

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY Newsletter 28

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Specially Produced for
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We All Love The N. W. Meetings

At the N West Meetings we all agree that there is a wonderful harmony that can't be found in most other societies, and these are the main reasons why they like to come along. We asked a few of the members what they thought of the meetings:-

Peniffordd Meeting

Saucy JANET HAWKINS (all the way from Milton Keynes) said delightfully:- I like the way George played his Ukulele, he's got loads of rhythm and you can sing along to all the songs, the meetings are all so friendly, you get a lot of enjoyment and pleasure from the songs - especially the saucy ones.

BRIAN ENSALL - George's happy songs are good for all ages and he made some great films for the kids. He was a good all-round entertainer.

BRIAN HARRISON - What I like about the George Formby meetings is the camaraderie, the friendliness, and the thoroughly good time that we all have. It doesn't matter if you are a beginner or an expert, we all get the same treatment and given the same encouragement - it's superb!

JIM KNIGHT - I attend both the Crewe and Peniffordd meetings and enjoy them both - such a friendly atmosphere and we get a good applause whatever we do. Some nice people here and we always meet somebody new.

GARY LUYT - So informal, everybody is friendly, you can play anything you like as well as Formby material, we all have a great time and George's songs are so hilarious. They had a meaning then and they still do today.

ALAN CHENNER - Absolutely brilliant, everybody is so friendly, George's songs are brilliant, happy songs like: "Happy Go Lucky Me."

CARL BASFORD - Great - and I've never had so much enjoyment in my life.

GERALD JONES (Now "Jones The Uke") - I've been a Formby fan all my life and attending the GFS meetings for 18 years, it's enjoyable making up your own words to the songs.

JONATHON BADDELEY - What do we like about the meetings? Well, we like friendliness of the folk, we enjoy hearing George's different songs and you can't play the uke without having a smile on your face.

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Many Thanks To All Who Contributed to This Issue

DES REDFERN - Well I've only been playing for 2 years and 2 months but I've certainly got hooked on it. I've always enjoyed watching George in his films - It's Turned Out Nice Again - Hasn't It?

AUNTIE MARY - We are all together - such a friendly lot. I'm in the blues when I come out but go home feeling very cheerful. It does me the world of good.

And at the Blackpool Meeting

DORIS MYERSCOUGH - It's so friendly, friendly, we are all like one person and we all come to enjoy ourselves.

RHODA RIGBY - I like the songs we can all join in with. I don't know all of George's songs so enjoy joining in with the songs that I do know.

EILEEN ABBOTT - The meetings are very, very pleasant and we have a most enjoyable evening, they are very happy meetings and not in the least serious. Also they are so relaxing after having lived a hectic life. I listen to all the words and they are so tranquil. Steve and I understand only too well how difficult these meetings must be to arrange. We have just bought a new Answering Machine and for the past three days we've not even been successful in installing a message on it.

IRIS HILLMAN - These meetings make me so happy and everyone else is so friendly, the George Formby music is really great. I feel terribly upset if I miss a meeting. It is the only place where I feel that I belong. When I first joined I couldn't play a note but then I got started with a small wooden uke and your Tuition Book & Tape and now, after the encouragement, I get up to entertain. Really great!

STAN EVANS (Summing Up) - Music is the key to it all. If you've got music in your soul you can't help but be happy. Formby members are very easy to perform to because they all enjoy listening to happy melodies and enjoy a bit of fun mixed in. When you get up on stage just look at the Formby audience and you will see an ocean of happy smiling faces. Now, in contrast, if you want to test yourself out before a tough audience try, entertaining a Magic Society.

Being magicians, they are naturally suspicious of all around and have no musical interests. A pleasant melodious rhythm has no effect on them. We Formby Fans are very lucky being members of a society where the main theme is happy music.

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Articles Urgently Required For The Next Issue

What a Grand Night We Had at Liverpool - Although we don't fill many seats it is surprising how the concert is enjoyed. The star of the show was Les Jones, one of the GFS London members who, along with his wife Vera, stopped off to enjoy a night with us at Liverpool. Les has only been a member for a few months and hasn't yet got into performing with the uke, however, he is a fully fledged member of the London Magic Circle (about 40 years) and capable of putting on an excellent show of illusion.

Les started his act with an Orange Silk which quickly turned to Blue, and then, back to Orange again. This was finished off with both silks turning into a Union Jack Flag. A great piece of magic! Another marvel was the Three Ropes illusion. These were all of different lengths - one short, one medium and one long - which he changed to being all of the same length. At the end he changed the ropes back to the original lengths. Great!

Another star of the night was Des Redfern, he really has come on well over the past two years. Jim Bramwell gave us his version of the old Wigan favourite "Uncle Joe's Mint Balls" and everybody, as usual, supported him during the "Hey Up" bits. This is a great little number that suits Jim. He really does the job well because at the end of the evening he wanders round the audience giving out mint balls. Tom Bailey is doing a grand job in organising the venue each month and staging a Raffle to enable us to purchase some PA Equipment.

We are extremely pleased that Steve Raymond is well and truly on the mend after his hospital treatment. He proved this when he sang a few numbers with his usual strong voice. We are all very pleased Steve. Keep up the good work.

Our thanks, as usual, to those who bring along raffle prizes and to Des Redfern for supplying the sound system. **GREAT NIGHT!!!!**

Call My Bluff on TV - Just typing away at my computer and listening to bits of the programme, when Alan Corren bursts out with "With My Little Stick Of Blackpool Rock" to describe the meaning of the word "Triancy." He explains that he has great admiration for cheeky George Formby because he was capable of using songs like "Mr Wu" and "Windows" to put over his innuendo. Very few could do this. He claimed that "Triancy" means "Chirpiness" like George used. He finished with "Turned Out Nice Again."

BRIAN EDGE says "TODAY - Sept 26th - At Crewe we are holding a Special Birthday Meeting for Pat Chennery - wife of keen Formby fan, Alan Chennery. Alan appreciated the help given by Pat when she bought him his first uke and encouraged him to start playing. **MANY HAPPY RETURNS PAT.**

The Formby Story- Part 18 by Stan Evans

The story so far:-

George Formby Senior (James Booth) a popular music hall artist, died. His oldest son, George Hoy Booth, decided to follow in his footsteps and his mother, Eliza, set about pleading with theatre managers to give him a chance. His first engagement was set for Monday 21st March 1921 at the Earlestown Hippodrome, near Warrington. Now read on . . .



Eliza was very anxious for her son to do well. She contacted all her friends, around the Warrington area, asking them to come along to give support.

There were many imitators of George Formby but none as good as young George. He had his father's build and voice and at the drop of a hat he could very easily switch on his father's pathetic and innocent looks. He was also fortunate that he had his father's complete set of props which were carefully stored in a top room at his home, Hill Crest.

George was nervous. This was his first attempt at entertaining and he had the unfortunate task of following in the footsteps of his very famous father. He used the name "George Hoy" hoping that they would not compare him with his father.

Alas, poor George's debut was a failure. Dressed in his father's old stage clothes he attempted to put over the songs just like his father did. In horse riding gear, and a whip, he opened up with "I'm a jockey," and immediately stumbled with his lines. The crowd responded quickly with "Not as good as his father" and this unsettled young George more so.

Ninety one year old Albert Longmore took up the story: "As friends of George's we went along to give him some support. He was terribly nervous and some of the gang heckled him. This made him worse and the management threw some of us out of the theatre. Poor George kept forgetting the words to the songs and he was so bad that they had to pull him off the stage." In later years George described his debut as: "I died the death of a dog!"

Like his father, young George was extremely gutsy. He was not in the least deterred by his failure on his first night and immediately pressured his mother to find other bookings. News travelled fast and some of the theatre managers were reluctant to take a chance with someone who had failed so badly on an opening night. They considered him too immature to take over his father's role.

More Next Month.

HAVE YOU ANY INFORMATION ON GEORGE'S EARLY YEARS?

6 Crash, Bang, Wallop at Werrington

Bill Turner writes - Catastrophe!!! - is that how you spell it? Our September meeting started as usual with good attendance and we'd just got into a merry swing, then - "BANG - The speakers on the sound system had blown!!! Did we panic - not in the least! Everyone was marvellous and the thrash went ahead as if nothing had happened. I dashed home (*I know the feeling Bill*) for a replacement speaker and we were back to normal - we lost about 30 minutes.

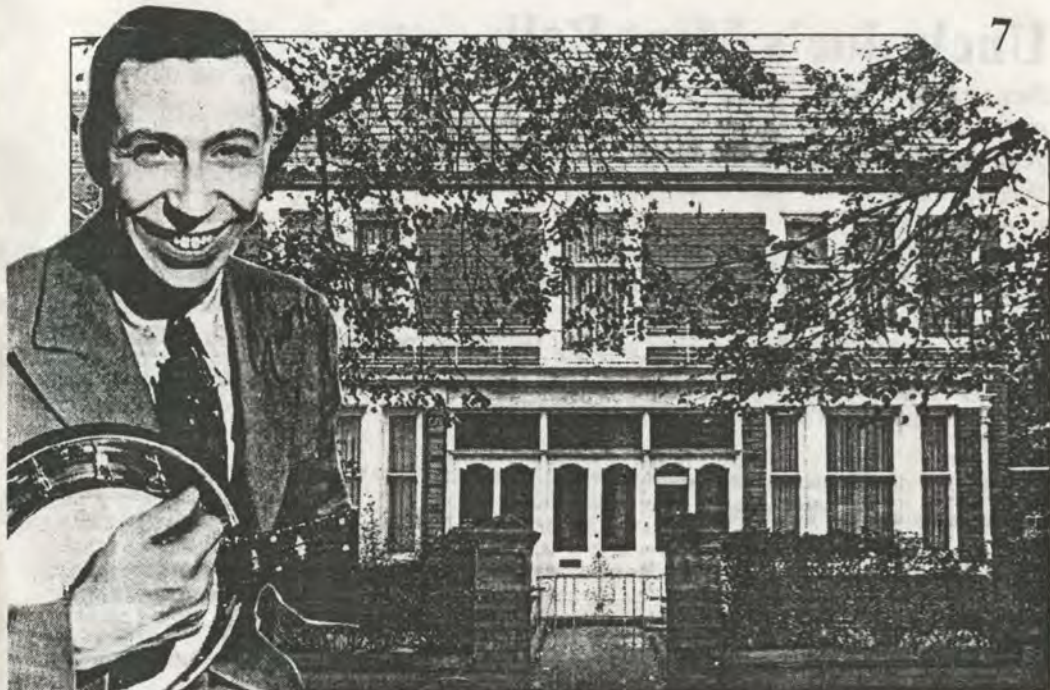
The lads & lasses from Crewe were magnificent, as usual, and along with our society boys & girls we had a fantastic evening. Jonathan Baddeley did a great job when he stepped in as MC for Derek Ball, who was "Lazzacking" somewhere in Italy. Brian, Des, Colin and Alan were as entertaining as ever, not forgetting Auntie Mary who "Didn't Need A Licence For That".

Our own boys, Barry Bowler, Gary Luyt, Carl Basford, Darryl Snow and our two youngest players, Becky and Steven Hall - eight and 12 years old respectively. Unfortunately we couldn't fit all the artists on the bill as we ran out of time and we must clear the hall by 11pm. All in all, it was a brilliant night and my heartfelt thanks to everyone. Bill Turner, Staffs Knot Uke Society *Thank you Bill for the report. Now what's all this about "Lozzacking" in Italy? You lot in the Potteries seem to have a language of your own. Derek with his "Boster" and you with your "Lozzacking" - have you any more? Do you supply a code book? Keep sending em in!*

Bill Turner of the Werrington Branch, took me back a few years when, at Crewe, he recited "The Goldfish" by Sandy Powell.

Laugh and the world laughs with you. Weep and you weep alone.
Think of the poor little goldfish, what's he got to laugh at I ask you?
What's he got to live for, can anyone here explain?
Swimming round, and round, and round, and round, and round
Think of his life when winter begins, all chaps on his fins
No rings on his fingers, no bells on his toes
No hanky when he's got a cold in his nose
Poor little fella, no sister, no brother
No telephone to say "Can you hear me mother"
And when you're snug in bed and hear the winds hiss
Suffer a prayer, it won't go amiss
"Oh Heaven help the goldfish on a night like this
Swimming round, and round, and round."
Thanks Bill. I remember Sandy reciting this very well. A wonderful performer.

Details of the D Day trip from Stan Evans or Dennis Lee



For sale.. George Formby's former home in Stockton Heath

Up-date on Hill Crest - George's home, Hill Crest, London Rd, Stockton Heath, Warrington, is still for sale and the price has now been dropped from £160,000 to £150,000. The agents, Ashall & Burnett, claimed that one couple was ready to put down a deposit but, due to the cost of modernising, they withdrew their offer. Amy Taylor, who lived there for many years didn't make any alterations to the house and even the old round electric plug sockets still exist in some of the rooms.

Apart from our own interest in possibly creating a Formby museum the agents have had no other enquiries from Formby fans. When they took on the contract they were expecting some enquiries from society members. More information as it comes in.

Nellie Dean's Sing-a-long Parlour.

When next in Blackpool have a look round for a NELLIE DEAN'S video. It is well worth buying. The is about 60 minutes long and consists of a group of four (Jam Butty Foot Tapping Fun Band) playing and singing all the old songs. Nellie Deans is situated along the Blackpool prom and is open during lunchtimes and evenings.

Don't Forget A Letter to the Newsletter

Uncle Joe's Mint Balls - of Wigan.

Eating Meat Pies, watching Rugby League and sucking Uncle Joe's Mint Balls are the three most important pastimes in Wigan. Since the boiled sweet was invented 90 years ago both Kings and commoners have enjoyed the subtle taste. Wherever Wiganers settle there's a demand for Uncle Joe's Mints - from the Persian Gulf to Arizona, USA.

Sales Director John Winnard says the demand for the mints has kept the firm going. If people emigrate then they write to ask for supplies. The mints were first bought by the Wigan miners to keep the mouth and the lips moist. They paid one penny for 12 in those days. They have similar dust in the kilns in the Potteries and that's why there is a demand there.

The secret of the success is keeping the recipe exactly the same. They taste the same today as they did then.

The founder of the company, Mr Santus, died in 1953 at the age of 80. His wife, who died in 1964, died at the age of 96. The present Managing Director, John Winnard, is the great nephew of the Santus family. The present Santus factory in Dorning Street, Wigan, was built just before World War One and the firm became a limited company in 1937. It employs about 50 people.

And their best customer must be Jim Bramwell.

Using A Capo - Some members, like Wilf Salt, have used a capo on their uke and found it a valuable piece of equipment.

Others probably have never used one and possibly don't know what it is used for. Well, the idea of a capo is to be able to quickly tune your uke to a higher or lower setting without twiddling the pegs and upsetting the strings.

The two most used tunings are: "D" and "C" and with aid of a capo you can easily change the tuning from "C" to "D" in a few seconds: First tune the uke to "C" and then, when you require a higher tuning simply fit the capo on the second fret and it is then set to a "D" tuning. This is ideal for playing in the thrash and these are the other settings:-

Without

Capo	1 st fret	2 nd fret	3 rd fret	4 th fret
C	C" or Db	D	Eb	E
D	Eb	E	F	F" or Gb
E	F	F" or Gb	G	Ab
F	F" or Gb	G	Ab	A
G	Ab	A	Bb	B
A	Bb	B	C	C" or Db
Bb	B	C	C" or Db	D

Diana - Some of you will not be aware that about 4 years ago Anthony Mason was engaged as 'Warm Up Man' to get the crowds in the mood for receiving Diana. This was when she visited the Wigan Market which had just been opened by the council. I supplied the PA equipment and naturally it was essential to keep a front row position to make sure that the crowds didn't cause any damage to the speakers - which were situated on the floor. The crowd was huge and packed solid.



Just as Diana was approaching I heard a yell from a little lady who was standing behind me. She was desperate to shake hands with Diana and tears of admiration were streaming down her cheeks.

Diana was walking towards me to shake hands and this little lady was throwing a wild fit at my rear. She was in complete desperation to get to the front row. I, however, felt a cheat as I was only there keeping an eye on the equipment.

Diana was only 12 inches away and I felt guilty at depriving the little lady of something that she would probably remember for the rest of her life. At the last vital second I quickly twisted round and grabbed her (not Diana) by the shoulders, shot her straight up in the air and transferred her to the front. The little lady had never moved so fast in her life and wondered what had quickly transported her to the front row. It was so quick she thought it was an act of God. In a state of confusion she quickly clutched Diana's hand and expressed her delight to all around her. I'll bet she's told everybody about the day she shook hands with Diana. Stan Evans.

SOUTHPORT'S GARRICK THEATRE

Postcards of a famous Merseyside landmark have proved a sell out. Copies of Fortunino Matania's painting of Southport's Garrick theatre are so popular the resort's tourism information centre has been unable to keep pace with demand.

Phil King, chief of tourism, said "The people like to be reminded of the resort in its Victorian and Edwardian heyday and this is what the Garrick represents. The 1,600 seat Garrick opened in December 1932 on the site of the old Victorian Opera House which was razed to the ground by a fire in 1929. Great stars like George Formby made regular appearances at the Garrick but dwindling audiences forced the theatre's closure in November 1963. The existing building, which has now been converted to a bingo hall, still exists on Lord St.



Remember the old Garrick theatre very well.

fans keep music alive

By RICHARD HUGHES

HE was the biggest pop star of his day – the man with his own unique brand of northern soul.

George Formby died more than 30 years ago but the Noel Gallagher of the 1930s will never be forgotten.

Dennis Lee is chairman of the North Wales branch of the George Formby Society and says the style of his act has ensured enduring popularity.

"I think he was so popular because he brought humour into people's lives at a time when the world was in depression and turmoil," said Dennis.

"There was nothing offensive about him and he was funny in a way which still appeals to people today.

"George was the highest paid entertainer in Britain during the 30s and 40s and there are a lot of people who have collections of his records and films."

Festival

The Society perform with their ukuleles at functions all over the region and next week take part in a festival at Wigan Pier.

They also hosted the National George Formby Society conference earlier this year in Llandudno.

Dennis, of Buckley, says their audiences tend to be elderly but Formby's fan base continues to attract young admirers.

"Kids love his films because they are so daft. I sometimes cringe when I watch them because the technology is so poor but it doesn't seem to worry them.

"If they came along to one of our meetings I sure they would be hooked. The ukulele is a fairly simple instrument to get a tune out of and it's great fun.

"We have one nine-year-old lad who plays with us and he is brilliant because his hands are so fast."

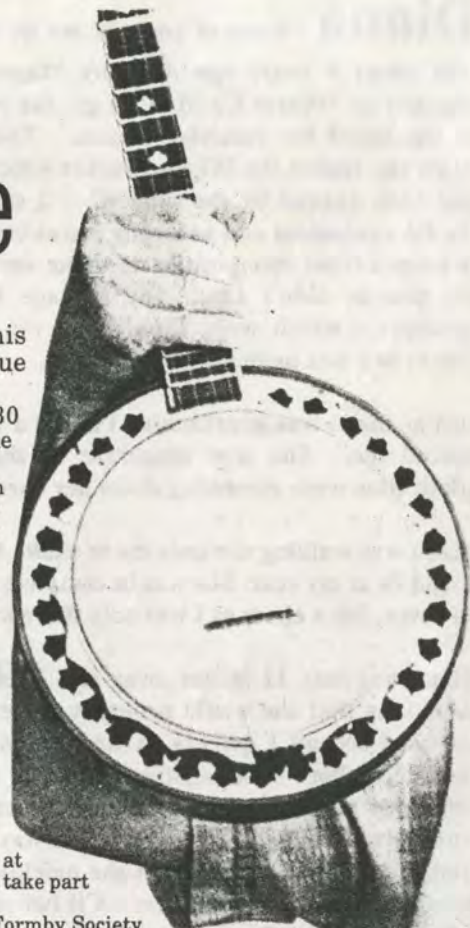
Songs such as 'Leaning on a Lamp-post' and 'Window Cleaner' get the biggest response and Dennis picks out 'No Limits' as the film everyone remembers.

"That's the one where he takes part in Isle of Man TT motorbike race and they still show it there every year," he said.

Dennis stresses they don't set out to impersonate Formby but simply enjoy playing their ukuleles and keeping his music alive.

"We couldn't copy George because he was the master but we love what we do and the response we get from audiences is brilliant."

The society meets on the first Friday of every month at



■ George Formby fan Dennis Lee with his ukelele.

Picture: MIKE ROBERTS

Ref: 9483 07/97

Thanks
Kevin!

You've Got To Laugh!!!-

Kevin Blanchfield told me that the phone rang one day and it was the local newspaper after a bit of a report on the Peniffordd Meetings. I told em to contact Dennis Lee who would gladly supply them with a few details. A couple of days later I opened the newspaper and Dennis's face pops up splashed all over the pages. I couldn't believe it! I'll never trust the newspapers again!

Good little story Kevin. Have you any more disappointments worth reporting?



Bill Turner of Werrington

writes - Dear Stan, I am very interested in the Newsletter article regarding a proposed trip to the old battle sites of the Normandy Beaches.

I landed there on Juno beach on D Day morning with the Canadian forces - 3rd Can Division, driving the American amphibious craft called D.U.K.W. or "Duck" for short.

In all these years I've never returned there and would dearly love to see it again- just once. Please keep me posted on what is happening.

Harry's A Rum Lad!

I spent 30 minutes on the phone with Harry and he told me how ill he was and all about his aches and pains. A couple of nights later I went to Liverpool and apologised for him because he wasn't well enough to come. "NOT SO WELL" shouted the crowd! He's lapping it up sunbathing on the beach at Llandudno!

Wait till I see him.

**Anthony Mason
Entertains**



Lindsey's musical 'thank you'

BARRYMORE'S girl, Lindsey Morley, took to the stage as a 'thank you' for a charity night in her honour.

Friends have rallied round to help the teenager, who is set to have a life or death operation.

In a gala night of entertainment, they raised £1,000 for the girl who left millions in tears with her appearance on Barrymore's People.

Lindsey, aged 14, suffers from a rare syndrome which has left her spine twisted.

But her condition has deteriorated so much that she has agreed to undergo surgery which

could kill or cure. Friend and neighbour, Graham Cartledge, organised a raffle and auction, plus a night of live entertainment at Bank Quay Social Club to raise money for Lindsey.

Donated

Prizes were donated by businesses and charities including Takover Distribution, the Buffaloes and Penketh and Old Hall Fishing Club.

Graham added: "We had tremendous support. It was a great night and Lindsey herself sang some songs."

A little help from her friends... Lindsey, centre, with, from left, Graham Cartledge, Alan Pomfrett, Clare McGibbon, Brian, Lorraine Cartledge and Anthony Mason.

A Joke from Jim Bramwell . . . This chap went home

from work and the next door neighbour rushed out to him.

Neighbour:- "I've got some very bad news for you - your wife has hanged herself from the washing line."

Chap:- "Oh dear, I've left my keys at works. I'll have to go back to get them, will you do me a favour?"

Neighbour:- "Yes, what is it?"

Chap:- "If it rains will you take her in?"

A Statue For George in Blackpool?-

Charles Stewart sent in information regarding controversy on who is worthy of a statue in Blackpool. A statue of Richard De Vere has been erected at the Blackpool Pleasure Beach and various readers have expressed their opinion:



STEVE KING writes - With all due respect to Richard De Vere, one cannot say that he is as synonymous with Blackpool as George Formby, Charlie Cairoli, Les Dawson or Frank Randle. I do feel that there should be something here to commemorate these men. The most worthy one, of course, is George Formby as he did more than anyone to promote Blackpool world wide.

MRS CHAMBERS writes - I think the statue of Schnorbitz and his master is beautiful and anyone who objects to that must be kinky.

MR WEIGHMAN of Blackpool The Richard De Vere statue at the Pleasure Beach proves how much more enterprising the people are who have an interest in this person. The Charlie Cairoli and the George Formby Societies have been in existence for many years and neither has yet come up with a statue of their idol. Perhaps they're waiting for somebody else to pay for it

CHARLES STEWART writes - Mr De Vere is a young man on the up-and-up in show business but he is hardly a household name. About 3 years ago Mr Thompson, at the Pleasure Beach, told our society that he was very interested in erecting a statue of George. Unfortunately it never happened.

ANOTHER READER wrote - Yes, George Formby and Charlie Cairoli did good work but they are in the past and Richard De Vere is for the future.

Thanks Charles for the information. Personally I don't think that George would go down too well at the Pleasure Beach as it caters mainly for the younger folk and their children. The ideal position for a George Formby statue is in the entrance way of the Wintergardens - or somewhere near.

Mr Weighman is possibly right! The Society should make an effort to provide a statue instead of waiting for the council to supply one. The council have many stars to choose from while we are concerned with just George.

George Should Be Honoured

Dennis Lee & I gave a "Talk & A Song" to the old folk in Wigan and 95 year old Mona Jackson expressed the concern of the Wiganners at not having honoured George in Wigan. "They all know that George was a hero to them all but somehow nobody has done anything about it."

Our Local Bookshop was advertising a book with the name of "SHOWBIZ Goes To War" by Eric Taylor and offering it at £3.99 (from £5.99) It was advertised as a compilation of reports on the efforts of various artists who went to the war front to entertain the troops. I popped along to the shop wondering if George's experiences had been recorded.

I asked the lady: "Could you tell me if the book you are offering has any reports on George Formby" to which the lady said: "Hold on sir and I'll bring one for you." A few seconds later she brought the book and - low and behold - who should be on the front cover but our George playing his heart out to the troops on the front line. A favourite photo of any Formby fan!

Some of the reports were: "Within days of landing two hundred a seven ENSA artistes were sent over to Normandy as the first wave of performers to cover the entertainment needs of thr troops. The first to volunteer was Britain's top box office draw then, George Formby, the ukulele playing comedian with a toothy grin. He had been one of the first to go to France in 1940 in the desperate days before Dunkirk and was one of the last to leave Brest before the final evacuation of troops from the beaches.

Meanwhile, in the UK he had raised thousands of pounds for charity and even joined the Home Guard. During the height of the London blitz he performed in the London Underground, sometimes appearing on a makeshift stage and at others sitting on the track.

Incidentally, an interesting reflection on these shelter shows was that legally, it was all right for George Formby to entertain men and women seeking refuge from the bombs but it was quite illegal for unknown entertainers. A 19 year old youth was fined at Yarmouth for singing in a public air-raid shelter. The court heard that he was surrounded by youths, girls and sailors, giving an impersonation of George Formby, 'to the annoyance' of other people.

George gave Sunday concerts to raise money for the Air Raid Distress Fund, free of any fee for himself, whilst at the same time foregoing lucrative contracts and engagements elsewhere. The people loved him.

By June 1944 he headed the list of 'top money stars' in British films. Behind him in order were Robert Donat, Gracie Fields, Arthur Askey, Charles Laughton, Will Hay, Gordon Harker and Anna Neagle.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Trip to France - 5th to 8th June 98 - D Day - A lot of interest is coming in. About 10 have confirmed, plus around 40 doubtfuls. The British Legion have shown strong interest - but we need more players.

In the international list George followed Mickey Rooney, Deanna Durbin, Spencer Tracy, and Jeanette MacDonald. George was in fact, way ahead of Errol Flynn, Gary Cooper and, surprisingly, Bing Crosby.

When he arrived at a secluded Normandy orchard sitting alongside the driver on an ENSA truck, thousands of troops rose to their feet and cheered. There, in a rest centre to which soldiers were sent for a few days recuperation after a long time in the line, served as a natural amphitheatre. Soon the whole area was packed; the more fortunate of the troops sat on benches, others sat on the grass or stood on the rising ground.

One customary feature of the audience however was missing, and this was at George's insistence. There was be no brass hats occupying the best seats at the front. Now they all knew better. On so many occasions when visiting the UK, George had some harsh words to say to the whole audience when he saw officers filling the front rows. 'Here lads, have come to entertain t'lads not the likes of you. Make room for them. Come forward lads'. George had a special relationship so that he could say things without giving offence.

Sale Meeting - How It All Began - By Ken Ratcliffe.

At the September 1971 GFS meeting a number of the Manchester GFS members, at the Imperial Hotel A.G.M. asked if they could hold a meeting of their own in the Manchester area. The GFS committee rejected the idea, but 2 years later the Sale George Formby Ukulele Society began to operate.

The first meeting was held at the Sale Moor Community Centre, Norris Rd, Sale, and 12 members turned up. The members were: Bob Sheldon, George Cheetham, Walter Longshaw, Arthur Fordham, Bob Walsh, Trevor Stiles, Tony Capewell, Jack Teesdale, Derrick Hulme, Dennis Hulme, Jack Hallen and Bob Anderson.

Sadly, most have passed on or left the society. The news of the opening of an independent GF society soon spread and the meetings became a success.

John Taylor - at the Blackpool (Wainwright Hotel) meeting - did a wonderful illusion on stage. I was quietly emptying a few items out of my case when John started to sing his number. A couple of seconds later I looked up and he had completely disappeared and was nowhere to be seen. The stage was empty! About a minute later I looked up again and John was back on stage singing his big heart out. Now tell me John! How did you do it? It's got me completely baffled.

Alder Hey Children's Hospital send their thanks for the £60 which was raised at the Wigan Pier Concert.

News From The PENYFFORDD Branch - by Dennis Lee.

Our September meeting began with a one minute's silence in memory of Diana, the Princess of Wales.

Following that Jim Knight assumed the role of MC as I was engaged in other activities. I must say that Jim did a sterling job and I hope we can persuade him to continue with it. As you know I have carried out this duty since the branch started almost 4 years ago and naturally feel it's time to hand over to someone else. Jim has already taken up Brian Edge's suggestion that we should dress up at our meetings with his straw hat and waistcoat. And so have some others which is a delight to see. So come on the rest of you, let's see you entering into the spirit, it doesn't half brighten things up!

Once again our young members, Stephen Ensall and Frank Murphy excelled themselves - they are a delight! We were pleased to welcome Janet & Dave Hawkins from Milton Keynes who happened to be on holiday. Our faithful Crewe friends were there together with Sheila & Cyril Palmer, accompanied by Alice Cronshaw. Also it was a pleasure to see Joan & Jim Bramwell who came with Stan Evans. A hearty welcome to Mr & Mrs Bill Harding, from Rhyl, who joined us for the first time. We hope to see them again.

At half time a free Pie & Peas Supper was distributed and wolfed down by all. Praise here must go to Dolwyn & Geoff Shone for the organisation. A total of 53 people attended the meeting and thanks go to all who gave their support.

Thanks Dennis. It was a great meeting and we had young Stephen actually singing for the first time. We must keep on encouraging these kids!

Brian Edge says - the following quoted from Nigel Rees's excellent dictionary "Phrases and Saying" published by Bloomsbury at £20.

IT'S TURNED OUT NICE AGAIN

The British North Country entertainer George Formby (1904 - 1961) disclaimed any credit for originating the phrase with which he always opened his act. "It's simply a familiar Lancashire expression - people use it naturally up there. I used it as part of a gag and have been doing so ever since." - particularly in his films when emerging from some disaster or other. It was used as the title one of his films in 1941 (as well as being the punch line of it) and as the title of a song.

Formby was not exactly a comedian but he exuded personality and, singing slightly naughty songs to a ukulele accompaniment, he became one of the great stars of the variety stage between the wars. He also appeared in a highly successful series of films. In these there was another catch phrase: "Oh Mother!" - said when scuttling away from trouble.

Thank you Brian. I look forward to receiving these packets of articles in the post.

We regret to report the death of Derek Taylor

- Now not many will know of Derek Taylor but he was a member of the GFS for a few years. Now I'm not sure if he's still a member as, unlike other societies, the GFS committee have this ruling which prevents members having a membership list. However he was a member in 1991 when we received a lot of publicity through the Warrington Exhibition.



TAYLOR: Enthusiastic

Derek came along to the exhibition with George Harrison (Beatles) and spent considerable time studying the exhibits while George attended a council meeting which was being held to discuss the possibility of a permanent GF Exhibition. I remember Derek as being a very pleasant and quiet person.



Two George Formby fans
George Harrison and Derek Taylor

NEWSLETTERS - Just heard that Brian Edge has arranged for REMPLOY (who find work for the disabled) to bind the first two year's Newsletters and believe that they've done an excellent job. Can't wait to see it.

Brian Edge Sadly Reports - One of our Crewe members has been tragically killed in an M6 coach disaster. Mrs Dorothy Harrison was travelling to Buckingham Palace with the Over 50s Club when the coach was hit behind by another vehicle. A number of people were seriously injured but Mrs Harrison, and another lady, died.

The Queen has sent a message of condolence to the organisers of the trip. Mrs Harrison, who was widowed just a year ago, was trying hard to rebuild her life. She was a great fan of George Formby and loved every song. She appreciated every innuendo and her smiling face in the front row of every Crewe concert will be sadly missed.

The Branch offers condolences to her son, who it seems is in Australia, and indeed to all the others who lost loved ones in the crash.

Thank you Brian for the report. I'm sure that some of the members will remember Mrs Harrison. Has anyone got a photo of her for the next issue? We assume that the coach was travelling to Buckingham Palace for Diana's funeral.

Eve & Charles Stewart - Ladies and gentlemen, within the last seven days events have taken place which have affected our lives. There has been the deaths of three great ladies.

Most of us live within a circle of friends and our love for them is uppermost, but we all shared the shock and are saddened by the death of Princess Diana.

The poorest people of our world have lost a Mother Teresa. Let us hope that her legacy to the world is fulfilled.

Yesterday we were privileged to attend the funeral of Margaret Helme. We share with her husband Clive and her loving family the memories of a caring lady from within our circle.

Please may we observe a few moments of quiet respect for the bereaved. Thank You. Eve & Charles.

Thank you both for notifying us of the loss of Margaret. Many will have met her at the Wintergardens meetings, or if you don't recall, maybe you will remember her as the lady who, for the past few months, has used the aid of a Zimmer Frame to enable her to move around.

Margaret was a very keen Formby fan who greatly encouraged her son, Steve, and her grandson, Alan Yates, to get on the stage and entertain. A sad loss!

Special Red/White/Blue Meeting at Warrington - 31st October
in aid of The British Legion.

Brian Edge - Crewe Meeting - The August

Bank Holiday Weekend did little to staunch the enthusiasm of the South Cheshire Branch, as fifty four Formby fans rolled up and put on yet another excellent concert. Jonathan Baddeley, our resident Master of Ceremonies, was holidaying in Greece on the night, so his place was taken by Derek Ball who ably kept up the very high standard that has been set by Jonathan.

Bill Turner gave an original performance ending with the old favourite, 'Cigareets and Wusky and Wild Wild Women' which really got the audience singing along. Colin Wood sang his new number 'I Wish I Could Play The Ukulele' and the co-songwriter Stan Evans agreed that he performed it very well. It was nice to have the Snow family with us for the first time and having Darrel & Becky, his 8 year old daughter, making their Crewe stage debut. Darrel played 'On The Beat' as part of the act, a very difficult number which few people tackle but he performed it well. Becky sang 'Banjo Boy,' George Formby's last recorded song.

Stan Evans was presented with yet another Banana this time by Barry Bowler. I've often wondered why Stan needed that enormous 'Evans House' in Warrington, I guess now that he uses it to store all his bananas.

Carl Basford serenaded Mary Atkinson (the playing lady doyen of the George Formby Society) with the lovely song "They Call Her Mary" but she responded with "I Promised To Be Home By Nine O'clock!" When she finished her act an admirer was heard to comment "She deserves a standing ovation, in fact she deserves an ovation for standing!" A very apt observation too for few octogenarians stand up when they are playing. Yet having said that, we do have another in Matthew Kelly who is now quite relaxed on stage and no doubt will be looking at extending his repertoire for future concerts. Well done Matthew, great stuff!

A special thanks must go to Alan Chennery for his stalwart support on the afternoon and night of the concert. And all those who helped in the kitchen, or in any way towards the success of the concert. Any help is greatly appreciated.

It was with great regret that the Duck Derby was cancelled which, sadly, was due to the death of the Princess of Wales.

Janet Hawkins

At the Peniffordd Meeting - Janet Hawkins, who looks after dear old folk in a retirement home, mentioned that one of her residents was chauffeur to Gracie Fields and on occasions he would meet George. He said that everybody enjoyed working with him and he was a very pleasant man. Gracie & George got on very well together. *Thanks Janet.*

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: Sep 27th (NOTE DATE
CHANGE IN SEPT. - NONE IN OCT. 1st Nov, 6th Dec. Adm £1 with Buffet.
All are made very - very - very - very - very welcome.

Liverpool - Broadgreen Conservative Club - Every 2nd Friday in the month
- Ring Tom Bailey on 0151 289 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 26th Sept, Fri 24th Oct, Tues 25th Nov, Thur 18th Dec. Adm 50p.

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 -
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. Organisers can order a minimum
lot of 10 copies for £3 plus 60p postage and you
are welcome to sell them to help raise funds.

Deadline for next issue - 18th Sept

So as George would say -

“Get Cracking”

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Send An Article in Quick!