

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 13

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Specially Produced for the
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Welcome to Newsletter No. 13 - is it really

12 months ago since dear Wally Cronshaw pressurised me into launching the first copy? It certainly is.

So what have we got this month? Well, on page four Ken Ratcliffe gives his short tribute to Wally. Alf Caldwell makes an appeal to anyone who might know what happened to George's mask.

The dreaded No. 13 has struck again because on pages 9 & 10 we have sad news of vandals desecrating Ashley Lynch's grave and also the loss of one of the Midland's members.

We have news of two excellent meetings which were held at Crewe and Penyffordd and also an explanation on why Len Philips was slurring his words at New Brighton.

Harry Stanford - God Bless Him - is up and fighting again and giving an account of why the stage manager interrupted his act and threw him off the Pavilion stage - of course we take it all with a pinch of salt.

Bob Drinkwater. . . . In response to your comment in the last issue that we in the Midlands don't send any material for the Newsletter I thought that I would get down to sending an article in. In October 1948 George Formby played at Dudley Hippodrome. A friend and I got a couple of seats very close to the stage.

This was the second time I'd seen George, the other time being when George opened the Danilo Cinema in Brierley Hill, December 1936. George gave a terrific performance and his uke playing, with Harry Pell and his orchestra, was superb. One night, after the show, George, who was staying at the Station Hotel (as all the stars did) came out on the balcony of his room when a crowd had gathered outside and demanded his appearance. He brought out his uke and did his stuff. It was a wonderful performance which received wild applause.

This story did the rounds and I heard it repeated many times when I was working in Dudley. But, nobody, however, claimed that they were there at the time. Perhaps one of the readers could confirm that it actually happened.

That's all for the moment. Cheers. Bob Drinkwater.
Thanks Bob. Proud of yer. There must be loads of stories of George in the Midlands.

Jeff Formby Booth was listening to the Charlie Chester Show, on radio, and he heard him ask the listeners if they knew what film "Andy The Handy Man" came from. Like a shot, our Jeff was on the phone with - "Much Too Shy" and Charlie congratulated him. A few days later a couple of tickets arrived for the Cannon Cinema in Northampton. Good for you Jeff.

The Formby Story - Part Three

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The story so far . . . As a child, James (Jimmy) Booth is neglected by his mother and at the age of nine he leaves home to make his way in the world. He sings for pennies in the street and also manages to find a job in a cotton mill in Todmorden. He suffers very badly with bronchial problems. Now read on . . .



Jimmy (George's father) Works On The Stage

The dusty conditions, in the cotton mill, were not suitable for Jimmy's health. He discovered that life was much easier outside in the fresh air. He found work in a blacksmith's forge but the sulphur fumes created more problems with his chesty cough. He was extremely well spirited and rather than disappoint his small crowds of listeners, he would build the hacking cough into his act to make them believe that it was all part of the show. After a short coughing bout he would say "I'll cough anyone for a shilling" or "I'm coughing better today." People loved his sense of humour and so did a Mr Brown who engaged him to tour the pubs, and ale houses, with another young boy. They were billed as Brothers Glenray - Songbirds of the Music Hall. Jimmy had a rich soprano voice. Brown, who was keen on keeping his costs down, paid three pennies a week to Jimmy and six pennies to the partner. He also insisted on the boys travelling, by train, in the stage hamper to save expense.



When Jimmy's voice started to break he found that his audience preferred to laugh at his comedy rather than listen to his singing. This inspired him to break away from the partnership and find work on his own. At the age of seventeen he was encouraged to break into the real music hall scene and perform his uplifting comedy songs on a proper stage. He adopted the name "John Willie" and used it in some of his songs. More next month.

The Sun Shone at Crewe. . . . Twenty three uke players attended the Wistaston Rose Queen Fete organised by the Crewe Society. What a lovely day it was , blistering hot and the crowds turned out in their hundreds. Colin, and Christine Wood, and Brian, got all the bricabrac to the field by mid-morning and Steve Hassall and Des Redfern were there too wrestling with the incompatibility of respected sound systems. Barbara Ball and various lady helpers worked very hard during the day to raise £96 for society funds. (Thanks to all who donated items for the stall) Crewe members were well represented and there was really great support from Dennis Lee and all our friends from the N. Wales Branch.

It was especially nice to have Eva & Stan Evans with us and it was good to see Eva looking so well after her recent ordeal.

Lesley Lee stood in to work the strange P.A.System at the last minute and was doing a great job until a bad electrical connection deprived players of their backing music.

Dennis Lee, Jonathon Baddeley, Kevin Blanchfield, Des Redfern and Jim Knights nevertheless battled on leading the group through the rest of the programme. It was a bit of an anticlimax to an excellent afternoon the lesson learnt - always use your own equipment! Having said that it was a lovely day out which I am sure was enjoyed by everyone. Brian Edge. *Thank you Brian for your report. It was a great day out and Eva slept well that night and up to about 12 noon. The air must be good for her in Crewe.*

It's a Mystery: *On two occasions the P.A. broke down and the lads, undeterred, kept on playing while Leslie was twiddling all the knobs to get it going again. When eventually the tape was restarted it blended in perfectly with the lads who were still playing. Now I can understand it happening once, and we could put it down to sheer luck, but it happened twice and the struggling group of stalwarts were spot on both occasions. Now this was a miracle that even I - the maker of miracles - couldn't explain. How did you do it Leslie?*

Crewe In The News Again! According to 'George Formby' - a biography by Ray Seaton and Alan Randall. " On 7th July 1913, when his father was in a Royal Command Performance, George took a horse which his father wanted to sell to Crewe. He boxed it himself, arranged transport, and sold the horse at the sales for £30." Not bad for someone who was only nine at the time. Who said he was gormless? Brian Edge.

A tribute to **Wally Cronshaw** by Ken Ratcliffe

What a wonderful 35th Anniversary we had at Warrington. The services were well represented and we had a good array of talent of all kinds. George would have been proud of everyone thinking of him, and also our dear friend, Wally Cronshaw who passed away recently.



Wally was a very proud man as he watched his granddaughter entertaining on the stage. He came to all the meetings and he was a great ambassador for the George Formby Society and was not afraid to tell all walks of life. Walt became the Chairman of the Sale George Formby Society and with his great enthusiasm he gave 1,000 per cent along with Alice, his wife.

The VE Celebration Night, that Walt organised, was brilliant and the buffets and raffles he arranged, with Alice, were really excellent.

It was a very sad time when Walt passed away, but his memory lives on through Alice and Jenny who keep the flag flying. What a wonderful character we have lost.

Thank you Ken for your kind words. The reason I have included your tribute in this particular issue is because the Newsletter is now 1 year old and I shall never forget the hounding that dear Wally gave me to get the first issue started. He was as pleased as punch when I finally agreed to produce one. I'm sure that Wally is pulling strings from somewhere as supplies for the Newsletter have never ceased to flow in. Wally was a worker who got things going. God Bless Him.

Wigan Pier. . . We've got a nice little event coming up at Wigan Pier on the 3rd and 4th of August. We have been asked to put a show on at the 6th Annual Boat Rally and it looks like it could be a super event.

There will be Clowns parading around, Brass Bands, Vintage Cars, Buskers, Cable Cat (whatever that is) Miniature Steam, On Site Acting and bit of good old Lancashire Clog Dancing. Now if anyone fancies coming along with their uke - and their clogs - to do a spot of entertaining then please let us know.

Dick Playle of the Music Hall Society rang . . .

Stan, Can you help me out. One of my contacts has informed me that she has a relation who was George's pianist and she is looking for information on him. His name is Percy Lonsdale. *Sorry Dick, I've never heard of Percy Lonsdale but I'll that some of our readers have. We'll let you know.*

Alf Caldwell - Warrington's little ray of sunshine - called in.

Alf was very friendly with Jessie Bailey who, with her husband, Fred, was a very close friend of George & Beryl.

Alf is curious as to the whereabouts of six GF film scripts that were owned by Jessie. She kept these in the loft along with several other GF items such as, a GF mask, cine films, photos, a scrap book and personal letters.



He also recalls that Jessie had a small table in the kitchen, which was decorated with several Chinese symbols, and several of George's old 78s. Alf has often wondered what happened to these.

Rowdy Lot!!! . . . We'd just finished doing our bit of entertaining at the Wistaston Rose Queen Fete (page 4) when we were invited to tea & biscuits in the community hall. On entering the building we heard the soothing tones of a five piece orchestra. They were playing something like Handels Water Music and it sounded great. Dennis Lee went over to them to congratulate them - or so I thought - for their excellent music, but I think he must have said something like, "Well, go on, push off, we've had enough of that rubbish. Because within a few seconds they'd scarpered through the door taking their instruments with them. They had hardly enough time to stick their basses and chellos under their armpits before we had "Cleaning Windows" from the noisiest plonkers in N. Wales (Kevin Blanchfield can whisper over three fields) I buried my head in shame!

Bernard Cribbins topped the bill on the Olde Tyme Music Hall show on Sky TV UK Gold on Sunday 23rd June and he sang GF senior's "Standing At The Corner Of The Street." Good for you Bernard.

Ukes for Sale. . . . Richard Ineson on 0114 2485698 wishes to sell a "May Bell" uke banjo, pre war, maple neck and hoop' good condition £150. Also a beginners "Fitzroy" uke in good condition £65.

He also requires offers for a piece of GF sheet music, "If I Had A Girl Like You" from Bell Bottom George dated 1944.

GF Anagrams by Derek Ball . . . Answers on page 19 - cheat fair.

1. Mom's chat mad voice.
2. Ken tickle the dolt.
3. O rock ball pomp.
4. Gun dog in an army.
5. Lily be girl on turtle.
6. A solemn thief.

The answer to last month's photo puzzle was: Wilf Salt.

Nice to hear from **Winifred Rowell**

from the I. O. Man, who is the wife of the late Harold Rowell. Harold's articles, on the I. O. Man T.T. Races, were used in previous Newsletters.



Dear Stan, We are in the middle of T.T.Week here in the Isle Of Man. Lots of visitors from the Brish Isles, France, Germany, Italy, USA, New Zealand, North and Southern Ireland.

The famous Joey Dunlop has already won his 20th T.T.Race. a marvellous rider. We are half way through T.T.Week but today, Wednesday, the fog has delayed the races. We hope to get going again in the afternoon.

On Thursday, Manx Radio are giving a programme on their Mannin line, all about "No Limit" in which my husband, and other Manx motorcyclists took part. It is on the VHF wave length, for the second time this week, between 12pm and 1pm.

Please excuse my writing but I am now 84 years of age now, Harold was the same age. I have a flat here at the Ellerslie Residential Home, with care and attention, and I am very comfortable. From my window I can see all the visiting motorcyclists who are staying at the houses round about.

I enclose £5 for your George Formby Society and hope that it goes on from strength to strength. Yours Sincerely, Winifred Rowell.

A letter of thanks went to Winifred and the £5 cheque has been sent to the GFS Treasurer. Isn't it wonderful that outsiders are concerned for George's society?

From an old Australian newspaper - no date.

Autograph hunters eager to get George Formby's signature threatened to hold up the drawing of the N.8 Special State Lottery yesterday. George Formby, who was accompanied by his wife, Beryl, drew the eight major prizes in the lottery. As soon as he arrived at Paling's concert hall he was beseiged by admirers pleading for his autograph. He signed books and scraps of paper until the autograph hunters were restrained by lottery officials

As he drew the first marble from the barrel, George exclaimed, "Do you mean to say that little thing's worth twelve thousand quid? I must get a ticket myself." Mr Henry Edwards, salesman of Junction St, Woollahra, who won the first prize of £12, 000, said, "I've never been an ardent Formby fan but his marble is good with me now."

And Another Great Night we had at the Penyffordd June Meeting. The Special Night brought a room full of enthusiastic GF fans and the air became alive with happy music as soon as Dickie Speake struck up the Keyboard. It was a great night, well organised, and it was nice to see two or three there from over the Yorkshire borders.

I was particularly interested in a new GF song that Cliff Royle had written, "Mr Wu and Lay-by Lil." He performed it on the night but unfortunately didn't stand near enough to the mike so that we could hear the words - you've got to belt it to the back of the room Cliff! I would like to hear Anthony Mason bash it out. Cliff has also written "I'm A Cyclist From Frodsham" and "My Maggie or Back To Basics" Great work Cliff. Stan Evans.

Kevin Blanchfield continues. . . . June 7th witnessed a Grand Gala Night at the Royal British Legion, Penyffordd when the North Wales Branch met for their monthly meeting. Dickie Speake, Dennis Mitchell and Peter Pollard all managed to avoid immigration and smuggled their ukes through Customs just north of Chester.

There's a deliberate mistake somewhere in this Newsletter - spotted it? See P19.



Thanks to Jeff & Dolwen Shone for the photo.

All were delighted by the professional and comfortable facilities that we enjoy at the club and Peter Pollard, who hales from Batley, was understandably surprised by the facilities such as, electric lights, carpets and curtains.

The presence of the Yorkshire contingent combined with Anthony Mason, Stan Evans and friends from Crewe, made it one of the best nights we have ever enjoyed. Jack & Jim were super!

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Anthony Mason's performance of "I'm Saving Up For Sally" and "Pleasure Cruise" was quite stunning, and it is now rumoured that he has taken out nationality papers here in Wales. He will be appearing at Llandudno Pier each Saturday, from the first week in July to the end of September, and we wish him all the best. We are waiting for him to perform "Lamp Post" in Welsh.

The highlight of the evening was Dickie Speake's solo "September" and "Georgia" played on a wooden uke. We were amazed at his versatility.

It was also wonderful to welcome Alan Southworth for the first time. His easy flowing style leaves us green with envy.

Our members here in North Wales contented themselves with the organisation and all the thanks go to Dennis Lee for his usual impeccable management of the evening. There was a great performance by Ray Davies, and Dennis attempted to play Formby, - and lost. I myself managed to get on the scoresheet and rendered a couple of songs (rendered - as in tore apart!)

Harry Stanford, at the end of his performance was carried triumphantly off the stage - it was the only way to get him off.

Our visitors from Crewe were ably lead by Brian Edge who on this occasion never even looked like forgetting his words, and our final thanks go to Jim Knight, whose model of George's Lamp Post made a lovely feature.

North Wales Group have certainly learnt a lot as a result of watching our visitors perform, and the opportunity to play with professional backing made each and every one of us enhance our performance. Please note that our next meeting is on THURSDAY 4th JULY and not on Friday the 5th.

Thank you Kevin for the report. We are very pleased that Harry went down well. We at Warrington have struck up a deal with him. If he gets plenty of banjo practise in over the next 16 years we'll allow him to do a 10 minute spot for his 100th birthday.

Did Anyone See - Paul Daniels (the second best Magician in the country) appearing on the Bob Monkhouse Show. It was a very old recording which appeared on Sky TV mid-June. Bob introduced him as an impersonator of George Formby and Paul walked on to centre stage to do his act. He sang "The Lancashire Toreador" with a typical Lancashire accent and he sounded great. Every word was loud and clear to the listeners and his timing was perfect. What a pity that he didn't play the uke which was played by one of the orchestra. The uke was played extremely well on what looked very much like (although I don't think it was) an East German Musima. Great bit of entertainment.

This is a sad page

Denise has lost two children, the latest one was dear Ashley, a keen Formby fan who died last October. This was a sad time for all around him.

Only recently she has had a new stone made with the words "Goodnight Little Fellow Goodnight." engraved.

Poor Denise is now angry because vandals enter the cemetery at night time to damage the graves.

Let us hope that George's light is shining for Denise and that she can, at long last, find peace of mind.



And there was sadness at the last Wintergardens meeting when (Dizzy) Doug Johnson, collapsed and had to be rushed to hospital. The following day we were notified that he had died. Doug teamed up with Rosamund Grey in a double act, "The Stourbridge Buskers" and performed often at the Formby meetings. They did a singalong and slapstick type of routine which always went down very well with the members. He was a GFS member for a short period about 24 years ago. He rejoined when the Stourbridge Branch was formed around 1990.

Poor Doug will be sadly missed.



Denise Elliott at the grave of her son and daughter

Picture DARREN TUDOR

Mum's pain as shrine to children is desecrated

EXCLUSIVE: By WENDY HAMPSHIRE

RUTHLESS thieves are stealing gifts and flowers from the graves of children. Grieving mum Denise Elliott has created a shrine to 12-year-old Ashley, who died of cancer, and baby Yvonne, a cot death victim. But the grave the brother and sister share in Warrington Cemetery has been desecrated by sick thieves who snatch flowers and mementos left by

family and friends. Denise is so distraught she just wants to take her children 'home'. "It's bad enough having to cope with your children dying, but this is an insult to their memory," she said. "That's where my children are, and their grave is all I have left. It makes me so angry I feel like digging my children up and taking them home."

Since Ashley's funeral last year, thieves have persistently targeted the burial plot. "It started with the flowers being taken, but we'd find them on other people's graves," said Denise, of Reaper Close, Great Sankey. The thieves have also helped themselves to gifts which adorn the youngsters' grave - cuddly teddy bears, ornamental candles from Lourdes and

'I feel like digging my children up and taking them home'

decorative pots from Portugal. Denise added: "How can they do it? The headstone has pictures of Ashley and Yvonne. They know there are two children buried there." The thefts come after a string of vandalism attacks on Warrington Cemetery.

A spokesman for Warrington Borough Council, which manages the cemetery, said staff have difficulty tracking down the offenders. "Some of the older cemeteries aren't secure," he said. "Once the staff go home at night, who knows what goes on."

New Brighton Rock - Anthony was booked to entertain there (anyone else was invited to go along as well) on Sat & Sun the 25th & 26th of May. Now they are a wonderful audience there so it was suggested that he should take advantage of the week-end and produce recordings. This was all arranged and he took along a car load of recording equipment. Unfortunately he lost his voice after the first few songs and the whole idea of recording had to be abandoned.

He rang me on the Sunday morning. "Stan, you've got to help me out. I've lost my voice and I'm booked at the rock again tonight." Now the Sunday night performance was a little bit like how they made "The Jolson Story." For about 3 hours I was doing the singing and Anthony was whispering the words in my ear-hole. It wouldn't have gone down so well at the London Palladium but it was certainly appreciated at Perch Rock where the audience show great approval.

Thanks again to dear Len Philips for helping out with a few songs. Unfortunately he had a slight problem with the bar staff. On a couple of occasions I asked him why he was slurring his words and he informed me that everytime he asked at the bar for a glass of coke they would give him a large glass of whisky. Well that explained it. Poor Len didn't stand a chance.

There wasn't much light in the room so naturally he would assume that they had given him a glass of coke. I don't know how the poor man survived the night.

Anyway, we had a great night and the proceeds went to the Stephen Williams fund to give him a treat in Disneyland.

Part Two:- After the recording disaster at Perch Rock, Anthony made another attempt on Friday the 14th of June. Now apparently the bar staff still don't know the difference between Coke and Whisky and, once again, they gave poor Len the wrong drinks. The man must have been devastated when he discovered what they'd done to him. It was reported that, at one stage, the poor soul had frozen to the spot and his body was completely numb. Fortunately the Perch Rock staff found a bed for him in the underground shelter and dear Len was out like a light for the night.

I have suggested to Len that in future he should consider taking his own bottle of coke with him. But as Len said "I was alright until I went outside for a breather and the fresh air hit me." Well, in Len's defence, I will admit that there was an awful lot of fresh air about that night.

Ukes for Sale. . . . Richard Ineson on 0114 2485698 wishes to sell a "May Bell" uke banjo, pre war, maple neck and hoop' good condition £150. Also a beginners "Fitzroy" uke in good condition £65.

He also requires offers for a piece of GF sheet music, "If I Had A Girl Like You" from Bell Bottom George dated 1944.

Nice little bit of information from Ivan Liljebaek, of Denmark who has given the Danish names of George's film titles. . . .

No Limit - Depress The Accelerator	Feather Your Nest - Pitch A Tale
Keep Fit - Knock Him Out George	I See Ice - On Thin Ice
Trouble Brewing - A Finger In The Pie	Get Cracking - Keep At It George
Bell Bottom George - Row In The Navy	I Didn't Do It - It Isn't Me
Spare A Copper - Look Out For The Coppers	
George In Civvy St - George As Innkeeper	
South American George - The Double From South America	
Let George Do It - George Fixes Everything	
Turned Out Nice Again - All's Well	

It's In The Air, Much Too Shy and Come On George kept the same titles.

Keep Your Seats Please and He Snoops To Conquer never appeared in Denmark.

The Danes have a particular liking to George's "It's In The Air" as this was shown at the Colosseum and the Rialto even though the Germans had banned all public showings of British films. The film was a message of freedom to the Danes. It was shown again on Feb 24th 1960, June 14th 1980 and August 20th 1986, at the Carlton.

So there you have it. George's "It's In The Air" was a message of hope for the Danes in their German occupied country. Our thanks to Ivan for this information.

Cyril Palmer wants the words and chords to "Down Forget Me Not Lane" You can ring him on 0161 748 6550

Ukes For Sale . . . Frank Sykes on 01484 646894 has two Musima ukes for sale.

Ukes For Sale . . . Graham Greenfield on 01283 223074 has two Baby Gibsons for sale. He is also looking for a Big Gibson UB3.

What a great night we had at the Ansdell Centre, Lytham St Annes on Friday the 31st of May. Charles Stewart, along with Arnold Sumner (representing the Chamber of Trade), organised the event and it went with a great swing. All the seats were taken and everybody enjoyed listening to George's songs and a few snippets of his life. There wasn't a sad face in the house. Although Charles has turned the 70 mark he is still a great grafter. He and Anthony Mason went along to the venue, in the early afternoon, and set up all the heavy equipment. After the show they lugged it all back to Charles's house. During the show he joined in with a few singalongs and the crowd loved every minute. Our thanks to Charles, Alan Yates, Wilf Salt and Anthony Mason for a wonderful night.

Arnold Sumner Writes - Turned Out Nice Again at Ansdell / Fairhaven. Many thanks to you and your team for a fantastic evening. So much work was done by you in preparation for the show that I can only say that the response from the audience said it all.



There was a man there who owns a local superstore. He was dragged along by his wife. He said he was not going to enjoy a George Formby evening but after a few minutes his feet were tapping and after 10 minutes his scowl had changed to a smile and he was merrily singing along with the rest of us.

What a fine tribute to the artists on stage. "That's Show Business." Cheers from Gill & Arnold Sumner, Chamber Of Trade.

From Charles Stewart - Dear Stan, The above letter arrived early of Saturday morning, which pleased Eve & I. People who said they were coming to the Wainwright turned up and enjoyed the meeting, even though we were short of talent. Our thanks to all who supported us. *No problem Charles. We hope that it brings in a few new members.*

John Shreeve . . . From The Isle Of Man.

Dear Stan, Please send everyone my regards and I am pleased that Eva is now on her way to recovery. Here is a newspaper cutting which was taken when we stepped off the stage after our 6 minute performance. If we had gone over the 6 minutes we would have been disqualified. Nick Saunders is in the picture.

We took part in the "Guild Manx Music For Fun Festival" under the name of "The Formby Melodians" and we were very nervous back stage mainly because the Villa Marina is so big and we didn't have any mikes. Nick and I had to sing out very loud otherwise they wouldn't have heard us. We sang "Little Ukulele, T.T.Races and Mr Wu" and it sounded really great. Unfortunately the judge wasn't a Formby fan and he told us that he remembers seeing George on his boat, playing his uke, in Norfolk.



In good Formby: The Formby Melodians, from Ballabeg, performed a medley of the ukelele player's tunes in the Guild music for fun class (IP)

The tone of his voice didn't give us much hope and we got 2nd from the lowest marks. Anyway the audience loved us and it was a brilliant experience for us. The two girls in the picture were there to make up the number as the rules stated that there must be a minimum of three in the group. They were nervous because they hadn't been on stage before. See you in June. John.

Thanks John for your snippet of news. They have some funny rules over there! No more than 6 minutes otherwise disqualified. No less than 3 in the group, and they didn't supply any mikes. I'm afraid that Harry won't be coming over if they have rules like that.

Full House At Crewe . .

A number of Crewe Branch members gave me a roasting when they found that there was no society report in the N. West Newsletter last month. As I had penned the usual report in good time I mentioned the matter to the editor. He was astounded and replied "I don't believe it - I typed the report myself!" However, when he looked for the document on his computer screen it was nowhere to be found. Now any other mortal would have scratched the side of his head and pondered over the situation but not Stan, he stood upright, threw his arms out sideways, raised his eyes to the skies and declared "Glory Hallelujah! I've just seen a miracle in Penketh!" Of course it was not one of Stan's real miracles, he'd forgotten to 'save' the text after typing it in the computer. It happens to us all.

The complaints received, however, showed just how branch members enjoy keeping up to date via the Newsletter - it is a great pot boiler and keeps interest bubbling nicely between issues of the Vellum. There is certainly no appeasing the hunger of the George Formby aficionados for news of our George is there.

In a nutshell the missing story reported the visit to Crewe of Dennis Taylor, the President of the George Formby Society, who visited our branch accompanied by Peter Pollard and Dennis Mitchell. It was good to hear them performing their own favourite numbers. Dennis Mitchell was, in the writer's opinion, quite outstanding with his rendition of "On The Beat." He gave us a lesson on how to put a song over.

Connie had brightened up the auditorium, by making new table covers and it was generally agreed that the room was much cosier as a result.

Fifty one attended the May meeting and it was a lovely night. Derrick Ball deserves a mention as he made his debut with "Five Foot Two" on the uke and a very humorous monologue that had some of the audience wiping away the tears (of laughter)! Our practise night, in readiness for the village fete, was very rewarding. Barry Bowler who has only had his banjolele two or three weeks impressed everyone with his first efforts. Barry, a cyclist, told us that he normally took his mouth organ with him on his bike rides. It was good company for him at nights when camping out.

Unfortunately Barry likes singing and he finds it a little difficult playing the mouth organ and singing at the same time! So what do you think, he decided to get a uke. Now Barry can ride his bike, sing, and play the uke at the same time. And for those who may be interested, Barry's last bike ride was not to the corner shop it was a mere 2,900 miles! Keep up the good work Barry!

Not only keep up the good work Barry, but keep on the bike. Especially if you are playing the uke at the same time. Thanks for your report Brian.

Hinge (sitting) & Bracket

- Sent in by Dave Hawkins. . .

Dame Hilda Bracket said of Dr Evadne Hinge:

. . . . she had what nowadays you'd call "a thing" about George Formby. She could be found at all his concerts sitting in the front row clutching a wicker basket full of ukulele strings in case anything snapped on stage and she could leap to the rescue. And I was the one who had to smooth things over when Beryl found out.



I talked Evadne out of taking it further. After all, Formby was one of those variety artists. He sang risque songs about Grandad's Flannelette Nightshirt. Evadne would have gone to pieces in that sort of world.

Dame Evadne said of herself: As for myself I was George Formby's number one fan. I know the doctors called it an obsession but it wasn't. George was a striking man. He appeared to be little but he was quite big, Muscular. He often took his shirt off in films and he was quite robust in an appealing sort of way but vulnerable at the same time. I wanted to mother him. *Thanks Dave. Very interesting.*



■ JEFFREY: His home is shrine to his famous uncle ...

Lord Formby Booth

What do you think about this? Jeffrey Booth is posing as if he is Lord of the manor outside his stately home. In fact, the photo was taken outside the Kingfisher Hotel at Milton Keynes *You Old Cheat!*

18 A Few Snippets from George's Column in the Daily Express

March 26th 1939. . . . ASK PROFESSOR FORMBY. . . .

- Question - What's good for biting nails? *Sharp Teeth.*
- “ What kind of hens lay the longest? *Dead ones.*
- “ What would 20 lbs of fish at 2 pence per pound be? *Bad.*

A SONG FOR GEORGE FROM Mrs Wigginthorpe.

In our little air raid shelter. At the bottom of the old back yard.
Safe and sound, underground, there's me and the missus and our faithful hound.

In our little air raid shelter, the door can very soon be barred.
When t'landlord comes on a quarter day. Out of sight we mean to stay.
In our little air raid shelter. At the bottom of the old back yard

In our little air raid shelter, At the bottom of the old back yard.
There's mice and rats, owls and bats. Half a dozen wippets and a score of cats.
In our little air raid shelter, The peace around is marred
The neighbour's fowls are there in force
And now the milkman parks his horse. In our little air raid shelter
At the bottom of the old back yard.

I've checked to see if this was one of George's songs but it is not listed.

Iris Hillman - Blackpool, writes. . .

Dear Stan, Just a few lines for the Newsletter. There was a lot of extra talent on stage at the last Blackpool monthly meeting - five youngsters from one family. Wish we'd a photo of them for the Newsletter. Don't be too long in coming over as Harry's jokes are becoming interesting!! I think the applause is going to his head. As you know everyone is made welcome here and the food is scrumptious, so mosey down all you readers. Of course, sea breezes, sand and sunshine are free.

Whilst on the subject of things free. I'd like to thank everyone who has encouraged me to keep playing (and now singing, such as it is) and given me a lot of their time and advice. Remember, happiness is a ukulele, it nourishes the parts others can't reach. All The Best, Iris Hillman

Thank you Iris for your contribution to the Newsletter. I am pleased that you are soldiering on with your playing and look forward to seeing you on the stage (at the next meeting) You are right! We must have some photos of these youngsters in the Newsletter. Must get this organised. It is great to hear them bellowing out George's songs. Keep Strummin.

Have you seen the new Golden Wonder advert on TV ? They are plugging their new line in Micro Noodles with a Keech Uke/banjo player on the right hand side of the screen singing a song. I've no idea of the words he is singing or who the player is.

Harry Stanford

And From The Man Himself -

Dear Stan, I am trying to catch up on the Newsletter No. 7. Martin Harrison did a marvellous "Write" up about Lottie and myself on the story of "Kemps Hipodrome." Lottie went every week until it was burnt down in 1929. She told me that her dad had shares in both the Hippodrome, the Pavilion, and others. Lottie thinks the shares came under the name of the South Lancashire Hippodrome Company.

I appeared twice at the Pavilion (known as The Rink) in August 1951 and played a uke in a talent competition. I'd only had the uke a short time and the only tune I could play was "Join The Army," which, as you are aware, is not a George Formby song. I reached the final but unfortunately didn't win. As usual, I was left to the last on the bill and as I was doing my turn the manager came on stage and stopped me in the middle of my act. He told the audience that the cinema was only licenced till 11pm but I would be taken into consideration for a future event.

However, I was very pleased that the winner was a small girl aged 10 who was blind. She played the piano.

There was a report in the Vellum stating that we shouldn't have anything other than George Formby songs. No songs from the shows, no monologues, no jokes etc. So if his suggestions go his way it will mean the "End of Harry." In the years I have been a society member I have never seen a George Formby audience dismayed. Your Old Joker - Harry.

What a load of old rubbish Harry! The cinema manager threw you off stage because you'd been rambling on for about three hours and the audience had all gone home. You've not changed one bit. You're still an old joker. Anyway, we are pleased that you and Lottie are back to normal again. It's always nice to hear from you both. Keep sending 'em in.

Answers to Anagrams - I'll bet you peeked.

- 1. Madam Moscovitch.
- 2. Old Kitchen Kettle.
- 3. Blackpool Prom.
- 4. Daring Young Man.
- 5. Ring Your Little Bell.
- 6. The Isle Of Man.

Our thanks to Derek Ball.

The picture taken on page 8 was actually taken at Wistaston not Penyffordd. It was Anthony Mason's fault. You can't get good staff nowadays!

Pete Waterman, a Warrington based pop star producer who is a keen GF fan, and who joined the GFS for 12 months, was asked on radio his opinion of Stravinski's work. He replied, "I'd rather listen to George Formby.

N. West Branch Meetings and Future Dates.

N. Wales Branch - British Legion, Penyfordd (10 miles west of Chester).
Every first Friday in the month. (NEXT MEETING IS ONE DAY EARLIER
- JULY 4th) 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:- Jun 1st, Jul 6th, Aug 3rd, Aug 31st, Oct 5th, Nov 2nd, Dec 7th.
Adm £1 with Buffet. PLEASE NOTE: 2 MEETINGS IN AUGUST

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:- June 28th, July 26th, Aug 23rd, Adm 50p

Warrington Branch - Alliance Sports & Social Club Evans House,
Orford Lane, Warrington. - 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 July -
as George would say - "GET CRACKING"

ReTtEISwEn RuOy TrOpPuS

LATE NEWS - Good old favourite **Charlie Drake**

(Hello My Darlings) popped into the Wintergardens June meeting for a couple of
hours and our Milton Keynes star reporter - Jeffrey Booth - who was almost sat on
his knee, with a camera in his hand, failed to snap him. If you want a job doing, do it thisel.

