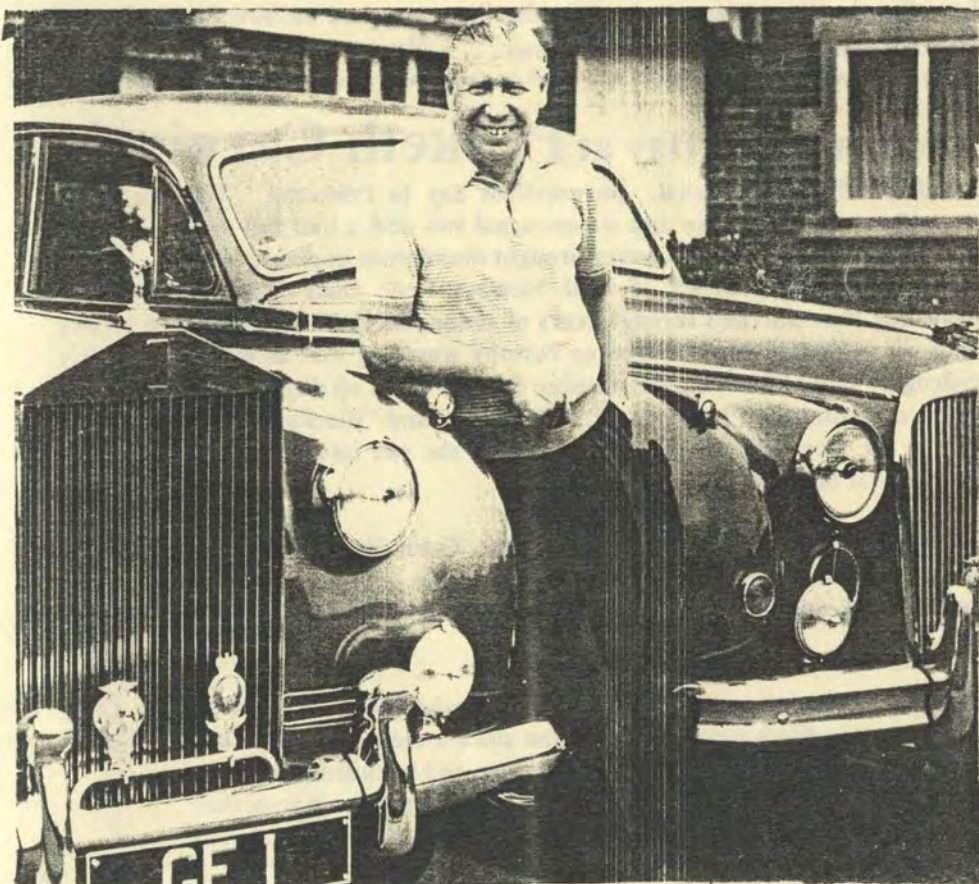


THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 26

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Specially Produced for
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Newsletter No. 26 and what have we got?

Well we have reports from Liverpool, Sale, Crewe, Werrington and North Wales and also news on the death of dear Charlie Chester.

A great day at the Penketh Carnival is reported and one of our young GFS ex - members, Michael Davis of Blackpool, is doing great guns with his entertaining. We have a report on Ken Goodwin, the comedian.

Ken Ratcliffe explains how Sale was first launched and John Guy tells us how the ukulele got its name. We also have a report on how Sandy Powell came to say, "Can you hear me mother." So now you can read on . . .

Another Great Day at Penketh Carnival -

Sat July 5th, and as usual, an excellent day in Penketh. The sun shone throughout the whole day and we attracted two and a half full houses into our marquee. Concert No. 2 however brought thunderous applause from the crowds when we invited a bunch of local Memory Lane Cake Makers (who were drowning their sorrows through fears of redundancy) to take the stage to sing with us. Marie knew the George Formby words as well as we did - like her colleagues said - "She's singing George Formby songs all day!" She thoroughly enjoyed blasting out "Lamp Post", "Windows" and "Blackpool Rock" and went red in the face with the determined effort she put into it. Marie is a true ambassador of George.

Many thanks to Dennis Lee, Brian Edge, Colin Wood, 12 year old Gareth Sumner - with his mum & dad - Alan Chenery and Carl Basford for giving support and singing their hearts out. Also to those in the crowd who came to give a cheer.

We were pleased to see Hilda Hunt, although wheelchair bound, with her husband. She's been a Formby fan since a teenager, when she travelled miles to watch George on the stage and hounded him at the stage door. A dedicated fan is our Hilda and we sincerely trust that George's light is shining for her. We look forward to seeing you in the very best of good health Hilda.

After the three concerts we descended on 19 Hall Nook where Eva and Grandson David had prepared a grand feast. A wonderful day in Penketh.



REDUNDANCY - You'll be pleased to know that the Memory Lane Cakes ladies will not be made redundant after all. According to the TV News the company has been taken over and is now saved from closure.

The Formby Story - Part 15 by Stan Evans

We now enter the life of George Formby junior . . . 1921 brought a turning point in young George's life. He was 16 years of age and not entirely satisfied with his planned career as a jockey and future horse trainer. Involvement in the horse race business was the aim of his father who, at 44, had died and left his wife, Eliza, and seven children. Anyway, George was becoming too heavy to ride as a jockey.



After making the decision to take over his father's act on the stage, he went to Birkenhead to see JD Clarke, who was the manager of the Argyle Theatre, and a close friend of his father's.

Danny Clarke was a good man to ask advice and every star in the profession had some time or other played for him. He once employed Charlie Chaplin for thirty shillings a week and helped to discover the likes of Harry Lauder, Dan Leno, George Lashwood and George's father. He listened because he was George's lad.

Danny set him up with a week's trial at the Earlestown Hippodrome which was owned by Frank Harrison. Frank, being a good scout for future stars, gave George some valuable advice on how to make his name on the stage. Although he would be billed as the son of George Formby - or "A Chip Of The Old Block" young George wasn't happy about taking his father's name - for three reasons:

First, he didn't want to see the name George Formby at the bottom of the bill. Secondly, he couldn't risk being a failure under his father's name, and thirdly, with the name of George Formby the crowds would be expecting too much of him. After a discussion with Frank it was decided that he would use the name "George Hoy" until he topped the bill and then change to George Formby.

Although the Earlestown Hippodrome was a cinema, from time to time Frank would put on a stage act in the interval. He was a wonderful character who would strut up and down the street almost compelling the passers-by to take a seat in the cinema with: "Get your tickets now and if you look under the seats you'll find a box of chocolates."

Eliza was delighted with George's aim to take over his father's act and immediately set to work grooming him for the stage. George, although he'd heard his father rehearsing on many occasions, had never actually seen the performance. However, he had an extremely quick brain that could retain instruction very well. His debut was set for Monday 21st March 1921. Six weeks after his father's death. Continued.

4 Jon Baddeley Wants to Know . . . Yet again watching

The South Bank Show and the Forty Minutes tribute to George, a thought struck me. Why was there a silent film camera at his father's funeral? Of course, George Formby Senior was a big star in his day but even today with video cameras it would be most unusual for the proceedings to be recorded for posterity. Was the film shot by a member of the family, a friend or onlooker, or a film company. If you are able to shed any light on this puzzle perhaps the readers of the Newsletter would be interested.

Thanks Jon. GF Senior died in 1921 (which was 7 years before I was born) and the cinemas were operating then. Although I can't remember, as a child, News Reels being shown in the North-west, you can bet your life that the News would be part of the programme in the cities. Now old George was a big star throughout the country so I would assume that the silent camera was filming the news on his funeral. Unless anyone has any other ideas.

Blackpool - Ever been Conned? Eva & I went

along on a coach trip to Blackpool and as we were walking down the prom we stopped to watch a young man with dancing dolls (made from cardboard) He had a tape player blasting out and the dolls were dancing to the music. We thought that they were controlled by some sort of computer chip which responded to the music so we immediately asked the price.

"SPECIAL OFFER" he replied, "Only £1 each."

I just couldn't believe it and thought of all sorts of magic miracles that could be conjured up with these dancing dolls. "Right, I'll have two," - and our friend bought two also.



On arriving back at the coach we opened our lucky bags only to find that the dancing dolls were operated by a young man hidden round the back pulling a length of cotton. To rub salt in the wounds the instructions were printed in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish - and they don't even supply the length of cotton. I didn't think they'd do things like that in Blackpool.

BLACKPOOL MEETING - Just to remind you that the next monthly meeting at the Wainwright is on the 9th August not the 2nd. See back page. Don't buy any dancing dolls.

George on Radio - Several phone calls came in to say that Petula Clark will be broadcasting at 7pm on Thursday 17th July. The subjects were to be George Formby and Jack Buchanan. Well I flicked through every channel from 7 till 9pm but there was no trace of Petula. Did anyone tape it?

A Few Facts about the Ukulele sent in by John Guy. .

The present day ukulele was adapted from the Portuguese instrument called the Braguinha, which was introduced into Hawaii in 1878 by the first group of Portuguese immigrants.

Oddly enough, no member of the group was able to play it, not even its owner, one Joao de Freitas.



It was not until the second boat load of immigrants arrived, on August 22nd 1879, that Ukulele History began, for on board the Ravenscraig that docked in Honolulu Harbour were musicians who could play the instrument and craftsmen who could make them.

The small four stringed braguinha derives its name from the Portuguese province of Braga where the instrument was first manufactured. It was a prominent instrument on the island of Madeira where it was called the machete or machete de braga. In the Honolulu Advertiser Jan 24 1932, David M Kupihea stated that in the early days "we called the instrument a pila 'li 'ili 'i " which meant "little fiddle"- pili (fiddle) li 'ili ' i- (small).

Before long the name was changed to ukulele which means: uku - (flea) and lele - (jumping) or the jumping flea.

There are many explanations offered on how the instrument got its name - one version attributes the name to the flying fingers of Joao Fernandez which looked like jumping fleas when he plucked the melody of a song. Another explanation appears to have nothing whatsoever to do with jumping fleas: The development of the instrument was accepted by Hawaiian nobility, especially King Kalakaua who was fond of playing the instrument. He encouraged people to take up the instrument and featured it at a major occasion, which may have been the first time it was used by both musicians and dancers together in public.

At these occasions they had plenty of musicians, music, plenty of food and drink and King Kalakaua paid for the lot. It was felt that the name of the ukulele may have derived from the King's name: Kalakaua. So there you have it!

THE BEATLES

According to a BBC Radio programme, based on the ukulele, every family in Hawaii learned how to play the instrument. That was until the Beatles came on the scene and all the young Hawaiians threw away their ukes to take up the guitar. However the elders fought back to protect their favourite instrument by forming 400 piece ukulele orchestras.



Don't Forget Your Newsletter

Estelle Davis writes . . . Beryl's stage career terminated after her wedding and there is nothing worth writing which wasn't covered in your Warrington exhibition. George was not the easiest of persons with which to live with but the fact that their marriage lasted for 37 years, through some turbulent times speaks for itself.

My earliest recollections of Beryl go back to the early nineteen twenties. I was about 8 years of age and could recall that Beryl's parents, Mr & Mrs Ingham kept a public house in Darwen, Lancs. It was called "The Bull" but it has long since been demolished. My parents and the Ingham's were great friends and Beryl & her sister, May, taught me to tap dance. May & Beryl often appeared as teenagers in local music halls and were known as "The Two Violets." May, the elder, dressed as a prince, as in pantomime, and Beryl dressed as Cinderella in a ball gown.

Darwen Theatre in those days was a social asset to the town. Wireless was in its infancy and most family entertainment was provided by the local theatre - all towns had them. The Bull public house was adjacent to the theatre and was patronised by all those connected with the stage. It was through these contacts that the "Two Violets" met George Formby. They also were on the same bill at theatres in the Northern circuit. Beryl, always the leading light, often quarrelled with May but they never let the audience have an inkling that they were at loggerheads.

When the Inghams decided they wanted to leave the hotel business they moved to a house in Richmond Terrace, Darwen, and it was from there that the association between Beryl and George developed. Mrs Ingham was not happy about the relationship and did all in her power to put an end to it but to no avail. George & Beryl eloped one night and married. That was the end of "The Two Violets." Beryl was determined to push George to the limit and it is quite true that she was the "woman behind the man" as related in the exhibition album.

She was however a very likeable person and full of vitality. She was always well received and Beryl & George often visited the great social occasions and privately to Buckingham Palace and Badminton.

To be the wife of a star of the calibre of George Formby takes a great deal of diplomacy, tact and forbearance. Beryl had all this but she wasn't a 'push over' and drove hard bargains with the producers etc. to further her husband's career. She was also hospitable and kind to those who she befriended. Her mother and father gave up their home in Darwen to live with George & Beryl in their various big houses. Mrs Ingham was an expert housekeeper and arranged the family home and saw that all the hospitality Beryl offered was given without

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any stint in difficulties. Beryl's father took over the outside functions of looking after the property and beautiful gardens.

Beryl always expressed her gratitude for these services. She regretted having no family and after her family died she lost a lot of her enthusiasm and became a victim of that dreaded disease. It is a pity she is maligned as there are two side to every story.

Ken Ratcliffe is to be saluted!!! Some of the years haven't been too kind to him: In 1991 he was working at a friend's house - putting a window frame in - when he fell from the ladder. This resulted in him being taken to hospital with fractures down the left side. He rallied to when concerned GFS members showered him with "Get Well" wishes and visits to the hospital.

A few months later he had a stroke and had to retire from work. Ken, never to be beaten, still toils on working to keep the Sale meeting active, and he is always the first to respond when someone is in need of help.

From Charles Stewart - A new padre was so nervous at his first Mass before a large congregation, including an Admiral and senior officers, that he could hardly speak. Before his second appearance in the pulpit, the Chaplain explained to him the best way to relax. He told him that it would help if he put some rum in his water pitcher and after a few sips everything should go smoothly.

The following Sunday he put the suggestion into practice and it enabled him to talk up a storm. He felt really great and completely let his hair down with the congregation.

However, on returning to his quarters he found a note from the Chaplain, it said:

- (1) Next time, Sip don't Gulp.
- (2) There are Ten Commandments - not Twelve.
- (3) There are Twelve Disciples not Ten
- (4) We do not refer to the Cross as the "Big T."
- (5) The recommended Grace before meals is not Rub a Dub Dub, Thanks
For The Grub.
- (6) Do not refer to The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost as Big Daddy,
Junior, and the spook.
- (7) David Slew Goliath, he didn't beat seven sorts of anything out of him.

Don't Forget Your Newsletter

Crewe is doing Very Well!!! - Brian Edge Writes in.

It was good to see Jeffrey Booth (George Formby's nephew) and his good wife Christine also Eva Evans amongst the audience at the Crewe June Concert. There was a number of new faces and amongst them were children. Hopefully we will recruit some of them as uke players. It is worth pointing out that most of the best uke players in the George Formby Society nationally are youngsters who started around ten years of age and now ten years on are great entertainers. So come on boys and girls you can do it! Lady players are also a scarce commodity so come on girls get practising!

There was a special surprise on the night for Audrey Lewis who was celebrating her 60th Birthday. Audrey's sister in law Hazel Stamps (the lady who made our society banner) made Audrey a beautiful birthday cake which was cut up and everyone enjoyed a piece. Audrey also received a card signed by those present as well as a choral rendering of Happy Birthday!

During the meeting a new duo known as "Privet and Hedge" made their stage debut. We will be hearing lots more from them in the future.

Our new Jazz thrash was well received by the audience who actually shouted for more! The thrashing ukes were supported by a good backing tape, Steve on drums, Alan on trombone, Jonathan on clarinet, Walter on bones and yours truly on piano. Not only was the experience enjoyed by the audience but it was great being a part of it on the stage. We will develop the idea in the months ahead.

Carl Basford was quick to appreciate the value of the jazz backing. In his introductory remarks he said, "I've always wanted a band of my own" and invited the lads back on stage to accompany him with "Sunbathing In The Park." Jazz backing is of course nothing new as George Formby himself often had the support of a good jazz band. It was great to see Jim Knight from Wrexham who is a good entertainer who enjoys himself and presents himself well.

ANY DRESSING UP IDEAS?

During the meeting a few pebbles were thrown into the pond in order to watch the ripples. This concerned our two end of the years parties. The first in November for Pam Baddeley's special birthday and followed by our Anniversary party in December. The idea is that we all, audience and entertainers alike think about adopting a costume for those parties. Not a fancy dress but a costume which one could feel happy to wear to wear and could be easily slipped on at our society concerts, much in the fashion of the "Good Old Days" on TV. This would not only make our parties memorable events but if we continue with

Don't Forget Wigan Pier Sunday 3rd Aug 1.30

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them in the forthcoming months we would have quite a unique society in which everyone would be taking part. Brian Edge.

Thank you Brian, I'm with you all the way with regards to outfits to wear - in fact I've just purchased a new jazzy rig-out that will dazzle you all at the Wigan Pier meeting on Sun August 3rd - bring your sun glasses. But I am concerned that we are getting away from George and the smart outfit that we were nicely slotting into during the early nineties when GFS members were proudly displaying themselves in Blazer, Badge and Tie. We appear to be losing our main theme and searching for another anchor! However as Albert Higginbottom, the great Chinese philosopher once said, - "It'll all come out in the washing up."

Don't Forget - Wigan Pier Sun 3rd Aug at 1.30pm.

Quite a number will be coming along, from Sale, Crewe, N. Wales and Warrington - and we are hoping that John Shreeve, who is now back in the country, will be with us. Bring your uke. There's plenty of free parking.

Business Hours as displayed on an Isle of Wight shop window

Open most days about 9 or 10 - Occasionally as early as 7

But some days as late as 12 or 1 - We close about 5.30 or 6

Occasionally about 4 or 5 - But sometimes as late as 11 or 12

But some days or afternoons we aren't here at all

And lately I've been here just about all the time

Except when I'm some place else, but I should be here then too

Sounds straight forward enough!

George on a Gold Rimmed Plate - Iris Hillman, of

Blackpool wrote to say the Ron Harris of Craft Workshops, Burton Garden Centre, Forest Rd, Burton on Trent DE13 9TP (Tel. 01283 561879) are makers of a fine Gold Rimmed Plate bearing our George.

BBC TV rang . . . They are making a film on "Accents" and

required George singing a Lancashire song in any of his films. "No trouble - The ideal film snippet is George singing "Emperor Of Lancashire" in the film "Turned Out Nice Again." The TV show is called "Close Up North" and it will be screened during October or November on Thursday at 7.30pm on BBC2.

WERRINGTON July Meeting. Derek Ball wishes to thank all who played a part in getting it all together on the night. Des Redford, Colin Wood, Brian Edge and Tony Thornton for the Vellum report (plus others but shortage of space prevents). He did actually say that at 8.30pm the place was "Humming" but I don't know who to blame for that. *Thanks Derek.*

Police Notice - Companions are warned to be on the look-out for Joseph Gomez, a Spaniard, last heard of living in Tooting, whose Mother was a Nun in Barcelona. A one time Flautist with the Symphony Orchestra, he is wanted for looting in Haifa where he casually worked on a farm.

The police are urging you to look out for a Haifa Looting, Fluting, Tooting, Son of a Nun from Barcelona, Part Time Ploughboy Joe.

How many of you remember

Sandy Powell? a great

Music Hall and later, Radio & TV artist who's famous catch phrase was "Can You Hear Me Mother?" Well this originated from the time when, as a young boy, he was taken to auditions by his partially deaf mother. Frequently unable to hear him from her seat in the stalls, she would call out: "Speak up Sandy," so that he developed the habit of asking his mother from the stage: "Can you hear me mother."



One of **George's** friends,

Josef Locke, the singing Irishman, had to make a quick exit from the country, when the tax man was pursuing him. He rang George and asked if he would buy his Blackpool house. George snapped up the bargain. Josef has never set foot in this country since, but there is a mysterious Mr X who is constantly asked "Are you Josef Locke?"



Mr X, like Josef has a booming voice, has all Josef's looks and sings all Josef's songs.

He certainly is a good entertainer with tons of experience. He sings "Goodbye Dolly Grey" and has the audience waving their handkerchiefs and regularly appears in "The Good Old Days" in Blackpool.

Don't Forget Wigan Pier Sunday 3rd Aug 1.30

A Number of Humorous Stories sent in by Brian Edge. . .

- (1) Told at the Crewe June meeting - A Teddy Bear worked on a building site and sadly one of his tools, a pick, was stolen. All his work mates started celebrating and singing "Today's the day the Teddy Bear had his pick nicked."
- (2) Heard at the Sale meeting - This man went to heaven but begged a pass out to go back to earth to hear his son perform in a night club. Unfortunately when he arrived back at the pearly gates he discovered that some of his ethereal equipment was missing, to which he sang - "I've Left My Harp In Sam Frank's Disco."
- (3) Heard at Penyffordd - A Scandinavian bricklayer was amongst those who invaded these shores many centuries ago. In a resultant fighting he sadly lost his eyesight but was cared for by a peasant lady. In appreciation of the help she had given he he decided to build her a new house to replace the hovel in which she lived. As he couldn't find a hod in which to carry his bricks he used the old back kitchen sink that was lying around. The result was "A sink is as good as a hod to a blind Norse."
- (4) The troops of Alexander the Great were getting fed up of fighting long hours and threatened to go on strike for shorter battle hours. It was eventually conceded that they should wear a piece of material as an arm-band around their sword arm and when the band became wet with sweat they were able to take a short rest. The device became known as Alexander's Rag Time Band!
- (5) Al Capone loved to own nice footwear and one day his neighbour's cat chewed up his favourite alligator skin shoes. As a result he sent his henchmen out to find the animal dead or alive. Eventually there was a knock at the door and when he opened it a scared face held up a mangy animal and proceeded with, "Pardon me Al, is that the cat who chewed your new shoes?"
- (6) And finally the story of the prehistoric monster, the Rairie, who was eventually hunted to extinction, the last being driven over a cliff where it plunged to its death to the strains of "It's a long way to tip a rairie."

Or another version is - The Rairie Brothers had a Barbers Shop in the desert. Young Harry Stanford walked 20 miles to have his hair cut and when he returned home he confessed to his father that he had forgotten to leave a tip. His father was fuming and immediately sent him back to the tunes of, "It's a long way to tip a Rairie."

Up-date on George's Warrington home - Hill Crest. It has been sold and contracts are due to be signed. The new owners have no connection with the George. More news as it comes in.

BILL WADDINGTON is giving up Coronation St because he doesn't like the way the show has changed - too much violence etc. Good for you Bill. We are proud of you.

THANKS -

Steve Raymond rang. He wishes to thank all who sent their kind thoughts during his spell of hospital treatment. He and Doris are very pleased with the improvements that are taking place. We are also very pleased Steve! Keep Smiling.



Liverpool - Well not many members turned up but we had an excellent night at the July meeting. And it was certainly a night for the senior members! Harry performed at the age of 85, Mary Atkinson also gave a wonderful solo spot - with her little ukulele in her hand - at the age of 84, and Lottie led the cheer leaders at the age of 83. How's that for enthusiasm? Many thanks again to Des Redford for coming along and supplying the sound system.

CHANGE OF PHONE NUMBER

Please note that Tom Bailey - who does a magnificent job of organising the meetings at Liverpool - has changed his number to 0151 289 1711

Southport Art Centre - Every Monday evening from 28th July to Sept 15th - 7.30pm. Ken Goodwin, Steve King and Roy Chappell are appearing in the JOLSON, FORMBY and CROSBY SHOW. Tickets are £8 - £6 for senior citizens. Steve King is currently managing the Formby exhibition at Lytham St Annes.

Charlie Chester dies - what a sincere man Charlie was.

Nothing was too much trouble for him. Anyone who sent an appeal to his Sunday afternoon radio show could almost guarantee that he would give it a mention. He was a friend of George's brother, Frank, and they trotted around together searching for work. Like George & Frank, he played the uke but confessed that he was not in George's class by any means. Gerry Nicholas, who as a newspaper reporter, made contact with many stars, including George & Beryl, visited Charlie at Brimsworth House - the old artists home where Louie is living, and rang to say that he was looking very old and nearing his death.

Louie -

Gerry also called in to see her and he informs us that she is looking better than ever. Still full of chat and always willing to talk about the old days. I'll bet she is trying to beat her mother's record - who passed on at the ripe old age of 102.

GRANADA TV STUDIOS

Just received a cheque for £25 from them for the Joseph Collins fund. Our thanks to Granada TV



Memories of Formby

BEING an admirer of George Formby, I was delighted to get tickets for a play he was starring in at the Sheffield Empire around 1954 when he took the role of a hen-pecked husband.

Like the majority of the full house, I was bored and frustrated because George hadn't sung a song.

After almost two hours we hadn't even seen the uke and the audience were becoming restless and some called out for George to sing.

They got so noisy I thought some of the cast would walk off, but eventually George did produce his uke and sang one song which I'm certain was not in the script.

The applause was deafening.

Mr. D. Higgins, The Square, Harley, Rotherham.

□ □ □

THANK you for bringing back some very fond memories by your article of the late George Formby Jr.

I, too, have happy



memories of show business in the late 20s. In those days it was usual for visiting shows to employ local girls as chorus girls for the week. As I was at

home for the week, I went along to the Empire and was chosen to appear.

George's very attractive wife, Beryl, auditioned us. I remember her carrying

her little dog everywhere wearing immaculate clothes, coats with huge collars.

I kept a George Formby doll which the children of the family passed to each other.

Mrs. Gladys Needham (nee Atkins) White Lane, Gleadless, Sheffield.

□ □ □

DURING the Sixties my family had a few enjoyable holidays cruising on the Norfolk Broads. One year we stayed the night at Oulton Broad and moored near George Formby's sea-going cruiser, Lady Beryl II.

When we left the next morning, we cruised past his boat, and he was on the fore deck cleaning windows.

My dad shouted: "I see you're cleaning your windows, George."

He looked across with that well known cheery grin and shouted: "You've got to do something to pass the time."

L Hope, Addy Street, Sheffield.

Michael Davis of Blackpool

How many remember him when, as a four year old, he graced the stage at the Wintergardens, playing the bones, and uke. At a very young age he took Yorkshire TV by storm with Blackpool Rock and was chosen as "Pick Of The Week" for Granada TV. Later, at the age of five, he took centre stage with Michael Barrymore in "The Barrymore Show," along with GFS members.

Michael is now 10 years of age and performing very well. He plays the Keyboard, the Uke and the Trumpet at many charity shows. His latest engagement was at the end of June when he played for the Burma Star Re-union at the Wintergardens. At the age of six he won the Child of Achievement Music Award in recognition of his work to help others. He also entertains at old folk's homes.

Werrington Meetings - By Bill Turner . . . We've had two successful meetings in three days - so how's about that, Stan?

First came our normal monthly meeting and then we were invited to play at the local primary school for their gala day. Mums & dads and girls and lads all gathered round to hear Jonathan Baddeley, Derek Ball, Carl Basford, Darrel Snow and 8 year old Becky Snow playing George's songs. She was fantastic!

The headmaster was delighted saying that he'd only heard George playing in his films - great stuff!!! We have a lot of venues lined up for the future, O.A.P. Homes, Day Centres Etc.

Werrington - By Derek Ball . . . First - many, many thanks from all our members to Mrs Stamp for making an absolutely super banner for the front of the stage - it looks super great.

Well, we had another 'Boster' (which means a 'reet gud do') of a night at Werrington on 12th June. It was grand to see all our friends from Wistaston and they soon had us tapping our feet to their ensemble number 'Doctor Jazz'. Rebekah Snow, true to her promise last month, got up on stage for the first time to sing 'Banjo Boy' while her father, Darrel, was 'On The Beat' and eight four years old Auntie Mary 'Promised To Be Home By Nine O'clock', Carl Basford was 'Sunbathing In The Park' and Alan Chenery was his usual 'Happy Go Lucky'. Ivy Turner joined husband Bill in a duet 'Those Were The Days'.

Brian Edge came up with yet another song we hadn't heard before: 'Mr Wu's A Traffic Warden Now' and I was beginning to think that Brian had a hoard of music somewhere. However, I think I've solved the mystery as to where he gets all these songs. I went into an antique warehouse with him and found a song called 'How Many Pips are There in a Pomegranate?' Definitely not heard that one before.

SAM BASS

We were very pleased to get a visit from Sam Bass, a well known local ukulele virtuoso, and his friend and accompanist, John. Sam, now retired, has been a professional for many years, alongside stars like Robb Wilton and Gerty Gitana.

Derrick Jones, our Treasurer, and a friend of Sam, has been trying to get him to a meeting for some time. Look forward to seeing them again. Thanks for the double coverage in the June edition.

Thanks Derek and Bill. Now you may have got the report printed twice in the June edition but you were both too late for the July issue. So, as George would say:- GET CRACKING!!!!

Chinese Laundries - Today's youngsters are possibly not aware that in every town, way back in the 30s and 40s, there was at least one Chinese Laundry shop. These were owned by the Chinese - the Mr Wu

All this was before the production of the washing machine and it was usually the better off people who arranged to have their washing cleaned, starched, dried and ironed for them. Mr Wu had a wonderful reputation for his thorough work.

Unlike today, with people wearing jeans and open neck etc. there was a lot of pride in being turned out in a nice starched white shirt. Unfortunately, if over starched, it would be almost impossible to put on as the back and front would be stuck together and when eventually you did get it on it would feel like you were wearing a sheet of hardboard. For the first few hours it was very uncomfortable as the stiff shirt collar would rub the neck raw. The collar was always the first part of the shirt to get soiled so to save constantly washing the shirt, a loose collar was worn. These were the most dreadful thing to wear as, with only one button at the back and a collar stud at the front, they always drifted away from the rest of the shirt and left open slots at the sides.

1940s Pounds & Pence Puzzle -

Answers Below
No cheating.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (1) How much was a pig? | (2) Mars, Pluto, Moon etc. |
| (3) Old form of bicycle? | (4) Boy's name? |
| (5) Weight? | (6) Girl's name? |
| (7) Unwell sea creature? | (8) Singer? |
| (9) Leather worker? | (10) What is the total amount? |

Another One Of Those Days - On Tuesday July

8th we had no less than 4 repairmen calling to fix various gadgets in the home.

- (1) The scanner on the computer was throwing out fluffy pictures.
 - (2) The TV went on the blink and we couldn't raise any Sky programmes.
 - (3) The bathroom shower had suddenly sprung a leak.
- And (4) The music studio wasn't working on one of the tracks.

I couldn't believe it! Four in one day.

Answers to 1940s Pounds & Pence Puzzle . . .
(1) Guinea, (2) Three far things, (3) Penny farthing, (4) Bob
(5) Pound, (6) Penny, (7) Sick squid, (8) Tenor, (9) Tanner.
Total amount: £18. 2s. 9d.

Many Thanks to all who subscribed to this issue

I Wish I Could Play The Ukulele By Stan Evans

I've noticed that the above song is becoming quite popular with some of the GFS members so I thought I'd just write an article on how this song came about.

Way back in the late 80s I worked on composing a song on 'how to play the ukulele just like George used to do.' About half a dozen various songs were knocked out but none were worth writing home about. More and more new members were joining the GFS so a song on this particular theme would seem appropriate. After each attempt it got very frustrating and in the end I gave up entirely. By then I was heavily involved in planning the Warrington Exhibition which left little time to even think about song writing.



Phil Linder

Eva and I took a 7 day coach trip holiday to Torquay and in the hotel they held a cabaret night. I was particularly interested in one of the turns: Phil Linder. He was an all round entertainer who did everything possible to entertain the crowd. He told jokes, played trumpet, guitar, tin whistle, pipes, trombone, uke banjo, and performed magic tricks. He was a great act which our party enjoyed.

All that let him down was his uke playing and after the show I spoke to him about it. He told me that he'd always struggled with the uke but nobody in the audience ever noticed it. He also spoke of his admiration for George. I explained that his problem was due to the strings being set too high and he would need to drop the arm to bring the strings to the correct level. He was very thankful for the advice and said he would carry out the operation without delay.

Out of his case he brought a home made tape of a song that he had written. It was called "Play The Ukulele," which he gave to me. I didn't think much of it at the time as it had no set verse and chorus, but I noticed that the verses I'd previously written slotted comfortably into the same metre: 10. 8. 10. 9.

I rang Phil to ask if he would agree to me dismantling the song and re-building it with a couple of verses and a chorus, to which he agreed. Within a few days the newly built song was almost completed but I was struggling with the music to one line "*my wife said it was driving her insane*" Nothing seemed to fit! When suddenly there was a knock on the door and Anthony Mason walked. As quick as a flash he said "finish the line with F"7 and it will fit" - great, the tune was now set and ready for an extra verse.

Within a couple of hours the second verse was written and the song was now ready for recording. Anthony & I have used this song over the last six years to finish our "Talk & A Song Show" and it always goes down extremely well. We've also used it for the opening number on the Tuition Book & Tape.

George's Films & Ukes

FILM	SONG	UKE
Boots Boots 1934	Baby Why Don't Women Like Me I Could Make A Good Living Sitting On The Ice/Rink	Wooden Uke Wooden Uke Wooden Uke Wooden Uke
Off The Dole 1935	Surely No Harm In A Kiss I'm Going To Stick To My Mother If You Don't Want / Goods I Promised To Be Home/ 9 O'clock Little Ukulele Isn't Love A Funny Thing	No Uke Wooden Uke Will Van Allen Baby Gibson Baby Gibson No Uke
No Limit 1935	T T Races In A Wigan Garden Your Way, My Way Riding Around Rainbow	Wooden Uke Wooden Uke No Uke Wooden Uke
Keep Your Seats Please 1936	Keep Your Seats Please Cleaning Windows	Abbott Long Wooden
Feather Your Nest 1937	Feather Your Nest I'm Happy As Sandboy Lamp Post	Ludwig No Uke Ludwig
Keep Fit 1937	Keep Fit Biceps Muscles & Brawn I Don't Like	No Uke Abbott Abbott
I See Ice 1938	In My Little Snapshot Album Noughts & Crosses Mother What'll I Do Now	Baby Gibson No Uke Abbott
It's In The Air 1938	Our Sergeant Major They Can't Fool Me It's In The Air	Baby Gibson Abbott John Grey
Come On George 1939	I Couldn't Let Stables Down Pardon Me I'm Making Headway Now Goodnight Little Fellow	Abbott No Uke Abbott Abbott
Trouble Brewing 1939	I Can Tell It By My Horoscope Hitting The High Spots Fanlight Fanny	Baby Gibson Abbott Baby Gibson

Have You Any Queries on George? - Send 'em In.

CONTINUED

Let George Do It 1940	Grandad's Nightshirt	Abbott
	Mr Wu / Window Cleaner	Abbott
	Count Your Blessings	Abbott
	Oh Don't The Wind Blow Cold	Abbott
Spare A Copper 1940	Ukulele Man	Abbott
	On The Beat	Abbott
	I Wish / Back on The Farm	Baby Gibson
	I'm Shy	No Uke
Turned Out Nice Again 1941	You're Everything To Me	No Uke
	Aunty Maggie's Remedy	Dallas D
	You Can't Go Wrong In These	Dallas D
	Emperor of Lancashire	No Uke
South American George 1941	Swing Mamma	Dallas D
	Barmaid At The Rose & Crown	Ludwig
	La Donna Mobile	No Uke
	I Played / Spanish Guitar	4 String Guitar
	I'd Do It With A Smile	Wooden Uke
Much Too Shy 1942	Andy The Handy Man	Ludwig
	They Laughed / Started To Play	Ludwig
	Talking To The Moon	Ludwig
	Delivering Morning Milk	No Uke
Get Cracking 1943	Get Cracking	Ludwig
	Home Guard Blues	Ludwig
	Under The Blasted Oak	Ludwig
Bell Bottom George 1944	It Serves You Right	Ludwig
	Swim Little Fish	No Uke
	If I Had A Girl Like You	No Uke
	Bell Bottom George	Ludwig
He Snoops To Conquer 1944	Hill Billy Willie	Guitar
	Unconditional Surrender	No Uke
	Photo In The Press	Dallas D
I Didn't Do It 1945	She's Got Two Of Everything	Dallas D
	Daring Young Man	Big Gibson
	I'd Like A Dream Like That	Big Gibson
George In Civvy St 1946	Mad March Hare	No Uke
	We've Been A Long Time Gone	Abbott
	It Could Be	No Uke
	I Was Christened / Horseshoe	No Uke
	You Don't Need A Licence	Abbott

Many Thanks to all who subscribed to this issue

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

Liverpool - Broadgreen Conservative Club - Every 2nd Friday in the month - Ring Tom Bailey on 0151 229 1711 **Players Urgently Wanted**

Sale - Woodheys Club, 299 Washway Rd, Sale - Dates are now settled - EVERY THIRD FRIDAY - Ring Ken Ratcliffe on 0161 430 8290. SALE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT Adm now £1.

Crewe Wistaston Memorial Hall - Ring Brian Edge on 01270 69836 Future dates - Fri 22nd Aug, Fri 26th Sept, Fri 24th Oct, Tues 25th Nov, Thur 18th Dec. Adm 50p. All are welcome at the South Cheshire George Formby Ukulele Soc.

Warrington Alliance Sports & Social Centre, Evans House, Orford Lane, Warrington - Stan Evans on 01925 727102 - SPECIAL MEETINGS ONLY

Werrington Branch (Near Stoke) at the Werrington Village Hall - Every 2nd Thursday in the month, Ring Bill Turner on 01782 304858. Future dates - Aug 14th, Sept 11th, Oct 9th, Nov 13th, Dec 11th.

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 - 18th August

So as George would say -

“Get Cracking”

Support Your Newsletter

