

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY Newsletter 23

Vol. 2, No.11
May, 1997



Specially Produced for the
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Would You Believe It??? - This Is No. 23 and we are still going strong - Marvellous!!! Our thanks to all who contributed.

So - What have we got the month? Well we've got news that the club crowds have starting feeding tomatoes to Anthony Mason and a report on Craig Tinsley's show when he entertained the Irish Guards at Sandhurst during the Queen mother's inspection.

We have excellent news that the Nantwich Jazz show was a huge success and also that the N. West Branches are growing stronger each month. The N. Wales meeting was oozing with kids - at least a dozen - which is a very good sign for the future. We also have a profile on Brother Ronald, who reported the death of Bill Hilton.

Once again, Charles Stewart has kept the Newsletter going with newspaper articles on George & Beryl, and as usual, the N. West Branches have sent in reports. So read on . . .

Anthony Mason's just popped in - he's been very busy doing shows all over the place. Soon he will be performing at Blackpool (he doesn't know where - which is typical) and will be doing the usual Summer Show on Llandudno Pier from the end of June through to September - 10 weeks. He's still doing his stint of Bingo Calling, two nights a week, at the Gala Bingo and performing at various town centres and Night Clubs.

One particular night club, he claims, was very generous, he opened his act and mentioned that he was feeling very hungry as he hadn't had his tea. Kind heartedly, they responded by throwing tomatoes to him, in fact, some of the tomatoes actually hit him. He was very pleased with their generosity and looks forward to going back there again.

Just heard from Roy Phillips who is a professional musician working in the London area. He plays Guitar, Drums, bass and does vocals. He recently picked up a uke in a car boot sale and is now working on the basics of uke playing. He is a keen fan of George's because his rhythm sense was outstanding. Also, he claims that John Lennon was a very keen fan.

Good for you Roy. Once you have got the basics I would advise that you ring Jack Jones on 01744 (St Helens) 759007. He produces an excellent video to help players with various uke strokes. Well worth having. Nice to hear from you.

We've had more letters than ever - many thanks to you all

George Formby senior (James Booth) was at the height of his career with bookings to last him for the next 10 years, but, due to extreme ill health, struggled desperately to carry on. Only the strength of Eliza, kept him going.



While performing in pantomime, at the Empire Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on Wednesday 2nd February 1921, George collapsed and was seriously ill. A doctor diagnosed that the coughing had damaged the blood vessels in his throat.

The usual ice treatment was given, to stem the haemorrhage, but George was far too ill to respond. Eliza hired a special railway coach to take George home to Hill Crest, Warrington and he was immediately put to bed. His doctor recommended that he should be taken onto the bedroom balcony hoping that the breeze would help to lower his temperature. But George was beyond all help.

On the following Tuesday, February 8th, 1921, 45 year old George senior died. This was a bitter blow to Eliza, who was left with three sons and four daughters. George senior had been the only wage earner and over the later years he'd kept his family in luxury. The Warrington Examiner Newspaper reported:-

"Mrs Formby was overwhelmed telegrams of sympathy from numerous members of the stage profession from all over the country. Sir Harry Lauder wired:- "Accept my deepest sympathy, a good clean star has ceased to twinkle in our firmament." Other wires were received from Sir Oswald Stoll, The Variety Artistes Federation, members of Jack & Jill company at Newcastle, Florrie Ford wired:- I am very grieved, but God knows best. Cheer up and God bless you. Moss Empires wrote:- One cannot but admire his strenuous fight against fate and none more than you know how bravely he tried to keep his end up to the very last - a real white man was he!

MAIN STREETS THROGGED WITH PEOPLE

Impressive scenes were witnessed at the funeral. The coffin had rested in Our Lady's Church, Latchford and the mourners proceeded from Hill Crest to the church for service at 11am. Large crowds of people assembled in Knutsford Road, and after the service the cortege travelled to the Warrington Cemetery. It was almost impossible to walk along the footpath in Bridge St, Buttermarket St and Church St. George was buried in the Formby vault in the catholic side of the Manchester Road, Warrington cemetery. More next month.

Readers will be interested to know that Our Lady's RC Church, Warrington, still stands today.

Profile on Brother Ronald an Anglican Franciscan Friar

Brother Ronald, now aged eighty four, was a member of Liverpool Industrial Mission and a chaplain to several factories in Warrington and Liverpool during the sixties and seventies.



He met George & Beryl during the fifties when he was acting as Chaplain to the Coventry Hippodrome Theatre. He wrote, "I first met The Goons in Spike Milligan's dressing room. When Peter Sellers came in, after singing on stage with his wooden ukulele, I told him that I wished I could play the uke! Peter showed me the basic chords - D, Em, C and D7, and said that they were the only chords I needed. Spike then told me to think of a song and I answered with "Polly Wolly Doodle" He then told me to start playing the uke to the tune and that first launched me.

Then came George and the first thing that impressed me was the row of ukes tuned in different keys, like soldiers standing against the back of the settee in his dressing room.

Then when I was in the wings, whilst George was singing, I was amazed at the dexterity with which he swapped ukes without leaving the stage. As quick as lightning his hand went behind the curtain where his dresser took the uke and put another in his hand. No-one, even in the front row of the stalls noticed the switch!

Beryl was never far away, clearly managing George's business and leaving George free to entertain.

At that time I was also Chaplain to the aircraft factory in Coventry where Dr Bill Hilton was chief Aerodynamicist, who also knew George, and later became an active member of the London branch of the GFS. Even whilst year by year he travelled round the world for meetings with space scientists, he always took his uke with him.

Bill told me that his mother bought his first uke on the market for half a crown - two shillings and sixpence (about 12p)

As a result of an accident, whilst at a conference at Beijing, China, Bill was in hospital there - and in England, and sadly died on the 6th of March. He too was eighty four, his widow, Joan invited me to play his uke at the funeral at Epsom for *When The Saints Come Marching In!* I was joined by three other members of the London branch and a traditional jazz band. This was Bill's request!

I could tell you a good story of Bill at a space conference in Russia, before the revolution.

Yours Aye and Still Plonking, Brother Ronald.

And thank you Brother Ronald for your article. We will be pleased to hear your Bill Hilton story. Hope you received the bridges OK.

Cyril Palmer has been appearing in Cole Porters "Anything Goes" at the Sale Civic Theatre from the 14th to the 19th of April. He said they supplied a sailors suit that fitted like a glove (*I wonder if the trousers had five legs*) and they all thought it had been tailor made for him. When the cast heard that he played the uke he was volunteered to do a spot of entertaining at the final night party. *Good for Cyril!*

Harry says:- The reason why elephants drink so much water is because nobody offers them anything else.

Tom Peddie of Crewe, who enjoys a bit of magic, has just bought a guillotine for chopping heads off. He's looking for assistants! - Any volunteers?

6 Crewe Meeting by Brian Edge -

It was great to be able to welcome Cyril & Sheila Palmer and Alice Cronshaw, from Manchester, and Tom Meredith, from Wirral, amongst the 70 that attended the Crewe Branch meeting. One exciting aspect of GF meetings is that one never knows who is going to turn up and there are nearly always surprise visitors. This month was no exception as two other Manchester friends, Tom & Doris Harrison, paid us a surprise visit. They both had smiles on their faces all through the meeting.

Did you notice the newly decorated frontispiece to Steve's big drum? The silver material changes colour, when viewed from different viewpoints, which adds a little more colour to the stage setting. We are determined to brighten up our concerts so please look out for some new innovations on stage shortly.

One or two of our performers have already added personal colour to their act by introducing some form of costume. We all must develop this with a view to making our concerts as interesting as possible to our non-playing supporters.

We are constantly trying to improve our sound system so that we have a good balance of music and lyrics but some tapes are stronger than others or some performers either stand too far back or move their heads from side to side during the performance. This varies the level of the voice. The levels of hearing varies too.

In addition our drummer, Steve, has to be able to hear what's going on so that he can keep the beat - so it really is a complex job. Colin is doing an excellent job, with the sound system, trying to drive down the middle of the road with his equipment which is not as versatile as we would like it to be. Nevertheless we are constantly looking to improve the matter.

It was good to hear Arnold Osborne on stage singing a song which he had written about the Crewe Branch. Well done Arnold! Derek Ball was again in excellent voice with his monologues, which make a nice break in the musical proceedings.

£20 was raised for the Parkinson's Disease appeal. Chairman of the P.D.S, our Mr Bones, Walter Kirkland, thanked all members for their support of this event. *Thank you Brian for the report. It really was an excellent night and every seat was taken. If things keep improving you will need a larger room. One vast improvement, with any of our sound systems, is for the operator to have two tape decks coupled up to a set of earphones so that he/she can prepare the next tape in advance. Also, because some artists have muffled voices, while some are harsh, - and there is a variance on the sound of ukes - we need someone at the rear of each hall to signal to the operator. ANYWAY - IT'S ALL TURNING OUT VERY NICE!*

Slip up in the last issue - We reported that Warrington's Bobby Dazzler, Craig Tinsley, was due to entertain the Queen Mother at Sandringham Castle - in fact, it was Sandhurst Military Training College, in Surrey, where Craig went to.

He popped in with his report . . . He was invited to go there to entertain, with his uke, for the St Patrick's Day Parade and the Queen Mother's visit. He left Warrington at 6am and arrived at Sandhurst around 10am, where he was greeted by an Irish Guard. He watched the parade and was invited to walk in the parade but declined. Over two million pounds had been spent on the security and the whole day's event was televised.

The Queen Mother arrived and sat about 30 feet away from Craig. He watched her inspect the Irish Guards. He was then invited to the Sergeants Mess where everyone was presented with Irish Clover which had just been flown over from Ireland. He then entertained them with George's songs and a batch of War Songs. Their favourite, which brought the barracks down, was "Our Sergeant Major."

Craig was supposed to travel back that evening, but the Sergeants got him drunk during the "Drowning Of The Clover Ceremony" and had to find him a bunk for the night in the barracks.

The Sergeants were so pleased with the entertainment that they booked him to go to Munster, Germany, next year - all expenses paid. He's looking forward to it.

BBC 2 TV Wednesday 2nd April. They showed a trailer in the afternoon to publish a show, "Professional Cleaners" which was a compilation of short documentaries on people who clean for a living. The theme tune for the trailer was George singing "When I'm Cleaning Windows," Eva and I specially watched the show, from 9pm, but unfortunately George didn't turn up.

BBC 1 TV - Did you see Dame Hilda Everage doing her show to the workers at the Heinz Baked Bean factory at Wigan? She said, "It's nice to be in Wigan, the home of George Formby. I can remember him, his mother was always telling him to stop playing with his ukulele."

Some readers possibly don't know that George's family lived at Warthey Farm which was on the site of the Heinz factory.

Harry Says:- Lottie does bird imitations - she watches me like a hawk.

Nantwich Jazz & Blues Festival - Brian Edge

According to Phillip Martin, the Festival Director, 15,000 people came to Nantwich over the Easter Week-end to enjoy the Festival.

The South Cheshire (Crewe) Branch entertained at the Lamb Hotel from 2pm to 3pm. When Brian Edge and Dennis Lee stepped into the street at 1.55pm and started strumming their ukes, people flocked from every hook & cranny. It was incredible! The Lamb Hotel had never seen so many people in its history. Not another person could get in and there were people in the street trying to get through the lobby to get a glimpse of the artists.

The members of the audience were on holiday and determined to have a good time, and it was a pleasure to perform for them. They loved every minute of the concert which featured Steve Hassall, Des Redfern, Dennis Lee, Alan Chenery and Colin Wood. At the close of the session the Lamb Hotel management wanted us to continue but the Festival Director insisted that we finish as scheduled as he wanted the audience to move on to another venue - so much for the drawing power of George Formby. Brian Edge.

Thanks for the report Brian - terribly sorry I couldn't make it on the day.

From Alf Caldwell - Warrington's Little Ray of Sunshine.

Another year of smoking has cost me lots of dough
I took it up in childhood and now can't let it go
I swallowed TV adverts which brought me oh such bliss
But all it ever brought me was nothing more than this:
A hacking cough that tells me much better days I've seen
All my clothes and fingers are stained with nicotine
I've scorch marks on the furniture as well as on the floor
Although I know it's killing me I crave for just one more
I think I'll try to pack it up to show that I'm a man
Strange, now I come to think of it - that's how it all began!

Thanks Alf.

Poser For You - answer on page 19.

Twins were born at the same time - to the same mother.
They were born in March but their birthdays were in September.
One was 30 and the other was 32.
They both married each other.
Sort it out.

We will be two
year old next
issue
Wonderful!

Liverpool needs support - every second Friday.

The N. West Meetings are thriving very well. At the March Crewe meeting - although it was Thursday night - the hall was full to capacity. If it gets more popular we'll need a larger room. A great Night!!!

Many Thanks to Des Redfern for bringing his P.A. System along to the Liverpool Meeting. It was greatly appreciated. Tom Bailey has been organising a raffle each month to raise cash for new equipment - Raffle Prizes are appreciated.

Gary Luyt of the Crewe Branch, reported that on Radio 2 at 7.10pm on Wednesday 25th March, there was a panel type quiz show and the contestants were asked to act Shakespeare to various settings. One of them was asked to sing *Leaning On A Lamp Post* from *The Merchant Of Venice*. He finished with "Turned Out Nice Again."

Sid Thompson, of Dartford in Kent, recalls - I have been a George Formby fan since being a kid, but joined the GFS at the Warrington Exhibition in 1991. I rode up to Warrington on my motorcycle having heard the Derek Jameson Show on BBC Radio 2. We had a lovely day there and met some very nice people. *Thanks for the note Sid. It is amazing how many people enjoyed their trip to the museum. We were very pleased with the result.*

Sale Meeting - The first Sale Meeting, at the new Woodheys Club venue, went down very well and Ken Ratcliffe wishes to thank those who gave their support. Dennis Mitchell turned up and Pam & Jon Baddeley, Alan & Hilda Southworth, The Smith Family from Derby, George Cheetham, John & Doris Myerscough, Alice Cronshaw (one of our Spice Girls) - and our MC, the all singing and dancing, Cyril Palmer.

Apologies from Jim, Harry Lottie, John Broadhead. Apologies also for the PA System but this will be sorted out. See back cover for next meetings. *Thanks for your Fax Ken. Hope the meetings go well at the new venue.*

Easter Monday On BBC Radio - around 10pm, they played various songs which were made popular by Ukulele Ike. One of them was "Mister Insurance Man." George met Ike at one of the theatres and learnt a few tricks from him on the uke.

The Alliance Social Club (Warrington) needs a keyboard player for the Saturday night Free & Easy sessions. Ring Stan if you know of anyone.

There'll Be Bluebirds Over The

White Cliffs of Dover - Dame Vera has

just turned 80 years of age and Blackpool has every cause to wish the great dowager well. The seaside sweetheart who inspired servicemen was born in London's East End but variety shows, concerts and summer seasons made Blackpool her own.

Boys back from the war assured Vera of a place in the nation's heart. Few have won affection on such a scale or retained it to this day.

Earthier rival and Lancashire lass, Gracie Fields beat her to Blackpool's heart but Vera came a close second. With each resort visit she went out and about, to hospitals, homes and ex-servicemen at South Shore Blesma home, the Blackpool Limb-less Association.



She couldn't remember the names of faces in photographs from proud mums but it was important to show them that she cared. "I hated disappointing people who assumed I remembered everything." She recalls almost plummeting into the Opera House orchestra pit and later fainting in the wings in the "Happy Go Lucky" show when Lancashire '50s live-wire' Betty Driver (now Betty in Rovers Return) stepped in from the Palace Varieties to save the day.

Vera's fighting spirit has not abated! Talk Radio listeners heard her give presenter James Whale a piece of her mind the other day. Her near saintly status is far removed from humble beginnings. Dad was an MC for East Ham Working Men's Club and her uncle George was a club land impressionist. It

was only natural that Vera would follow the same path - first singing in public at the age of seven.

She's proud of early days as a crooner, first with Billy Cotton, later with Blackpool's favourite, Charlie Kunz and band leader Joe Loss. Fame came full blast with her BBC radio show and signature tune, "Wishing" Vera was voted British Expeditionary Forces favourite as the boys hung out the washing on the Siegfried Line.

Vera later recalled, "It wasn't just a title, I had to live up to it - it wasn't always easy." Charity appearances have taken over from concerts but Dame Vera made new friends when she up-staged Cliff Richards at last year's VE Day 50th Anniversary - restoring some sense of occasion with her "White Cliffs Of Dover."

The last word went to Harry Secombe who claims: "Churchill didn't beat the Nazis - Vera sang them to death!"

What's on in the N. West -

Friday, Saturday & Sunday 3rd, 4th & 5th May - Dennis Lee has arranged to attend the Victoria Extravaganza in Mostyn St, Llandudno (11am to 12.30pm) You will need a straw hat, gaudy waistcoat, a uke and a smiling face. All are welcome to join in. Ring Dennis Lee on 01244 544799

Friday May 30th - George's Birthday Special at The Alliance Social Club, Warrington. We've had loads of phone calls so get there early for a seat. Group Thrash kicks off at 8pm. Ring Stan Evans on 01925 727102

Whoops - Saturday ~~unday~~ July 5th - Penketh Carnival Grand Day - Members of the Formby Society will entertain the public. Look for the GFS Banner on the marquee. All are welcome to come along and have a bite to eat afterwards. Ring Stan Evans on 01925 727102.

Sun, Aug 3rd - Wigan Pier - 1.30pm. Loads of support needed - especially players for a full afternoon at Wigan Pier. It was a huge success last year and we collected £160 for the Children's Hospital. Ring Stan Evans on 01925 727102.

DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN DETAILS OF ANY LOCAL SHOWS.

Just Received a Phone Call from the TV company. They are making a documentary on George, for the Millennium Year, and wanted to know who owned George's songs, photos, copyrights etc. Sounds OK.

Venues - I went along to the Patten Arms Hotel to ask if they had a room available to be rented on a regular monthly basis.

What a disappointment!!! Gone are the friendly faces that welcomed us some years back. I was faced with officialdom! Our warm-hearted venue has changed its image and now it's a case of £40 for the upstairs committee room, or £100 for the Yard Room, which was the first room we occupied - take it or leave it.

Have a go at writing poetry and send it in to the Newsletter
You'll be surprised how easy it is!

I'm such a wonderful poet
That I can make anything rhyme
I'd write a verse here and now
But I haven't got a pen.

See what I mean - it's dead simple!

Crewe Have The Quietest Crowd!!! You can hear a pin drop at Crewe when the artist is performing. They are all reading their Newsletters. - It's True!!!! - It's True!!!!

Great Treat coming at Warrington!!! The BANNED (5 String) BANJO PLAYER - Harry Stanford - is to be given V.I.P. Treatment at the Warrington Special - Friday, May 30th. Due to public demand he will be performing his heart warming, finger plucking, renditioned solos with brilliant expertise. A great show that mustn't be missed. Be early as all seats will be taken. Don't forget - TOP OF THE BILL - Harry Stanford.

Just received a call from a **Mr Binder** of Bradford - He remembers - it was around 1954, he thinks, but it was soon after George had had his car accident. He went to see George, live, at the Bradford Ritz theatre and he remembers it well because George gave a special late-night performance to rehearse for the Canadian trip, which George & Beryl were due to go on. He sang "Pleasure Cruise" and "Hello Canada."

He finished his phone conversation by saying that he had always been a great fan of George's.

Wigan Pier - Please Note!!!! . . . The Concert to be held at Wigan Pier has now been changed to a ONE -DAY Event only. We will be meeting at the Pier at 1.30pm on Sunday August 3rd. All are welcome.

Dr Bill Hilton - In the last issue we reported the death of one of the London members, 84 year old Bill Hilton who recently died. Bill was a very good uke player who preferred playing Melody instead of basic chords, and had a large repertoire of sing-a-longs. He once told George, quite tactfully, that his right hand was better than his left and George agreed with him.

What many members don't know is that Bill was the inventor of the term "Sound Barrier." His work was concerned with wind tunnels, missiles, spacecraft and satellites. He worked with Frank Whittle and Barnes Wallis and also contributed to designing the famous Mulberry (floating) Harbour for D Day.

After the war he spent 4 years in America working on supersonic propulsion for missiles. In 1950 he moved to Coventry as Chief Aerodynamacist for Armstrong Whitworth. He published "High Speed Aerodynamics" in 1951.

In 1959 he was put in charge of the Hawker Siddeley advanced projects group for space applications. He submitted designs for a communications satellite to the Post Office and for a spy satellite to the Ministry of Defence. He moved to Paris as secretary of the International Astronautical Federation and in 1967 he was appointed technical director of the British Aircraft Corporation.

At the 1996 Congress in China, Bill delivered a paper on communication with extra-terrestrial intelligence, which he saw as a great challenge.

He had many hobbies including ice skating, ballroom dancing, skiing, ping-pong, philately, photography and model trains - but before all he was a ukulele player: his George Formby impressions enlivened many a post-conference gathering

Some years ago I received a tape and instructions (on playing melodies on the uke) from him. He requested that I should run through it and give an opinion. To be honest I couldn't understand one word of it and wrote to tell him so. "It's far too technical" I told him "and the members won't be able to grasp what you are teaching." Unfortunately Bill couldn't understand what I was talking about as he thought that all members should be as technical as himself. He was a wonderful character.

Bill attended the London meetings regularly and also the Milton Keynes and Ukulele Society of Great Britain meetings.

Harry says:- An Auctioneer has no friends - only nodding acquaintances.

Hands up if you've never contributed to the Newsletter.

Bumped into **Gordon Markendale** at Penifford.

He reported that he's no longer taking orders for Uke Banjos, but is now keeping a list of customers and notifying them when ukers are available. He is now slowing down on the production and, due to high cost, reluctant to make Ludwigs.

At Penifford he demonstrated his 5 string banjo which was built like a long scale uke banjo. With steel strings it sounded great with a touch of American Dixieland. I asked him if it could be made with 4 strings and played like a uke, "No" said Gordon, "The steel strings would hold the sound far too long for a uke banjo - which is a quick fire, snappy type of instrument."

Gordon is now doing more entertaining with his instruments - including the Keyboard - and appreciates the help received from the GFS. Being a member has helped him with his performing and given him confidence with singing.

He mentioned that last Christmas he had his car broken into and all the contents stolen - including his George Formby tapes. The police managed to get everything back for him - except George's tapes.

Roaring Success for N. Wales by Dennis Lee . . .

Well the convention at Llandudno on the 19th April was a roaring success with very nearly a full capacity audience of approx 140. Members came from far and wide and I must make particular mention to Olle Persson, who came from Sweden, and the Eastwood family from Christchurch.



Two concerts were held: 1.00 to 5pm and 7.45 to 11.30pm - almost eight hours of playing time with no shortage of players - wonderful. Dickie did his usual stuff on the keyboard and was assisted by Geoff Shone on drums (well done Geoff) and Tony Thornton on bass guitar. All credit to Tony who played with a heavily bandaged right hand. Dennis Mitchell was M.C. and conducted the business in his usual creditable and efficient manner. May I say a thank you to Bernard Young for the master tape of George's war-time performances, from which I made some copies for sale - every little helps.

A big thank you to all who helped to make the meeting a success and also those who attended. The venue was great, the staff were first class, and last but not least, George and Clare of the Llandudno Business Tourism Unit helped us tremendously. All in all it was a reet good do.

Thanks for the report Dennis. You did an excellent job in organising the event. Let's hope you gain some more members for Penyffordd.

George Formby Calling -



Hello Folks! This is George talking. They call me a "chip of the old block". I'm very proud of that - even though my famous father never wanted me to follow in his footsteps. I was a bad lad as a youngster and used to hang around stage-doors where my father was playing - hoping to get a glimpse of the glamour behind the scenes - only to get the boot out of the stage-door as soon as I put my head into it. The boot came from Papa - and well and truly.

I have often been asked the question: "What does it feel like to be famous?" and the answer has been, "Well, no great difference today than yesterday but I have a few more bobs in my pocket (shillings - 5ps) to spend.

GIVEN STUDIO HOLIDAY

But, for once, I did feel famous not so long ago - and then I felt really "awful." It was the occasion of the Royal Command Performance at the London Palladium last November. Every act on the bill probably went through the same ordeal that I did. Incidentally, it was on a Monday so the film studio had given me the week-end off. My studio holiday was almost ideal except that I never slept a wink for three nights before the performance, and was a wreck during the day.

Can you imagine my mind? These thoughts were running through my brain: Had I picked the right songs? Were my gags OK? Should I wait for the laughs or carry right on and hope for the best at the finish?

I'm not usually nervous but on this occasion I was! At the rehearsal on the Sunday I was fairly calm. I suppose my interest in watching how the rest of the artists were reacting took my mind off my own nervousness. Actually I was afraid to get up. Beryl, who had been expecting a bit of tension, threw me the morning paper and poured a cup of tea as if it was just another day. My hand shook when I tried to read the paper and it was hopeless trying to hold the cup of tea. I hid my head under the bed-clothes and wished I was a thousand miles away from the Palladium. It was the morning that Beryl and I had the biggest row ever during our years of marriage. She realised that the only way to bring me back to my proper senses was to give me the biggest ragging she had ever given me. And did Beryl do that. She called me all the lop-sided names she could think of and ended up by saying that I was nothing more than a pink-eyed rabbit with a hangover.

More Next Month Folks - Bye.

You've Got To Admire Malcolm Palmer! - He writes:-
"Sometimes I find myself short of material to report so I place myself in a situation to create something to write about." Wonderful Malcolm - you're a grafter!!!

It's a bit late but -

Here's How To Make A Christmas Cake . . . Handed in by the Andrew Sisters at the Wainwright, Blackpool.

Ingredients: 1 cup sugar: 1 cup mixed dried fruit: 1 cup butter: 1 cup water: 4 large eggs: lemon juice: 1 tbsp salt: 1 tbsp baking powder: 50 grams walnuts: 1 tbsp brown sugar: 1 Large Bottle of Whisky.

Method: Place dried fruit, water and half the sugar in small saucepan, boil for 15 mins. Pour Whisky into large glass and sample to test quality. Get a large mixing bowl and check Whisky once again - pour 1 level cup and drink.

Repeat previous step. Turn on electric mixer and beat butter in a fluffy bowl. Add 1 spoon of baking soda, half a clup of sugar and beat again.

Sample Whisky again to make sure it is still flesh. Break two leggs into bowl and chuck in dried fluit, mix on the turner, if fluit gets stuck in the bleaters, ply loose with a drowscriver. Sample Whisky again. Siffle 2 clups of salt or juice and stain nuts. Add a babbleshpoon of brown paper and mix well. Keep slampling the Whisky until the bockle is empty and go to bed.

Daily Telegraph Monday 24th March.

It's not only the strings that's highly strung!

More than one in five musicians need prescription drugs to calm their nerves before performing and nearly three quarters are so anxious that it affects their playing, a survey will show today. A report goes on: The musicians suffer from "disobedient fingers" which refuse to move, painful joints and muscles, over breathing and deafness caused by loud noise - *I know the feeling!*

It was discovered that at least 10% of musicians had more that a month off each year through ill health, 9% took beta blockers, which slow the heart beat, and stop shaking. 6% needed a drink before a performance.

Thanks to Brian Edge for this report - but we don't have problems like this, do we?

Eva & I had a day out with the Alliance Social Club Over 60s Group - which was a coach trip to Bury Market. Going through the market one of the stall holders was laying into his young assistant. "What are you doing standing there?" he shouted, "Don't worry boss," he replied, "I'm standing here watching all the ladies go by - just like George Formby."

Harry says:- Life is full of complications. Even when you are born there's a string attached.

Serious - You've forgotten the NEWSLETTER!

How to be popular at a party!!!

First you must 17

get plenty of practise in with your highly polished ukulele, however, if you can play the basic 3 chords, D, G and A7, you'll be ready to take any party by storm.

Before setting off to the party give your instrument an extra polish - this usually impresses the crowds and especially the host. Always set out in a smart, well tailored suit with straight creases back and front. A clean handkerchief popping up from the top pocket goes down well. Always walk to the party - never by car - as this gives you the opportunity to gain admiration from those you meet.

Walk with pride and with a slight swing of the uke carrying arm, look confident and give an occasional smile to the passers by. Remember - you are a ukulele player and a member of the George Formby Society, so be proud and turn the body as often as possible so that they see your tie and badge.

Always reach there when the party is in full swing. Arrive on the doorstep and confidently give a well timed "Hi Tiddly Hi Ti - Pom Pom" on the door bell. This immediately tells the host that you are musically minded with a good ear for rhythm. On entering, ask the host to announce your arrival from the door and mention that you have brought along your ukulele to entertain them.

Now it is possible, due to the extremely loud disco, that none of the guests have heard of your arrival. However, don't let minor details put you off. You are there to make an impression! You must remember that, due to the shortage of ukulele players, these party go-ers have no alternative but to book a disco for the night. Every few minutes take your uke to a quiet room - it may have to be to the end of the street - where you can check that the heat of the sweaty bodies hasn't thrown your strings out of tune. Be Professional!!!

Time goes on and the host appears to have forgotten to give a second mention that you have arrived. So, now is the time to make your stand. Immediately take your ukulele to the centre of the dancers and politely ask them to cease dancing as you intend giving them a few renditions on your four stringed instrument. In the event that they don't respond, which is possibly due to the amount of drink they have taken, then, you must be firm. Take a stand! Walk to the wall and, with a sharp tug, pull out the main plug which drives the disco equipment. Already you have made an impact and you will be aware of a sudden hush.

Without delay, announce that you have been practising a few songs and that you will be pleased to amuse them for the next 30 minutes. They will be delighted. Some will say "Thank goodness, we've got a ukulele player." Try to be as professional as possible and announce the name of each song before starting the first chord. A very good opener is "I Dream Of Jeannie With The Light Brown Hair" or "Wait Till The Sun Shines Nellie."

Now, at long last, you are on your way! Drop me a line and let me know how you went on. Stan Evans.

North Wales Branch by Dennis Lee.

We had another very successful meeting in April and our branch seems to have "taken off" lately! Only a few months ago we appeared to be in the doldrums but my how things have changed! The secret is to keep plugging away publicising yourself.

We at Peniffordd believe that "variety" needs to be a constant feature of branch meetings so we have tried hard to introduce something a little different at each of the meetings. Our April meeting saw the George Formby Easter Bonnet Parade when we asked for "Hats" on a George Formby theme. The winners were Martin Fowell (Feather Your Nest) and Sonya, Martin's wife, (It's In The Air). Well done you two and thanks to all who took part.

Stan Evans appeared on stage with 5 youngsters (isn't it great to see the young 'uns?) They were Kimberley, Ashley, Damian, and Heather, who came along with Gary Mendellsohn and Julie. The youngsters helped Stan to perform yet another brilliant miracle and they all finished off the act with a Tommy Cooper impression of "Just Like That!"

Young Steve Henshall came with his dad, Brian. Steve played - with excellent rhythm and tempo - "Leaning On A Lamp Post". Keep it up Steve you're doing great and you'll make a wonderful player.

We were pleased to see Gordon Markendale and Jackie at the meeting and another highlight was the performance of the Colin Wood, Des Redfern and Auntie Mary (now 84) trio. Apparently this was Mary's first attempt on stage (apart from the Group Thrash that is) but I assure you that her enthusiasm shone through. We look forward to her doing a solo. See you at Peniffordd - Dennis. *A big thank you to Dennis for the report. It was a GRAND MEETING! - Possibly the best yet. But what about those Easter Bonnets? Martin & Sonya deserved to win for originality, nerve, and frugal cheek. Martin's "Feather Your Nest" hat was a bundle of hay from his local farmer's field, and Sonya's "It's In The Air" was a gas filled balloon. - Great! It was wonderful seeing those young children. They are the next generation of Formby members so they've got to be encouraged. Let's have more of them.*

Sold a Uke? - Have you ever tried to send a uke by post and chased round looking for the ideal cardboard box to fit it in? What a difficult job! Anyway- Your problems are over! - Go to your local ASDA Supermarket and ask them for one of their boxes that has been used for their plastic carrier bags. They are usually stored near the check - outs. Perfect size.

Very Serious - You've forgotten it again!!!

Werrington Branch by Derek Ball

We've just had our fourth meeting and every one has been a 'Boster'. In the last four months we've been given great coverage by the local BBC radio station and a couple of good write ups in the local newspaper. The response has been well above all expectations. There certainly appears to be a growing interest in George's music and in uke playing. We have members of all ages, ranging from eight year old Rebecca Snow to our oldest Matthew Kelly, (no! not the 'You Bet man), who is a grand eighty four years old.

The tuition sessions are very popular with the newer members and we hope that some of them will soon be confident enough to join in the concert.

Last month we had to 'shoe-horn' the members onto the stage for the 'thrash - there were 45 plus. Mike Jones came up on stage for the first time anywhere to give us a medley of songs. This month Hugh Scarratt made his Werrington debut with a nice medley which included "Deep In The Heart Of Texas" and "Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey," and Derrick Jones had 'em rolling in the aisles with his dead-pan rendition of "Murphy's Sick Note."

John Guy was in great form as he played the uke and harmonica at the same time. John Walley treated us to a super rendition of "Windows" on the very same uke that George used in Keep Your Seats Please. Our next meting is on May 8th and if anyone would like to come along you'd get a 'reet' warm welcome at Werrington. *Thanks for the report Derek - you're a 'toff!!!' What's a Boster?*



Serious -
 Complaint from
 Harry - Stan! You didn't
 put my letter in the
 Newsletter that I gave you
 about 4 months ago!!!!!!
 Terribly sorry Harry -
 It'll go in the next one. I
 won't do it again - Honest.
 How does Lottie
 put up with him?

Hold it Stan! Paul's lost the pea out of his whistle!!

 and they were both vicars.

They were born in the town of March. One was 30 but the other was 30 too,

Answer to Poser -

N. West Branch Meetings and Future Dates

North Wales Branch - British Legion, Penyffordd (10 miles from Chester) Every first Fri in the Month. Tel Dennis Lee on 01244 544799 Adm 50p

Blackpool Branch - Wainwright, Hornby Rd, B/pool - Every 1st Sat. in the month - Tel Eve Stewart on 01253 768097 - Future Dates: May 3rd, Jun 7th, Jul 5th, Aug 9nd, Sep 6th, Sep 27th (NOTE DATE CHANGES IN AUG. AND SEPT. - NONE IN OCT. Adm £1 with Buffet. All are welcome.

Liverpool Branch - Broadgreen Conservative Club - Every 2nd Friday in the month - Ring Tom Bailey on 0151 228 9769

Sale Branch (New Venue) - Woodheys Club, 299 Washway Rd, Sale - Usually every 3rd Friday but subject to date change - Ring Ken Ratcliffe on 0161 430 8290. Next meetings Thurs April 25th, Thurs 26th June, all the rest will be held on the 3rd Friday. Adm now £1.

Crewe Branch Wistaston Memorial Hall - Ring Brian Edge on 01270 69836 Future dates - Fri Apr 25th, Fri May 23rd, Fri June 27th, Fri July 22th. Adm 50p.

Warrington Alliance Sports & Social Centre, Evans House, Orford Lane, Warrington - Stan Evans on 01925 727102 - For George's Birthday 30th May.

Werrington Branch (Near Stoke) at the Werrington Village Hall - Every 2nd Thursday in the month, Ring Bill Turner on 01782 304858. Future dates - May 8th, Jun 12th.

To receive the N. West Newsletter by post please send a cheque for 50p + 25p pp. (or £2.25 for 3 months) payable to Stan Evans - Address on front cover. Branch organisers can order a minimum lot of 10 copies for £3 plus 60p postage and you are welcome to sell them to help raise branch funds.

Deadline for next issue - 15th May

So as George would say -

“Get Cracking”

Support Your Newsletter

