blackpool district, are in the news today.

First is George Formby, who is to start work on a new film in June. It is called "It's In The Air" a film in which flying is a big feature, as George takes the part of a youth who gets into the Air Force by accident.

George Loves cars and anything to do with machinery, and he said in an interview that while he was looking forward to making the picture, he was sorry because it would probably prevent him from appearing at Blackpool this summer. Which is a regret that Blackpool theatre-goers will echo.

Did You See "Goodnight Sweetheart" on TV on New Years Day? George's name popped up twice on the show and later he turned up with Blackpool Rock and Lamp Post. The hero in the show, Nicholas Lindhurst, didn't like George so he switched him off.

There is quite a good story to the show. The hero has the ability to walk through some iron railings and go back in time to the war years. In almost every episode George is on the radio or being played on the gramophone.

Spare a Thought for young Harry Stanford who will

be 84 on the 23rd of February - Wonderful - This lad deserves a letter from the Queen. We've not seen him at the meetings over the past few weeks because he has been under the weather and not feeling his usual self. Let's hope he is on his way to recovery.

Anyway Harry, I got news for you. If you don't get back to the meetings quick you will be losing your "top of the bill" spot. At Liverpool they are all starting to tell old jokes in the hope that they can take your place -

NOT A CHANCE! Get back soon Harry. Hope Lottie is OK.

No! It is not true that the above photo shows our Harry busking in the streets of Earlestown. He is actually posing for a photo on the site of the old Harrison's Theatre where George made his debut. But I'll bet you'll agree that Harry doesn't look anything like 84 - He's pulling our legs. Photo by Martin Harrison.

Rob Davidson of the Sale Branch is delighted. He joined the Magi Magic Society and a couple of weeks ago he had to go through his initiation test to become a fully fledged member. This meant performing his magic ability in front of the full membership. Rob, I am pleased to report, did very well and didn't show any signs of nerves. He confused the full audience with his mind reading act and received a thunderous applause. Move over Paul Daniels, Rob has arrived.

"Grandad - there's a man at the door with a bald head."

"Tell him I've got one."

Just arrived home from the Sale Meeting. What a wonderful new venue they have. It is part of a large Sports Centre with loads of parking space. Great night!

Isn't It Wonderful when we see these youngsters strummin away at the meetings. I went to the Crewe Meeting in December and three very keen young boys, about 6 or 7 or maybe 8 years of age, were playing their hearts out with George's songs. It was a delight to watch them.

I always feel that any society that attracts innocent kids, and their mums and dads, must be healthy, and it is a great pleasure to be part of it. Learning to play the uke is also a confidence booster for many of them. Never in this wide world would they ever consider venturing onto a stage to perform in front of a crowd, but, stick a uke in their hands and away they go.

George, like his father, was a great confidence booster and maybe this is what attracts the youngsters to him. No matter how many scrapes he went through he always won in the end. His innocent, yet positive attitude to life is possibly what draws them to him.

Over the past months, Adam Smith, of Derby, has gained tremendous confidence with his playing. He has attended many of the meetings and greatly admired the top players like Anthony Mason, John Shreeve, Jack Jones and Martin Harrison. Some day he would love to be able to play like them.



Although he has been a member since September 94, his first introduction to George was when he saw the series of films on TV. On a trip to Blackpool he was bought a GF tape and on the back was the address of Eve & Charles Stewart. The Smith family immediately made contact with them and have been hooked on George ever since. Adam has a Dallas "A" uke and, at the moment his favourite songs are :- T.T.Races and Horoscope. He is not keen on Wigan Garden because it is his dad's favourite - perhaps he's only joking.

Adam - born 22nd May 1981, has one other great ambition: To be able to tell jokes like Harry. *Well, you're certainly setting your sights high there Adam!*

Don't Forget The Editor - I'll Bet You've Forgotten Already.

Landlord's daughter who tamed the ukelele man Turned out nice again

A GEORGE Formby historian has been investigating the famous entertainer's links with East Lancashire.

And Stan Evans, editor of the George Formby North West Newsletter, says the George Formby Society is attracting more members than ever — 35 years after the star's death.

George Formby's wife and manager, Beryl, was born in Accrington and was living in Darwen when she met her famous husband.

Beryl, who had a reputation for being a harsh woman, was the daughter of an Accrington landlord who owned a pub in the now-demolished Elephant Street.

The Ingham family were well known in the town and ran the Welcome Inn for many years.

Dancer

Beryl was reputedly a world champion clog dancer and formed a dancing double act with her sister, May, called the Two Violets.

According to Stan Evans, Beryl met her future husband while she was performing at a theatre in Warrington.

Stan said: "Beryl was not very impressed with George or his act, even though he was very interested in her."

"George decided he was going to win over Beryl and got a taxi to her home in Darwen."

The singer then paraded down the main street of the town and recited a poem in Beryl's honour.

The poem read: "How I love these Darwen girls with their bright and sunny curls. From their red and ruby lips I get the tack of fish and chips."

Stan Evans added: "The song was enough to win Beryl over and, from then, on she took George in hand."

Reputation

"She had the reputation of being a bossy woman, but she needed to be to take control of George's business affairs."

"From the moment Beryl became his manager, his career took off and he never looked backwards."

The George Formby

By

MIKE RIBBECK

Society is holding several events in March to mark the 35th anniversary of the entertainer's death.

Members would like to hear from anyone interested in joining the society, or people with information on George and Beryl.

George Formby died in Preston after years of treatment for a heart complaint.

At the peak of his fame, he could command £35,000 for a film, a fortune in the 1940s, and he received 90,000 letters a year from fans.

During the war years, he was the most popular figure in Russia, next to Stalin.

Stan Evans can be contacted by ringing 01925 727102.

NUMBER'S UP: George serenades Beryl while sitting on the bumper of his Roller



Ken Ratcliffe

Just a few lines to tell you that I am compiling a book on George's cars, motor cycles, boats and houses and at the moment I have about 75% of the information. Any other details will be appreciated. Did you know that you can buy the Registration Plates from George's Rolls Royce, "G F 1" for £109, 000? The car is currently being used as a funeral car in Macclesfield.

Thanks Ken for the info on the Registration Plates. At that price I'll bet the members are scrambling to buy them

**Don't Forget
an article for the
EDITOR**



THEY'RE OFF: George and Beryl wave to the crowds on arrival back from a tour of the United States



Beryl had a reputation of being a bossy woman

But she was George's excellent manager who knew what was best for him. She was also a woman in a "mans" world of showbusiness - something unheard of in those days. The management didn't like the idea of a woman being in control of the country's top comedy star and film producers made attempts to cut the songs out of his films. Beryl, quite rightly, argued against it so they banned her from the film sets.

The G F S must protect Beryl whenever possible. She was the strength behind George and without her he would never have made it to the top. Our society owes a lot to Beryl.

Another snippet from the Blackpool Gazette.

GEORGE FORMBY'S GIFT

August 27th 1937

Rug For Lytham St Annes Hall

Mr George Formby presented a rug, made by disabled ex-servicemen, to the Mayor of Lytham St Annes (Coun C.H.Riley) at Lytham Town Hall today. The rug was worked with the St Annes coat of arms.

Mr Formby, who was accompanied by Mrs Formby, said they would continue to present similar rugs to towns in Lancashire as long as they could get Mayors to accept them. Thanking Mr & Mrs Formby for the gift, the Mayor said it was greatly appreciated. He expressed the hope that Mrs Formby was fully recovered from her recent illness and that now she and Mr Formby had come to live in the Fylde she would continue to enjoy good health.

WORK OF EX-SERVICEMEN

On behalf of the Disabled Men's Handicrafts, Mr E C Thomas presented a toy tiger, the work of the disabled men, to the Mayor and Mayoress, and a similar souvenir to Mrs Formby. They also presented to Mr Formby a leather case of shoe cleaning materials.

Our thanks to Charles Stewart for the Blackpool Gazette reports from the past.

Warrington Guardian (no date)

George Formby's Air Mishap

Comedian Forced Down By Weather

Mr George Formby, the comedian with local associations, who is to appear at the Royal Court Theatre in a few week's time, was flying to London on Wednesday when he was forced down at Speke by the weather.

Mr Formby, who is playing at Preston this week was going to luncheon at the Savoy Hotel to meet members of the company of a film in which he is to appear. His only chance of getting to London and back to Preston in time for his show in the evening was by air, and he set off from Blackpool in a plane piloted by Captain Higgins. He was accompanied by Mr Fred Bailey, junior, of Warrington, who told the Guardian that "the air went yellow and then black and we could not see a thing. From Blackpool to Liverpool, the pilot told us he was flying blind."

Neighbour: "Your dog is digging holes in our garden."

"Well take his spade off him."

More Quotes from the **Blackpool Evening Gazette**

October 7th 1937

ROYAL COMMAND - Honour For George Formby

"I have no knowledge whatever as to whether I am to be chosen, but if I am it will be a tremendous honour for me." So said George Formby, star of "King Cheer" at the Blackpool Opera House, when I asked him today if it were true that he was to be honoured by selection to appear in the Royal Command Variety Performance at the London Palladium on November 15th. It is understood that Mr Formby's name appears on the list of artists which has been submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for their Majesties approval.

Another great Blackpool favourite who is expected to be honoured is Gracie Fields. Norman Evans - who was one of Gracie's discoveries - and Max Miller are two more who may be chosen to appear. Mr Formby told me that his father, the late George Formby, was honoured with two command performances. One was at the Coliseum and the other was at Knowsley Hall, "only the King and 20 or so visitors being present on that occasion," he said.

"I still have the tie-pin and a pair of cuff-links which were given to my father as mementoes."

June 8th 1938

STOPPED THE SHOW

Mr George Formby had a remarkable reception when he paid a surprise visit to Mr Lawrence Wright's "On With The Show" on the North Pier, Blackpool, last night.

Crowds gathered for autographs, and his appearance in the theatre 'stopped the show.' George thanked the audience from the stage, remained for the performance and afterwards renewed acquaintance with the artists, several of them whom are old friends.

October 6th 1939

SALARY FOR WAR EFFORT - George Plans To Help Country

Probably Britain's highest paid comedian. George Formby, is taking steps to surrender his salary to charity during the war. Appearing at an Army concert last night, he said he had tried to join up, but was told, "You must go back and sing comic songs."

Mr Formby stated to a Evening Gazette reporter that he was most anxious to do something for the country. "I am considering starting a road show and giving all the profits to a war fund under my own name." He said, "The weekly amount will probably be around £300. I think the best contribution I can make to the country would be to present to some charity, such as the Red Cross, all my salary after deducting expenses."

Many members will remember my Grandson, Lyndon, who had a mad session of uke playing a few years back when 11 years of age. He was uke mad and learnt to play several melodies. He did an excellent show on Sky TV, playing the melody notes of Rubinstein's Melody in F, - Bye Bye Blues, - Five Foot Two, - Anchors Aweigh and Robert E Lee. He finished with "Mr Wu's A Window Cleaner" and it all went down very well.

One Christmas, when he was at his best, he organised a couple of lads to go with him, and his uke, round the houses to sing carols. They knocked on the door first and asked if they wanted Christmas carols or would they prefer George Formby. In every case they chose George and, because it was novel. Everybody gave a contribution. At the ripe old age of 12 he decided to hang up his uke and hasn't touched it since - seriously, that is.

"It is so soul destroying when those who have the gift, neglect it, while others, who are struggling to attain it, never reach there." Stan Evans.

An article from the Daily Telegraph - December 29 1995.

TURNED OUT NICE AGAIN - Thieves who took two ukuleles, each worth £1,000, belonging to a George Formby fan, have returned them after an appeal.

David Edelston received an anonymous phone call telling him that his instruments were in a skip near his home in Farsley, Leeds.

Now that is a coincidence because Chris Webster had his uke stolen and he was given a message telling him that he would find it in his dustbin. It's got to be someone who doesn't like ukes!

Just Received a phone call asking for anyone who is willing to do a spot at a Charity Show on April 16th and 17th. Please ring me if you are interested. Stan Evans.

Just heard that Dennis Lee and the N. Wales crew went to entertain at an Old Folks Home. Half way through the act one old lady went stark raving bonkers, ranting, raving and screaming. Rumour has it that she was a music lover.

Well Wally Cronshaw is no longer with us at the Sale Meetings but he is certainly there in spirit. His two young grandchildren (7 and 5) went on stage with "Lamp Post" and - just like Wally - took over the show. Wonderful!

Edmund Cambien, who was appearing in pantomime, wrote to George & Beryl in 1953 and received the following reply:-

Beryldene
Promenade
St Annes - On - Sea

November 7th 1953

Phone St Annes 177

Dear Mr Cambien,
Mr Formby wishes me to thank you for your letter to hand.

Would you please convey to all your Pantomime Artists Mr Formby's sincere wishes for a successful show, we ourselves have played Cinderella - Mr Formby as Buttons - myself as Dandini and what a great time we had. George joins me in sending best wishes. Yours Faithfully, Beryl Formby.

Talent Wanted - Keith Harris, who pops up on TV quite often with his squeaky duck, is searching for any new talent for the Club L'Orange, Vicarage Rd, Poulton le Fylde, Nr Blackpool. Performers are invited to either send in a demo tape or contact the club for an audition.

Warrington & Liverpool

have a reputation for dragging 'em up on stage irrespective of whether they can play or not, and the November meeting was no different.

Dave & Janet Hawkins travelled a round journey of about 300 miles to be with us at Warrington and we wouldn't let them go home until Dave - at long last -made his debut with his uke. He looked a bit serious at the outset but after the first couple on minutes he was beginning to relax and enjoy it so much that we had a job getting him off stage. (Worse than Harry Stanford - well, not quite that bad). I wonder if he'll start telling old jokes?



Anyway, Dave was so pleased with his performance that he and Janet are now working on a double act. Great - I can't wait to hear them.

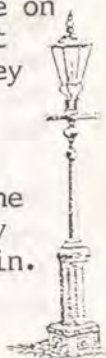
Thanks for your article Janet - Who on earth took the photo?

South Cheshire's December meeting was perhaps a bit close to the Christmas festivities but nevertheless 39 members turned up on a cold night to enjoy the entertainment, mince pies and sausage rolls! Brian Edge took over the role of M.C. on one of the rare occasions that Jonathan Baddeley was unable to attend.

It was really great to have the Smith family from Derby with us again particularly when Pete and Adam got up and gave us the song 'It serves you right.' Not too many tackle that one which is a pity as it is a good number. Both Pete and his son Adam have considerable talent which is just waiting to burst forth. It is clear to most people that Adam can play just about anything! It is certain that a few more performances on stage will help to get rid of the heeby jeebies which will in turn produce that extra confidence after which there will be no stopping him!

Audrey and Ray Lewis have become regular non-playing members at our concerts. However, it seems Ray has managed to borrow a uke to have a go on but from what Audrey said in passing, one could only conjecture that there could well be a little domestic problem as to who was going to practice on it! Lets hope that there are no black eyes as a result and that the whole thing is settled amicably and that they both end up as budding George Formbys!

Colin Wood has at last discarded his faithful "George Formby" East German Uke after over 25 years service and he came along to the last meeting proudly sporting his newly acquired "Cartwright" (Abbot copy) "Its great" says Colin. By the large number of "Cartwright" ukes in the South Cheshire society he must be right. Those who haven't already got one seem a to have one on the way! Model preferences seem to be equally divided between the Abbot and Ludwig copies although a whisper has just arrived on the grape vine that yet another of our members is expecting delivery of a Gibson copy soon!



Connie looked after the refreshments and she was ably assisted by Christine and Jenny. Thanks to them all.

Just Phoned Harry - He's Feeling a Bit Better.

From Mrs S Atkinson, of Hindley... Memories of George Formby got me thinking of my dad, who has now passed away. He would tell me about when he and George were small. George lived quite close to my dad's house in George St, Hindley, and my dad's sister was George's nanny. This meant that George was at my Grandma's house more than he was at home, during the day.

ALWAYS THE JOKER

George had a horse, which he often rode on to school, and my dad told me that he played tricks on him. He would give my dad a ride into the country and then ride off leaving him stranded for a couple of hours. He would always pick him up later.

George, as a lad, had a habit of wiping his runny nose on his sleeve. Before he did this my Grandma would often wipe it with her brat - or apron, as we call it today.

Eve & Charles Stewart. . . . We're still basking in the afterglow of two wonderful Formby Christmas parties, albeit on consecutive nights, Friday at Sale and Saturday at Blackpool. In spite of the usual venue, at Sale being double-booked, we had a great night in the Brooklands Sports Centre. All credit to Ken Ratcliffe and Cyril Palmer, and their helpers, for making last minute rearrangements in a rush, also to the many members who made the effort to find the new venue - British Telecom must have been busy that day.

Many of the members turned up again at the Wainwright Club the following night, such loyalty and dedication - bless 'em! We sadly missed some of the usual faces due to this wretched flu, and especially Sheila Palmer who is (was) in hospital having a series of tests get back soon.

Many thanks to all who help. Thanks also to everyone for their seasonal good wishes and we hope that you all find joy and peace in the new year.

Eve & Charles

GFS Archives - We reported that some GFS members were concerned re. the whereabouts of the archives since they were taken from Paul Walmsley's house in Blackpool. Paul often displayed them at the Wintergardens Meetings. I have just received a letter from Mandy Wylde stating that she has them at her home. Personally, I am very surprised that a very important 35 year old society, like ours, hasn't got an Archivist.

More from the writings of the late **Harold Rowell**

who rode in George's T.T. Races film - No Limit.

I think that one of the best shots in No Limit was when Reg Kavanagh overshot Ramsey Hairpin, ran up the bank, and fell down it again.

Perhaps our most eventful day was spent in the Grandstand area.

We had a bit of everything. Monty Banks had invited holidaymakers

from, what was then, Cunningham's Camp to occupy two or three blocks of the Grandstand, and quite naturally, having got them there he got through as much work as possible. Perhaps I should explain that in those days the equipment was not as sophisticated as it is today, and apart from the clutter of cameras, reflected light was obtained by placing a battery of silvered screens in all sorts of positions. These often presented quite a hazard to any of the riders who tried to pull up after passing the cameras.



One of the first items on the agenda was Gerrish's back somersault from a Blue Star B.S.A. This was followed by Florence Desmond's session on Harry Winter's donkey. It probably wasn't a good day for the donkey - possibly he had a thirst.

The famous tricycle was also in use that day, until, during a short rest period some clot tried to ride it and buckled a wheel against the concrete front of the pits. This was the only time when Monty Banks lost his temper. He was obviously working at full pressure and when he saw the damaged tricycle he went berserk. Unfortunately, at the same time, some joker put a bottle of red Cherry Cider upside down in the side pocket of his trousers - uncorked of course. Fortunately, his first wife was present. Like Beryl Formby she knew when to step in to calm him down

We made several T.T. starts and many pit stops were carried out. We also rehearsed the scene where George pushed his bike in to the finish to win by a whisker. It took a lot of synchronising and poor George must have been exhausted by the time they had it ready for shooting. George and Kavanagh did quite a few runs on the famous Shuttleworth Special and seemed to enjoy popping off the artificial explosions. **MORE NEXT MONTH.**

N.West Branch Meetings and Future Dates.

N.Wales Branch - British Legion, Penyfford - Every first Friday in the month. Ring Dennis Lee on 01244 544799. Adm 50p

Blackpool Branch - Wainwright Club, Hornby Rd, Blackpool - Every First Saturday in the month - Ring Eve Stewart on 01253 768097 Future Dates:- Feb 3rd, Mar 2nd, Apr 6th, May 4th Jun 1st, Jul 6th, Aug 3rd, Sep 7th Oct 5th, Nov 2nd, Dec 7th. Adm £1 with Buffet.

Liverpool Branch - Broadgreen Conservative Club - Every Second Friday in the month. Ring Tom Bailey on 0151 228 9769 Adm 50p

Sale Branch - (NEW VENUE) Brooklands Sports Club, George's Rd, off Marsland Rd, Sale. Every 3rd Friday, Ken Ratcliffe 0161 430 8290 Adm 50p

Crewe Branch - Wistaston Memorial Hall - Ring Brian Edge on 01270 69836. Future Dates:- Feb 27th, Mar 29th. Adm 50p

Warrington Branch - Alliance Sports & Social Club Evans House, Orford Lane, Warrington. SPECIAL MEETINGS ONLY - Next Meeting Friday 29th March, George's 35th Anniversary of his Death. Stan Evans 01925 727102

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.

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

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