

THE NORTH - WEST

# GEORGE FORMBY

## Newsletter 14

Vol. 2, No.2  
August 1996



Specially Produced for the  
North - West Branches of The George Formby Society  
by Stan Evans, The Hollies, 19 Hall Nook, Penketh, Warrington  
Cheshire WA5 2HN

Tel or Fax 01925 727102

**Welcome to Newsletter No. 14** - and what an active time we've had over the past month. The Penketh Carnival went down very well, as usual, when, amidst storms and gales, we entertained about 100 people.

## WEDDING

The highlight of the month however was the wedding of Wilf Salt to Bobby Frampton at St Thomas Church, Lytham St Annes. . . more news inside.

## So Read On . . .

There is no doubt about it but our GFS Branches in the N. West are doing extremely well. Every seat was taken at the Crewe meeting and I was pleased that at the July meeting the Wainwright room (Blackpool) was full to capacity. N.Wales, the latest branch to set up, is coming along very well and they have plenty of budding uke players to call on.

Liverpool, who usually struggle for artists, had extra members there. I was delighted when Jeff (Happy Go Lucky Me) Gray turned up with Jack Jones. Jeff certainly can lift an audience and Jack, although suffering with his shoulders, is still the tops with the uke. As usual he starts off with "Well I don't know if I'll be able to play tonight or not, but I'll try to give you one song." Everyone feels sad at that but after the fourth song he is switched on and you've a job getting him off. The crowd loved him!!! We want to see you there again next month Jack.

**Jack & Jim**, or is Jim & Jack? Are the busiest members in the N.West - apart from Harry that is, they travel North, South, East & West to every meeting going. Their rendition of "Uncle Joe's Mint Balls" goes down a treat and they get plenty of rapport from the crowd, "Six Tons" they shout, and "Hey Up," along with J & J's singing. They are very popular.

Jim's jokes are also a highlight of the night - next to Harry's of course - and here is a sample. This chap (notice I didn't type "Guy") fell off a six story building and, as he lay flat out on the floor, his mate dashed down and said "What happened." He replied with, "I don't know, I've only just got here myself."

## HARRY & LOTTIE

I've just rung Harry & Lottie to ask why they didn't make it to the Liverpool meeting. Unfortunately Lottie is feeling under the weather and the doctor's antibiotics are not doing anything for her. They were sadly missed at the meeting. Let us hope that George's light is shining for her. Keep smiling Lottie and God Bless.

\*\*\*\*\*



## The Formby Story - Part Four

### Still on George Formby Senior.

The story so far . . . 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 lives rough. He suffers from bronchial problems and becomes part of a double act. Their voices break and the audience laugh at them. Young Jimmy turns to comedy and laughs with the crowd. The double act split up and Jimmy decides to go it alone. Read on . . .



### Progress On The Stage

Jimmy started to use various types of clownish type suits and grotesque stage make-up to match a number of "down to earth" comedy songs that he had collected. He searched for songs about raw Lancashire, Wigan meat pies and black puddings from Bury. Some of the song lines he took from the verses in the Methodist Hymn Books.

### George Formby

He also searched for a new name as Jimmy Booth wasn't a name that would pull the crowds. One day he was waiting in a railway carriage and he saw a goods wagon bearing the "FORMBY" on the side. This meant that the wagon belonged to the Lancashire town of Formby. "That's a great name" he said, and immediately he played around with it in his mind. Now nobody is quite sure of how he came to use the name "George" but an opinion is that he took it because it had been a strong Royal family name (from 1714 to 1830) and George's V and VI were in the wings waiting to become future monarchs. The name Jimmy Booth was changed to "George Formby" and a new star was born!

He also adopted "Style." No-one could put this young man down. Although poor in health he was extremely strong in spirit. He would walk to the front of the stage and give commands to the audience. "Now I want you all to be quiet or go outside." This brought huge laughter. He would also stop a song half way through and tell the band leader where he was going wrong. The audience loved him.

In the music hall days, stage talent was greatly appreciated and the audience would listen intently. There was no coughing or opening of toffee papers to distract the artist. Microphones didn't exist so the artist had to learn to throw the voice. George, although a sick man, could do this. His act was droll but he had the power to capture his audience and he used his illness as part of the act. "I'll cough anyone for a shilling," he would tell them. He also promoted his favourite rubbing lotion, "Hee, That Zambuk is good!" More next month.

**4 Car Boot - Dennis Lee** made an appeal at the N. Wales meeting. To raise funds for the branch he is planning to hold a Car Boot Sale and requests that anyone with any surplus goods should ring him with a view to bringing it along on the day. At this no plans have been made regarding the date and venue. If you have anything to offer please ring Dennis on 01244 544799. He'll be pleased to hear from you.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Harold Fallows - Jack Jones mentioned Harold a couple of weeks back so here's an old Manchester Evening News article dated Oct 5th 1971.**

### **It All Began On The Back Of A Donkey.**



“One of these days I'll hold a jumble sale and sell the ruddy lot” says Harold Fallows, ukulele virtuoso and honorary member of the George Formby Memorial Society. By the “ruddy lot” he means the 15 ukuleles he keeps under the settee and in the bedroom of his home in Hillcrest Rd, Prestwich. But he doesn't quite mean “the ruddy lot.” “I'll keep the best,” says Mr Fallows 70 today) and that includes Billy “Uke” Scott's celebrated 1935 ukulele which was featured in six films and 500 broadcasts.

You could say it all began on the back of a donkey at Oldham Coliseum. At the age of six, he mounted the donkey which George Formby senior used in his comedy act and rode on stage.

As a lad in Oldham, he listened for hours to the old man on those ancient cylindrical records. And at 16 he took up the mandolin. The ukulele came 10 years later. Playing in workingmen's clubs and Sunday schools in North Lancashire for 10 shillings (50p) a night, he built up an act impersonating George Formby senior and, later, his more famous son. In better times he was paid £2 a week retainer as a theatre stand-by, ready to step in at a moment's notice if an artist fell ill. Mr Fallows still plays the ukulele for charities and O.A.P. groups and claims he is the oldest playing member of the GFS.

Unlike other members he does not have George's stage clothes, shoes, lamp shades, or music stand in his house. But he saw him perform scores of times and bought each new Formby song as it came out at 6d a time.

He makes ukuleles as well as plays them. “It's been a hobby with me. I've been experimenting for 10 years now.” He makes them in his garage and spends about 3 weeks on each. Most modern ukes come from Germany and Japan. “But instruments get better as they get older,” he says.

# Thanks - from Ken & Thelma Woolley . . .

Ken and Thelma are the Grand parents of Stephen Williams who has an ambition to meet Mickey Mouse in Disneyland. Thanks to generous supporters he will be flying out there next October and we wish him tons of luck. We hope that this is the best holiday he has ever had.



THELMA WRITES . . . Dear Stan, Please convey our heartfelt thanks to the members of the Alliance Club and The George Formby Society for their efforts in raising such a generous contribution to the fund for Stephen. The Florida trip for tephden and his family is now booked and we are all very grateful on his behalf.

We also cannot thank you personally enough for all the effort you have put into the fund-raising with such excellent results. Without your efforts the task would have been very much more difficult and we and the family really appreciate it.

Thank you all once again. Thelma Woolley.

*Well we are very pleased that our friends and members responded to the call and hope that young Stephen gains wonderful experiences that he will always remember. To date the collection figures are. . . . .*

<i>Greenall's Night . . .</i>	<i>£825</i>
<i>Two Alliance Nights, 35th Anniversary and Jim's 90th Birthday Party . .</i>	<i>443</i>
<i>Anthony Mason Entertained at W. W. 2. Society, Perch Rock . . .</i>	<i>200</i>
<i>and Mrs Totty of Runcorn raised privately . . .</i>	<i>80</i>

*Wonderful Total*

*£1548*

*Many, Many Thanks to all who took part - GREAT!!!*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Young Bob Drinkwater - 90 if he's a day!

Dropped a line about the Michigan Ukulele . . . . .

Quite recently a man from Wolverhampton came to see me and he had a Michigan Ukulele and a Dallas "E" uke-banjo for sale. The ukulele intrigued me as I had never heard of that particular make. I contacted Ray Bernard and he told me that in 1941 the U.S.A. entered the war and in line with other countries, the luxury goods manufacturers had to turn over to war work. The many companies that made Musical Instruments were directed to do this and exactly the same happened in this country.

The Gibson Company, however were ordered to make ukuleles for the American Armed Forces and subsequently a huge number were made at that time. Modern day experts think that this instrument was badly made and of poor quality. But now, since I've had the instrument restored to its original condition, I can hear the mystical sounds that only Gibson can produce. The amazing ending to this story is that I wrote to the experts at Mandolin Brothers, New York, and they claimed that they had never heard of the make. They also suggested that it must have been made by a small manufacturer. Bob Drinkwater.

*Thanks Bob. Have you noticed that I almost stuck to the script. . . No Moaning! Keep sending 'em in.*

## An Interview With Joe McCaffrey . . . 😊😊😊

As many of you know, Joe is the excellent artist who creates our wonderful cartoons - a gift that very few people possess. Joe was about 12 years of age and lying in a hospital bed recovering from appendicitis, (actually it was a bit more serious than that but that's another story). There was music being piped through the ward's loudspeakers and whoever was operating it was obviously a George Formby fan. He/she presented a feast of Formby songs and Joe became well and truly hooked.



In late 1943 Joe joined the Merchant Navy and crissed - crossed the Atlantic for a number of years. George was occupied in another theatre of war. On one trip he got himself a uke and made a serious attempt to emulate George's playing style. Unfortunately he got nowhere and eventually abandoned the uke in favour of the pencil.

Drawing helped to while away the hours at sea and after leaving the Merchant Navy, around 1952, he began to sell a few cartoons to the popular papers of the time, like "Tit - Bits" and "Weekend Mail". A few spells in advertising studios led him into Childrens Comics. He did "Mustapha Million" for seven years, plus other characters like "Jack Pott" and the "Toffs & Toughs." After 15 years of comics the market changed considerably and work started to dry up. Joe moved into Animation, working on the "Count Duckula" and "Danger Mouse."

About 5 years ago, before moving to London to work on Spielberg's "American Tail 2" he passed an old secondhand shop and spotted a uke banjo amongst the bric-a-brac. It was a Windsor Whirle and he got it for £45.

After a life time of neglect, Joe is now getting to grips with the uke, especially since joining the GFS, which he did when the Liverpool Branch opened. He is now happy to plonk away although he hasn't abandoned the pencil entirely.

*Well I must say Joe that you are progressing very well with your playing and entertaining. At the early stages you had difficulty in completing a song but now you are becoming stronger and more confident. Liverpool is a great meeting for anyone who has difficulty in getting going and the crowd are sympathetic and helpful. No problems if you forget the words - they all join in! Great Work Joe and many thanks*

*for the cartoons.* 👍👍👍

\*\*\*\*\*

## Evening Gazette December 30th 1942

### CANADA VISIT

I hear that Mr Formby may go to Canada in the summer to entertain the Forces training there. Engagements in film making - one with Vera Lynn - will not allow him to go before George has done a tremendous amount of work for the Forces in England, done it readily and generously, and I'll wager his visit to Canada will arouse excitement over there.

\* \* \* \* \*

### REAL PATRIOTS

Here at home, he and Beryl have entertained half a million of the Forces, and have raised £75,000 for war charities. And they are not going to Canada to escape paying income tax. It is estimated that on January 1st, 1943, George will have to hand over £55,000 to the Inland Revenue. "It's my way of helping the country," he told me.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Sunday Dispatch February 22 1953

With the doctor's verdict in his pocket to say he is now 100% fit, George Formby was making plans yesterday to resume his stage work. Sir Horace Evans, Queen Mary's physician, had told him; "If you went to be tested for life insurance you would pass on first class.

Only ten months ago Formby, stricken with coronary thrombosis, though his career finished, bought a Hollywood style £17,000 house in Dublin, and said farewell to his friends. Doctors who ordered him to rest have been amazed at the way his tough Wigan constitution has responded to rest since he collapsed while appearing in "Zip Goes A Million," his big West End success.

### MIDNIGHT PARTY

Formby was so confident he was fit again that he drove himself to London in his shooting brake, after arriving in England from Dublin last week. Then he stayed up till midnight at a party before he went to Harley Street. Yesterday he drove to Blackpool with his wife Beryl. He had his working kit - half a dozen ukuleles and banjoleles, music, and stage clothes - in the back of the brake. He told me, "The doctors have given me two months to get over the shock of being told I am 100% fit. I shall return to work gradually. Our thanks to Charles Stewart for the newspaper cuttings

## The Formbys Move Out!

Only three weeks after saying they were staying there, the Formbys - George and Beryl - are selling their luxurious home at Stillorgan, Dublin. They paid £18,000 for the house three months ago, and spent another - £5,000 redecorating it. Now they announce it is for immediate sale "at a greatly reduced reserve price." Why are they selling? For just two of them the house is too big. They're lonely. A small luxury flat, they think, would be better. Already they've inspected a few near Dublin. They also went to invest their money in land and are seeking a farm or a racing stable near the Curragh, headquarters of Irish racing.



### COCKTAIL BAR

Alterations to the 8 bedroom house included a cocktail bar in which specially made wrought iron grills protected Beryl's collection of glassware. Three weeks ago she told me "Why is it that people say we are leaving? Even before I get the curtains up in a new home these rumours start. I cannot understand it."

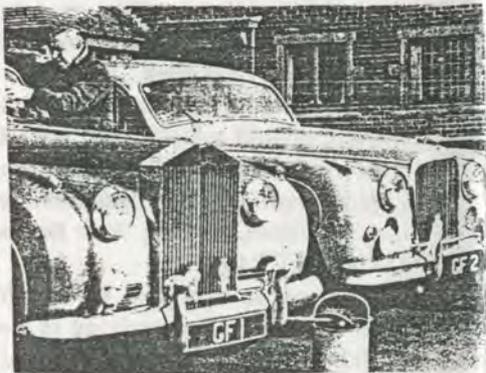
George, who hoped to return to show business by the summer, is not likely to be back on the stage for some time. In Dublin yesterday I was told; George is a good businessman, and has been appointed director of a large Dublin grocery store. If he had a flat in Dublin he would be able to travel frequently to Lancashire, where he has many friends. He has few friends in Dublin.

*I personally think that the reason why G & B soon got bored with their new homes was because they had no children to share them with.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Received a Call from **Peter Lee-**

Hello Stan, Did you know that the Log Book for George's Maroon Jaguar car GF2, is for sale? This is the car that George bought on the 20th July 1960. It was sold on the 21st April 1961, after George's death, but before the Beryldene auction, which was on the 21st June 1961. The car was kept in this country until 1967 and then it was taken over to New Zealand. We assume that the person who purchased the car was a dealer as there is no entry on the log book. It was later sold to Fred Toplis of 95 Gainsborough Rd, Liverpool 15. The last owner on the log book was Raymond Sykes of Bradford. *I wonder who has it now?*



\*\*\*\*\*

**Don't Froget Your Newsletter**

By the end of the week George Formby's "It's In The Air" will have made £10,000 more than any of his previous pictures. Yet it has been released for only ten weeks and is still 500 bookings short of the last film. This is a triumph not only for Formby, but for two other young Englishmen; Jack Kitchen, the producer, and Anthony Kimmins, the director. Kitchen started his film career when he was 19. He was an extra and he used to disguise his age by wearing a large black prop beard. He returned to England six years ago as supervising film editor at the Ealing Studios. From that he graduated to producing.



Kimmins said he owes his success to a car accident which forced him to lie on his back for several months. During that time he wrote "While Parents Sleep." It was so successful that he left the Navy. Since then he has been successfully actor, writer and director. Together with Kitchen, he is responsible for the latest George Formby film, "Trouble Brewing" which has not yet been released.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Newspaper (Not known) . . April 20th 1939

The Will Hay - George Formby battle must be ended at once. It's getting too complicated. I assumed that Hay was king of the fun castle, but Ben Henry, Formby's familiar, issued a challenge. He said there was £20 for the man who could prove that the past eight Hay films had attracted more cash than the past seven Formby films. Said Ted Black, Will Hay's producer; I don't know any actual figures, but I am happy with my money on my man.

#### THEY ARGUED THIS WAY

Then outsiders, seeing no reason to keep this a private fight, butted in with complicated arguments about the kind of audiences the comics attracted. Hay drew, they said, in the big halls, in the better class districts. Formby is hero of the little halls and the ninepennies

My verdict, which I am content is accurate and just, is this:- Formby wins by a short head. Consistency gets him by. A big Hay film will be just as popular as the biggest Formby, But Hay is erratic. Formby never changes except to improve. Hay beats the field when he is out with two stooges. Formby runs by himself, and gets there without whip or spur. The argument is now closed.

\*\*\*\*\*

### We Want George - and George Obligated . . 10/5/41

George Formby, who was accompanied by his wife, Beryl, attended the boxing contests at Blackpool Tower Circus last night. Few were aware of his presence until the interval, then they set up a cry, "We want George!" And the crowd did not stop until George entered the ring, and told a little story which brought roars of laughter. Waving his arms in true boxer greeting, George then went to his seat amid more cheers.

# HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN?

Should you do so please do not approach him. He is highly dangerous!!! He often masquerades as a ukulele player. If you see him please report to any GFS member. Dennis Lee.

*And if he whispers in your ear'ole you'll be stone deaf for life!*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Dear Louie (George's

sister) on her 90th birthday.

No longer stressed as she

has been for many years

but very relaxed and

peaceful. She was

two years and a day

younger than George.

Louie was moved from

her Warrington home

to Brinsworth House

for retired stage

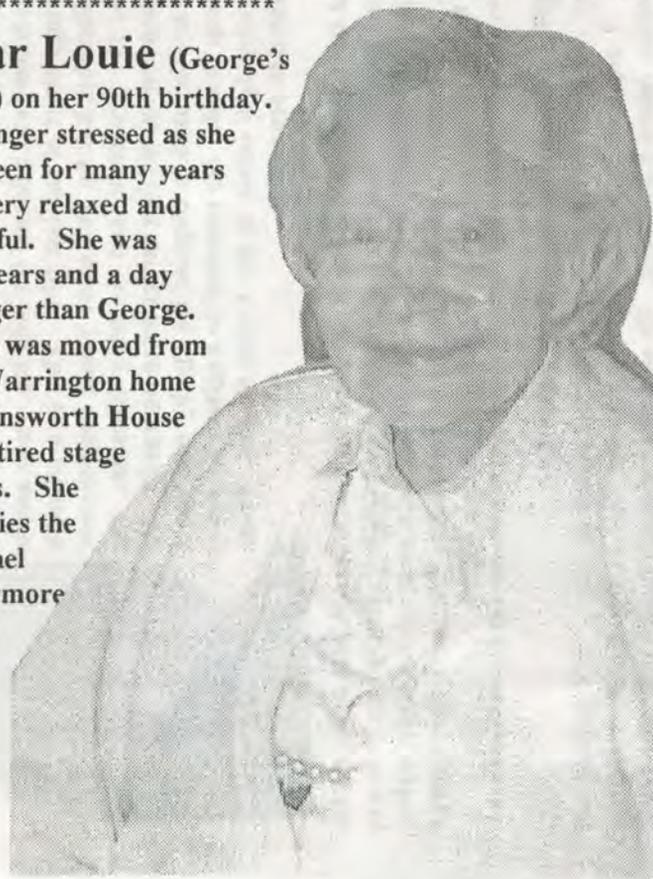
artists. She

occupies the

Michael

Barrymore

suite.



Actually this is Kevin Blanchfield. He should have been on the above photo but they sent him to the other side of the stage to sing on his own. This was to balance up the sound system.



**N. Wales Meeting**

Back Row - Brian Carl Charlie Derek John Jack Jim Colin Ray Geoff Dennis  
 Edge Basford Penman Ball Edmiston Skelland Bramwell Wood Davies Shone Lee

Front Row

Mike Cash - Martin Fowell - Claire Moody - James Griffiths - Daniel Jones - Jim Knight - Gerald Jones

**From John Guy . . .** Dear Stan, There appears to be quite a number of men in the society who suffer from Prostrate problems so I have enclosed a herbal recipe that I used. I've had no problems since. *Good idea John . . .let's have it.*

These herbs can be purchased from your local herb shop and the mixture consists of 1 part each of Bearberry, Couchgrass, Echinacea, Horsetail, Hydrangea. Mix all the powdered herbs together. Prepare and drink it like you would a cup of tea. Strain before pouring. If you don't like the taste add some honey. Further details from John Guy on 0121 523 8047.

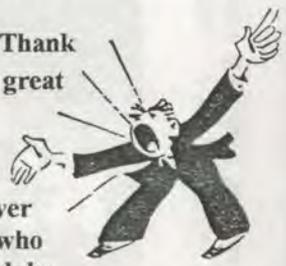
\*\*\*\*\*

**From Charles Stewart . . .** I was in the Wainwright Club, paying the new Treasurer, Mr Harry Nowell, for the Saturday evening, and he told me that as a very young stage hand, at the Opera House in 1939, he saw George Formby. The war curtailed the run of the show but he recalls that later George would sit in the audience of various shows when he was in town and he always sent drinks backstage for the workers. *Thanks Charles. This first hand snippet proves that George wasn't the meany that some of the press report him to be.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Charles Welsh replies . . .** Dear Stan, Thank

you for sending me a copy of your Newsletter. It has some great reading in it. As you know, I have played semi-pro for many years so I was particularly interested in the item on "Improving Your Act." I can well understand what the writer was getting at. Many artists do the same routine over and over again without any thought for the poor audience who have to sit through it. This is one reason why many night clubs have become terribly noisy. As stated, it is part of the job to learn to control the audience and if they are not attentive then it is the fault of the artist. He/she must improve the act and learn to capture the crowd - it is part of your learning!



There is one other point that I would like to add. Many artists turn to vulgarity to get laughs, which I personally think is a desperate shout for help. Anyone who has to be vulgar, to get attention, shouldn't be on the stage at all.

*Quite right Charles. We are pleased that our George Formby Society holds meetings that the whole family can enjoy without being embarrassed. Keep sending 'em in.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**2 Ukuleles For Sale . . .** By Bob Drinkwater.

La Foley Ukulele, 12 frets, Standard size, Geared pegs, perfect condition, case £120.

Martin No.2 Ukulele (Mahogany). Name in gold letters on peg board. 12 frets, Rosewood fingerboard, Top inlaid with black & white celluloid, Black nut, Patent pegs. In excellent condition, No cracks or scratches, With case £300.

Ring Bob on 01384 39918.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Charles Stewart** sent in this piece about  
Growing Older. . . .

Everything is farther away than it used to be, it is even twice as far to the corner and they have added a hill. I have given up running for the bus, it leaves much earlier than it used to do.



It seems to me they are making the stairs steeper than in the old days. And have you noticed the smaller print they use in the newspapers. There is no point in asking anyone to read aloud anymore, as everyone speaks in such a low voice I can hardly hear them.

The material in clothes is so skimpy now, especially around the hips and waist, that it is almost impossible to reach one's shoulders.

Even people are changing. They are so much younger than they used to be when I was their age. On the other hand, people my own age are so much older than I am.

I ran into an old classmate the other day and he had changed so much he didn't recognise me. I got to thinking about the poor soul while I was combing my hair this morning and in so doing I glanced at my own reflection. Really now, they don't even make mirrors like they used to. Thanks Charles.

\*\*\*\*\*



**If  
you  
don't  
send  
an  
article  
I'll send  
Harry  
round  
with his  
BANJO**

**It's old Harry! He wants to know if the next batch of jokes are ready!!**

# My Memories of George Formby by Hilda Hunt

1935 and I was just 14 years old when the George Formby bug hit me. The usual Xmas present from an Aunt was a visit to the Liverpool Empire pantomime. It was to see George Formby who I had never heard of before, so I wasn't particularly fussy on going, however, from the moment he walked onto the stage I was fascinated.



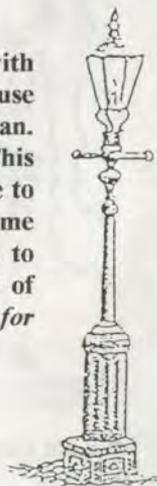
Hilda's Husband has George's looks.

I searched all the magazines and papers for information on him and my friends teased me rotten. They couldn't understand why I chose him for an idol while they liked all the glamorous stars. This didn't deter me. I just loved him and still do to this day, even though it is only in memory. My greatest moment came in 1943 and he was appearing again at the Empire Theatre. With my George Formby Scrapbook I went to the theatre to see if he would autograph it for me, and can you imagine to my surprise when the stage door manager, after taking my scrapbook to show him, returned and said that Mr Formby would like to meet me. I was terribly nervous and my legs felt like jelly as I walked to the dressing room to find that George was looking through my book. Beryl was busy cooking something on a little gas ring.

They were both very homely and friendly and not only did he sign my book but he also gave me a signed photograph, which I still have today. My only regret was not getting Beryl's autograph as well. I met them many times after that first meeting and I think that he must have got fed up seeing my face.

I'm very surprised that none of the articles mention their connection with Middleton Towers holiday camp, at Morecambe (now Pontins) because they were great friends of the owners Mrs Kamiya and her daughter Jean. Almost every year George & Beryl would turn up with their wee dog. This was my main attraction for going there. These are happy days for me to look back on and I really think that these memories have helped me through my recent operation and illnesses. I wish I was fit enough to attend all the meetings. Writing this article has done me the world of good as I feel as if I have been on a trip to the past. *Thank you Hilda for your interesting article. You must be George's keenest fan so I'm sure that George's lamp is shining for you.*

## Turned Out Nice Again



Alan Randall  
presents ...

# THE GEORGE FORMBY EXPERIENCE

A unique  
exhibition of  
memorabilia  
& personal  
effects

Re-live the  
life & times of  
LANCASHIRE'S  
most famous  
entertainer

Opens 23 July  
for the season ~ 10am to 6pm Daily

PLEASURE  
ISLAND is  
situated next  
to St. Annes Pier

Tickets  
£2.50  
Concessions  
£1.75

At St Annes  
**PLEASURE ISLAND**

For further information ring 01253 781381 Acknowledgments to Warrington Museum

**Evening Standard** 8th October 1953.

George Formby lay late in bed this morning at his in Park Lane, he rose at 11am instead of his usual hour of 8 o'clock. Last night he returned to the London stage 18 months after being struck down by coronary thrombosis. It is an illness that, not so long ago, permitted no return. Mrs Formby stood watching in the wings during her husband's 27 minute act at the Palladium. "I feel no ill effects at all" Mr Formby told me today. "It's a good feeling to be back in London."

### WHISKY HELPED

Then he took the air in Hyde Park before preparing for his nine weeks of twice nightly shows. He may add about 15 minutes to his act. But it will depend on what the audience wants. "We are always cautious in Lancashire," he says

The doctors prescribed whisky to assist Mr Formby's convalescence. "I am inclined to think it helped," he says, "But I had none yesterday until the show. Then I had a couple of nips."

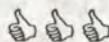
### George's Example

An even better use of the wayside is being made in front of the well known residence in Singleton of England's No.1 comedian, George Formby.

In front of the garden wall, where one usually expects to see a wasted strip of grass verge, there is a healthy looking crop of potatoes.

I know that George is particularly fond of Lancashire Hot Pot, so I assume he is making sure of a supply of its chief wartime ingredient.

We are accustomed to expect something funny from George but this brainy idea of growing potatoes by the roadside is both highly practical and original and I congratulate him.



**Keep Smiling**

The June meeting of the Crewe Branch was again a wonderful night. It was good to see young Gareth Summer on the stage again after a break of a couple of months and clearly he had been practicing during his absence.

The highlight of the evening was a great surprise to us when non playing member Mrs Hazel Stamps presented the society with a banner which she had painstakingly made for us. It looked really smart when in position across the proscenium arch and it will certainly brighten up our meetings in the future. What a lovely gesture Hazel, thanks again from all of us.

Since we last met Des Redfern has been treading the boards of the Lyceum Theatre playing Formby numbers in the local Policeman's Annual Concert and at the same time getting the society some more valuable publicity. I have been told by a lady in the audience that Des put on a grand performance which is great news. It is just twelve months since Des first picked up a ukulele and his progress just goes to show what can be done if one has a load of enthusiasm.

Saturday the 20th was the day of the Duck Race. Phww! What a day! Colin Wood, Tom Peddie, Barbara and Derrick Ball, Connie and myself were on the field setting things up by 11.30am. We had three stalls of bric a brac. Colin brought along a petrol generator which provided the power for our amplifier which we used for behind the stall entertainment during the day. I dont think it could have been hotter.

By two oclock we were joined by Jonathan and Pam Baddeley, Barry and Marion Bowler, Christine Wood, Des Redfern and Mary Atkinson. Lesley and Denis Lee,, Geoff and Dolwen Shone, Eric, Sonia and Martin Fowell from the North Wales Society gave us their usual magnificent support. It was a great afternoon and whilst the 780 plastic ducks were jockeying for position in a very slow flowing brook we managed to raise £57 for club funds.

#### HAPPY BIRTHDAY RAY!

Audrey Lewis (and all members of the Crewe Branch) would like to wish Ray a very Happy 65th Birthday Party and send him every good wish on his retirement. There can be no excuses now Ray - you'll have plenty of time to practice on your uke!! Have a great night.

**Penketh Carnival** - What a great little event this is . . We have performed for about 5 years now and it has always gone down extremely well. Unfortunately we had the most atrocious weather with stormy rain showers. The walls of the marquee were flapping and the roof was lifting but nevertheless we enjoyed entertaining our crowds at the two performances. If George could entertain the troops in the roughest of conditions - "mid shot and shell" then we could certainly do the same and lift the spirits of the drenched audience. This we did with pride.

There was one slight hiccup however. Eva, now feeling on the road to recovery, invited all the members, who turned up from Crewe and N. Wales, to come home for a meal after the show. She'd prepared a wagon load of sandwiches and volauvents - loads of 'em - but unfortunately only half of the members turned up. For the next three days I was eating volauvents until they were coming out of my ears. It was volauvents with egg for breakfast, volauvents with shrimps for tea, and volauvents with jam for supper. I've never eaten so many volauvents in my life. Next year we'll have it organised better. Our thanks to all who came to entertain and to those who gave support. Jack Sharp, God Bless him, and his uke, came from Halifax to be with us.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Wilf Salt & Dorothy Frampton** marry at Lytham St Annes.

. . . It must be a dreadful experience losing ones partner, and usually only those who have gone through the ordeal can understand it when the remaining partner turns to another for comfort. We are delighted that dear Wilf has found a new partner in life and we wish him and his new wife, Dorothy, every success and much happiness.



The Wedding on Saturday 13th July, which was held at St Thomas Church, Lytham St Annes, was attended by around 60 guests and it all went perfectly well. The weather was ideal for them. After the church service the reception was held at the Parkwater Hotel where an excellent buffet was laid out. Brian Edge was Wilf's best man and he carried out his duties like a professional.

The evening's entertainment was excellently organised out by Dickie Speake, Dennis Mitchell, Peter Pollard and Dennis Taylor who had journeyed many miles from Yorkshire.

One sad moment for Brian, however. Wilf has now moved from Crewe to Lytham, so he has lost his most experienced entertainer to the Blackpool Branch. Not even a transfer fee. Well you can't win 'em all Brian.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Every time** I see our little smiling symbol it reminds me of dear Wally Cronshaw. He was a thumbs up character with a smiling face.



## From John & Doris Myerscough ☺☺

Dear Stan, Just a snippet of interest for the N.West Newsletter. We, who are keen GFS addicts, have become proud and delighted grandparents with the news that Andrew Butler, our grandchild, is now taking the part of Danny Simpson in the Liverpool soap "Brookside." Andrew is at the bottom of the news cutting.

*Thank you John & Doris for the news. Andrew is a great little actor and no doubt he has got*

*his talent from Nan & Grandad. What a lot of members don't know is that, many years ago, Doris and I once appeared together in a great theatrical extravaganza and in the same show John played the part of a drunkard. Andrew Lloyd Webber kept popping in to take notes. Thanks for your contribution.*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Sad News

- Some of you will remember Doug (Dizzy) Johnson who, with Rosamund Grey, had an excellent double act. We regret to report that Doug collapsed during the first day of the Wintergarden meeting and was hurriedly taken into hospital. News reached us on the Sunday that he had passed away. Doug had quite an unusual act which was usually classed as a pleasant change at the Formby meetings. He would perform silly walks in the style of Max Wall or Billy Dainty. Dear Doug will be sadly missed by the members and especially those attend the Stourbridge meetings where he performed.



Back: Ollie and Bel  
Centre (from left): Georgia, Nat and Nat's fiancée Jules  
Front: Danny



Mentioning **Blackpool** - What a wonderful night we had at the July meeting at the Wainwright. The room was filled and every seat taken. I was particularly pleased that our Yorkshire friends, Lionel Owen and his wife, Joan, came along. His great little act had the audience shouting for more and I'm sure that he could have entertained all night if the time was available.

Nice to see you both. 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊

\*\*\*\*\*

## Wigan Pier . . . On the 4th of August

we will be entertaining at the Wigan Pier Boat Rally and we are very pleased the pier authorities have invited us. A few years ago George had been completely forgotten in Wigan and their reason was that they didn't want to go back to the cloth cap era. My argument was that Wigan Pier was the "Cloth Cap" era. Their excuse then was "Yes but George was born 4 years too late as our period is up to 1900." I couldn't believe it.

Anyway I am pleased that, at long last, due to the George Formby Society and the Warrington Exhibition, George has been recognised as one of their heroes.

But let me tell you a funny story. Way back in 1990 I received a phone call from a gentleman who had just taken over a restaurant very close to Wigan Pier. "Can you help me out" he shouted. He came over to my home and told me that the restaurant was going through major refurbishment and he had given the designers instructions to create a George Formby image. Everything - place mats, doilies, etc. had to have George illustrated on them. The restaurant was near to opening day and he got a shock where he saw the finished result. The lamp post was fine but it had a Charlie Chaplin figure leaning against it. When quizzed on this he replied "This was the only character we could get." In Wigan?????



Thanks to  
all those  
who have  
contributed  
to this  
Newsletter  
G-R-E-A-T  
Very much  
appreciated

ROBERTS, my aged butler, has a weakness for the banjo. He is in exalted company. Her Majesty the Queen, I discover, has similar musical tastes. Paul Arkham, who worked for two years as a marine engineer on the Royal Yacht Britannia, discloses that he played the banjo for the Queen three times on board the floating palace. The late George Formby's compositions were particularly popular as well as old favourites such as Baby Face and Roll Out The Barrel. "She seemed to really enjoy them," he says. "The Queen's quite partial to that kind of music." Quaint and endearing, I say.

# N.West Branch Meetings and Future Dates.

**N.Wales Branch** - British Legion, Penyfordd (10 miles west of Chester).  
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:- 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:- 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 next issue - 15th August

So as George would say -

“GET CRACKING”

ReTtElSwEn RuOy TrOpPuS

\*\*\*\*\*



Keep Smiling