

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 29

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Specially Produced for
George Formby Fans
by Stan Evans, The Hollies, 19 Hall Nook, Penketh, Warrington
Cheshire WA5 2HN

Tel or Fax 01925 727102

² George Formby Nostalgia Night

Stan East (wrong name) But it almost went West because they sent the wrong directions. Anyway - although 15 minutes late - it Turned Out Nice and they thoroughly enjoyed our show. The room was filled to capacity - about 275 - and they were all our age group. Dennis Lee did a great job in standing in for Anthony Mason - who should have been performing in Japan for a month. The silver topped audience were reluctant to sing at the beginning but we got them going - slightly - with "If You Don't Want The Goods Don't Maul Em," and, at the end, Dennis certainly got them stamping their hands and clapping their feet with "We'll Meet Again." It was a really great night with possibly the best response ever. The following report is from the Bolton Evening News.



Stan East



Dennis Lee

By Doreen Crowther

Showbusiness Correspondent

IT should turn out nice again for the audience at Walmsley Parish Hall, Egerton, on Thursday when the Rotary Club of Bolton le Moors presents An Evening of Nostalgia with "George Formby".

The evening will feature Stan East who edits a newsletter for the George Formby Appreciation Society. When George died in 1961, he left behind 19 ukuleles or ukulele banjos. Stan owns one of these and will take it along on Thursday.

It's the first ukulele banjo that George played in a film, and it was in *Off The Dole*, which was made in 1935. In this film he sang *If You Don't Want The Goods Don't Maul 'Em*.

Stan will talk about George's life and Dennis Lee will sing some of George's most popular songs like *Leaning on a Lamppost*, *Cleaning Windows*, *My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock* and *With My Little Ukelele in My Hand*.

There will be time for questions about George. Stan said: "Today's young pop groups, with a million pounds worth of equipment, certainly draw big crowds to their outdoor gigs. But George and his wife, Beryl, with a piano, a mike and his ukulele drew crowds just as big, if not bigger."

Tickets for the evening, which starts at 7.45pm, are available from Roy Grundy on 01204 695320, Michael Cull, Insurance Brokers of 01204 533523 or you may pay at the door.

The proceeds are in aid of local Rotary charities.

What an intro . . .

After a late arrival and a 20 minute scramble get the equipment set up - in front of a pack audience - the M/C got his George Formby mixed up with his Al Read and Sandy Powell as he introduced us with the opening line - "Well you're going to get plenty of 'Right Monkey' and 'Can You Hear Me Mother' tonight because we've got two experts here who are going to tell you all about George Formby" How's that for a start?

Great Night!!!!

The Formby Story - Part 19 by Stan Evans

At 16, young George gave up his career as a jockey to become a comedy entertainer in the theatre. Under the expert guidance of his mother, Eliza, he took over his father's old stage costumes, and songs, and set about practising his father's act. Six weeks later he failed to win over the audience when he made his debut at Fred Harrison's Little Picture House in Earlstown. "Not as good as his father," was the response of the crowd. In later years George claimed that "He died the death of a dog!" It was understood why George had failed at his first attempt to break into entertainment. His father had always insisted that none of the children were to enter the business and, in fact, they were never allowed to see him perform.



However, at the age of 11, young George did have a leading role in an early British silent film drama by Percy Manton, - "By The Shortest Of Heads," in which George played the part of a stable lad who outwits a gang of kidnappers. Apparently his father had no objection to him appearing in a movie film but he objected to him following in his footsteps on the stage.

George's father was a big comedy star in the country so news of young George's failure at Earlstown soon got round. However, out of sympathy for the family he was given a short tour by Moss Empires, where he continued to perform his father's act. J D Clarke also found him a weeks' work at Birkenhead with a contract to appear in shows over the next five years

Eliza was quite wealthy. Her husband had left over £21,000 in his will, which was a considerable amount of money in 1921, and to help George - and also to give herself the opportunity to get back into the theatre routine - she paid agents to find work for him.

Although George topped the bill at the Palace Theatre, Burley, he had long periods of rest between his bookings. The audiences were still comparing him with his father and the general opinion was that he just wasn't good enough. His toughest audience was at the Theatre Royal, Blyth, Northumberland, and George recalled that he was lucky not to get pelted by the crowd.

George's ambitions to succeed in his father's footsteps were motivated by Eliza's desire to restore her husband. She had spent years as a devoted aide and now she had difficulty in renewing her life. George was her only hope but she had to admit that he simply didn't have his father's talent. Continued next month.

Sam Bass - Alan Randall rang the other day and I mentioned that I'd had a very pleasant conversation with Sam Bass. "Sam Bass?" he said "I thought he'd be a hundred by now. He's been around a long time!" - Give him my regards when you next see him."

Sam still plays an active part in entertaining and he told me that he provides the Blind Societies with tapes. He gave me one to listen to and I must tell you that some the songs in his repertoire are really excellent. Jim & Joan Bramwell and myself - on our way home from the Crewe Meeting - recognised them as songs we'd heard in our early years and forgotten that they'd existed. These were songs like:- "If I Give My Heart To You" and "You Can't Be True Dear." But one in particular that I remember from the past - and which I've not heard for at least 40 years - was "Bluebirds Of Happiness." What a great song.

The Hammond organ backing on the tape sounds really great. Many thanks for the tape Sam. You've taken me back into a very pleasant musical past which was much appreciated.

BRIAN EDGE continues - As most readers will know - George Formby gave his name to the Dallas range of Banjoleles and the company - Dallas Arbiter Ltd, 10-18 Clifton St, London EC2 - supplied the instruments with a small GF metal plate fitted on the peg-head. When George died the Formby range of instruments continued but with a metal plate photo of Sam Bass fitted. In the photo, Sam is holding his Gibson and Dallas ukes. The vellum on the Gibson is signed "Cleaning Windows" and that of the Dallas endorsed "Little Ukulele."

And Thank You Very Much Brian!



Sam Bass - now a Crewe member - and a Blackpool poster (next page) showing Sam second on the bill. The year was 1965.



Joseph Collins-Stop Press
 Further to page 8 - I've just received
 a copy of the Video from Carol Vor-
 derman's office. If anyone wants to
 borrow it please contact me on 01925
 727102. Stan.



BLACKPOOL
SUNDAY, 10th SEPT.

SOUTH PIER THEATRE
 at 6 & 8 p.m. Bookable
Seats **Popular Prices**

Lawrence Wright Entertainments Ltd. present

FREDDY
 (PARROT FACE)
DAVIES

SAM BASS

with George Formby Melodies
 from The Black and White Minstrel Show

**SHIRLEY
 DAVIES**
 Direct from London Cabarets

HUGH METT TRIO
 Compere, Comedian
JIMMY RYDELL

"I wonder who's under the
 balcony now - er . . . Oh my
 God - er . . . Is your
 daughter in?"



Hey, George Formby - I
 thought window cleaners
 brought their own ladders

Don't Forget the
NEWSLETTER

What a load of Bananas - Part One.

BRIAN, WHAT'S ALL THIS BANANA BUSINESS WITH STAN?

Many members, particularly new ones, repeatedly ask me, and understandably so, for the background to Stan Evans's thing on bananas. Well here it is for the record.

Stan, a successful retired businessman, whose work was in the field of marquee and tent manufacture, didn't always have it so good. We have all heard famous T.V. personalities reveal that they had had a tough childhood, well Stan was no exception. Clearly hardship often creates a real determination in some people to make a success of their lives.

Stan as a boy came from a very poor family and when he first went to work at 14 he wore a pair of old overalls with nothing underneath as he didn't possess a pair of trousers that still fitted him. His first job was on Warrington market where he could be seen on Saturdays and other market days wandering about carrying a staff on top of which was a board which read, on one side: THE ALL YEAR ROUND FRUIT FOOD and on the other side J. STRETTON, FRUITERER and BANANA SALESMAN. Stan's first job was to advertise in this manner for which he got paid a few coppers. At 11pm Stan had to clear up and he would be allowed to take home any bananas or fruit that was laying about on the floor. Being a chirpy chap he soon became a well liked character and one day he was chatting with the Manager of the London Midland and Scottish Railway Hotel, (now the Pattern Arms just outside Bank Quay Station). It seemed that he was arranging a kids party and Stan mentioned a recent consignment of high quality large bananas that had just arrived at Strettons. As a result he bought half a hundredweight and as a reward Johnnie Stretton gave Stan Sixpence commission.

Sixpence was a large amount of money in those days and Stan got to thinking of ways of capitalising on his good fortune. He always had a flair for music and had often tried to write alternative words for popular songs. As a result he composed a song entitled 'Bananas' and this he sang as he walked around Warrington market. It was not long before he was approached by a man who offered him ten shillings for the rights of the song. Stan was delighted but it was not long before the song was appearing in Pantomimes and on

theatres all around the country. It swept America by storm under its new title 'Yes! We have no Bananas! Johnnie Strettons sales increased as the news got out and so did Stan's commission!

His next enterprise was to have printed small paper labels which read "Bananas, The All Food Fruit, J Stretton, Warrington Market, Wednesday and Saturdays." Stan glued these labels to the back of pennies and were given out in change to customers. This ingenious method of advertising boosted the Banana business even further and Stan Evans' name became synonymous with bananas.

Continued Next Month -Brian Edge

What a load of BANANAS but it is surprising how near to the truth you are Brian. Re. The trousers. When I was almost due to start work, at 14, the war was on and I had to wait about a month to get enough clothing coupons to buy a pair of overalls. By the time I received these new overalls, I had shot up in size and the new overalls barely fit me. My first job was in a wire mill (Warrington is known for wire) and my job was to plunge heavy coils of wire into a vat of acid. Due to the war there was a shortage of man power so they relied on strapping young lads to do a man's work.

Every time I plunged the coils into the vat, the acid would shoot upward and splash all over my brand new overalls, with the result that within the first couple of hours my overalls and trousers were eaten away. That night I went home in tatters with no legs (almost waist down) to my trousers and overalls. The skin on my red raw legs was burning and I can remember running all the way to get as much breeze round them as possible. My mother was not in the least pleased.

Regarding the Fruit & Veg - Money was always tight so I built a lightweight trailer. It had to be as light as possible because It had to be towed by my old bike. I fitted a large box on the front of the bike and a sliding drawer underneath the trailer.

Every Sunday morning I would rise at 5am and push the pedals of my unique outfit to the farms to select the freshest of fruit and vegetables. The box on the front was for the fruit and rhubarb, the sliding tray was for the lettuce, the trailer was loaded with mixed veg etc. and a 1 Cwt bag of potatoes was loaded on to my handlebars. I pushed that old bike home - 3 miles - with a worn out bike chain that slipped round at a faster rate than I was travelling, and by 7am the neighbours were waiting for me to arrive. Possibly the only fruit I didn't have on board was Bananas and this is because they were extremely scarce during the war.

Very Pleased to report that Steve Raymond has made excellent recovery after his regular hospital treatment. We are all delighted!

It's A Miracle!!! - Eh By Gum!!!

I was sat down at the computer and just about to write to Jim Collins - the father of young Joseph Collins who we raised funds for to send him to Florida to swim with the dolphins. Several readers have shown an interest so I wanted to know if there had been any response to the healing.



Suddenly I heard a shout from the front room and it was Eva asking me to come and watch the "Miracles" programme (presented by Carol Vorderman) on TV. Low and behold - and you could have knocked me down with a wet lettuce - but who should be on the tele but young Joseph, swimming with the dolphins.

I couldn't believe it!!! "It's a miracle!!!" I thought! Young Joseph was the star of the dolphin show and he appeared to be getting plenty of enjoyment from his adventure. Hanging onto the dolphin's fin for a tow round the lake he was thoroughly enjoying himself.

As usual there were "fors" and "against" from the experts on this type of healing but one young girl showed tremendous progress with her speech after her treatment.

Unfortunately it was all too rushed to get a copy of the programme for our members to see, however, I've sent a letter to Carol Vorderman and asked if it might be possible to obtain a copy. Will keep you up to date on any progress.

We all trust that George's Light is shining for young Joseph.

Jim Bramwell says: - A peeping Tom knocked at my door and asked me to tell the missus to draw the curtains.

Harry says: The lump on the side of his head was a glancing blow. Lottie caught him glancing at a blonde!

Jim says: Marriage isn't a word - it's a sentence!

Harry says: Did you hear about the nun who slept in her clothes? She couldn't get out of the habit!

Jim's got the sweetest voice in the country! - It sounds a bit rough in town but it's great in the country!

Party Time At Crewe - The September concert at

Crewe featured a surprise party for Pat Chenery's 60th birthday. 56 attended the event which was set up by CREWE ukeologist (Happy Go Lucky Alan Chenery. Alan wishes to thank everyone for making Pat's night a memorable one. The event was a closely guarded secret and the first that Pat knew about it was when the Birthday Cake was wheeled in and everybody sang Happy Birthday! Thelma Stanyer and Betty Jones put on a great buffet and in the second half Betty sang a solo.

Members are beginning to get fixed up with their outfits for November and December and thereafter. There were many fancy waistcoats on show. Connie came dressed as a Suffragette complete with a full fox fur tippet which intrigued young Gareth Sumner who had never seen one before.

Young Frank Murphy (7 years) complete with coloured waistcoat and bow tie, came for the first time with his dad and younger brother. He calmly walked to the front of the hall carrying his uke case and approached me saying "Who do I see so that I can play my ukulele on the stage?" I directed him to the MC who made a note of his requirements and Frank calmly went back to his seat.

Later he sang "Because I'm Shy" - a GF song that has never been performed before at Crewe - Wonderful! Frank's dad announced the arrival of twin sisters so Frank will have plenty of scope for a new song with them in mind. Congratulations to Frank's mum too.

Connie Edge made her stage debut with her uke singing "We've Been A Long Time Gone" which was well received by the audience. Another first time performance at Crewe.

Auntie Mary missed the meeting as she was on holiday in Portugal. Poor Mary said "Oh dear those mosquitoes! I've got bit on my neck, both eyes and my bum! I've got a cold and my hearing aid broke down, but in spite of that I enjoyed the rest and I'm looking forward to going to Peniffordd". Everyone is wondering what the 'rest' was? Perhaps we'll find out and we'll be able to try it!

It is great to have Sam Bass with us at the Crewe meeting. Sam has performed with the best on television, radio and in theatres all over the country. Sam enjoys listening to us perform and it is a great privilege to have him with us.

Don't forget we are hoping that you will all turn up in your costumes for the November party so as George would say "Get Cracking." NOW! *Thank you Brian. It was a really great meeting and the effort you all put in is appreciated.*

Send a self Photo with your Article

What A surprise - I

actually received a phone call from Anthony Mason who has been too busy to ring anyone lately. I asked him where he was working and he said: - "Well er, well er, well er, I've been working on the Isle Of Man on the - can't remember the date - at the Miss Isle of Man Contest 1997 (*well at least he's got the year right*) and I was booked to play during the costume changes. I sang "Isle Of Man" and "Riding In The T T Races," and when I sang "Mr Wu" the dancers came on the stage dressed in Chinese costumes and danced all around me (*no wonder he's been too busy to ring anyone*).



NORMAN WISDOM

During the second half of the show I went on stage again and did a dance routine (*Anthony didn't dance surely*) to "Lamp Post" and "Blackpool Rock." While I was on the stage I announced that Norman Wisdom was in the audience - who actually worked with George - so it was a tremendous honour for me to sing a song to Norman.

It was really good and I received a standing ovation. Later I was booked to go on the radio three times and made the front page of the Isle Of Man newspaper.

After the show Norman came back stage and we had a photo taken of us together. He gave me his phone number and invited me to go to his house. *Well I'm very pleased that he is working and we'll know where to go if we want to borrow some money.*

George (Abie Abie) Cheetham -

You might be wondering why we've not seen him at the meetings lately. Well this is because he has moved address and he's now finding difficulty in getting transport. His new address is: 57A Victoria Square, Oldham Rd, Ancoats M4 5DZ. He said, "Stan, I've been cut off from everybody since I moved. If any of the members are in the area ask them to drop in for a chat - or drop me a line." *No problem George - Get the kettle on! I'll bet you didn't know that George is a wealthy millionaire - Well they named Cheetham Hill after him!*



Anything To Report? Any Gossip? Jokes? News? Tittle Tattle?

N. Wales (Penyffordd) Meeting by Cliff Royle

Another excellent meeting with about 60 present Including visitors and the usual tremendous support from the South Cheshire Branch.

We are now blessed with a new M.C., Jim Knight, (our dressy comedian and player) who kept us all in order. His limitation of performers only doing one song or act paid off, for there was only time for a couple of second turns before close down.

Perhaps the highlights were the young players Frank Murphy, Gareth Sumner and Stephen Ensall. The latter was accompanied by Stan Evans. We just could not get these youngsters (sorry Stan) to stop playing.

Of course we mustn't forget Connie Edge who sings and plays in Victorian dress, and Charles Penman who played the uke banjo on the stage for the first time, ably accompanied by Dennis Lee with the song "My Little Nicotine Girl." We also had "Dr Jazz" superbly performed by the South Cheshire group.

There was a free pastry supper during the interval. Was this to celebrate Gerald Jones's Birthday? This free supper - not the birthday - is likely to be a continuing feature of future meetings.

OFFERS OF FOOD WANTED

Our Fancy Dress Christmas Party will be on Friday 5th December. Leslie Lee is co-ordinating the refreshments so please contact her with your offers of food. etc. All are welcome to come along.

WE are deeply indebted to Dennis & Leslie Lee for all the hard work they put in on behalf of the society. May we thank them most sincerely. Dennis is currently leading Training Sessions which are proving successful and is assisting Stan Evans with the proposed D-Day Trip to France next June 5th. Cliff Royle.

P.S. Now that we are "separated" from Wales there has been a special request to have Penyffordd spelt correctly in future issues of the Newsletter. It is thought that perhaps previous mis-spellings may have been deliberate acts of vandalism.

Thank you Cliff for the report. Well you can knock me over with a cloth cap - I didn't know it was Gerald Jones's birthday. Anyway, the vegetarian pasty tasted really great. I keep telling em at the Crewe meeting about the check points being set up on the Welsh and Lancashire borders. Every time I go to the meeting they carry on about spelling Pennyford wrong and they said they don't want any of this Ee Bah Gum - It's a Miracle stuff in Wales. It's Yakki Dah or else! Fussy Lot!

Don't Worry that your article isn't good enough. Send it in and we'll dress it up.

Alan Randall

rang to have a chat and to tell me that the Lytham St Annes Exhibition is now closed. In the opening stages the management were very pleased with the response from the public but they found that it slowly tailed off when the publicity wasn't being pushed out through the media. They don't intend holding the exhibition again next year.



Well this is what we found with the GF Exhibition at Warrington. As soon as there was a lull in the TV and Radio coverage, the crowds would start to dwindle. Due to George having been dead for over 35 years - and therefore forgotten by the general public - the crowds are not prepared to travel just to see a basic show of photos, videos etc. So it is essential that many extras are provided like: The staff being able to put on a GF concert, singalongs, guided tours, competitions, tuition on how to play the uke, etc.

The people who remember George are now in their 60s to 90s so to keep a permanent exhibition alive it is necessary to organise coach trips from various places like old folks homes and day centres etc. It has got to be run as a business otherwise it will not succeed.

And this is the reason why there has been no rush to put on a permanent GF exhibition at George's family house in Warrington. There is a lot of work involved in keeping the media interested and after the first few months they will have switched to some other current topic.

Now there is a big difference between us and the likes of the Laurel & Hardy Society or the Al Jolson Society. These great super stars were known world wide and therefore support is given from other countries.

However, on the positive side we are still considering a permanent GF exhibition at Hill Crest and talks are going on with one of the Warrington Council's chief executives - who has a keen interest.

Who knows, we might have a permanent home yet?

Don't Worry that your article isn't good enough. Send it in and we'll dress it up.

Ken Ratcliffe gave me copies of two letters which Beryl sent to Mrs Hamer, 30 Salford Brow, Derby St, Manchester. One was headed: GF at the Palace Manchester, and the address was: 152 Dorset House, Gloucester Place, London NW1. Tel. Welbeck 5522.

Dear Mrs Hamer, During our recent visit to the Middle East to entertain the troops we had the pleasure of meeting your husband who asked us to convey a message to you. This we gladly agreed to do. The message will be read from the stage at the First House at the Palace Theatre on Tuesday next. We have pleasure in sending herewith two complimentary tickets to enable you to be present with a friend. With best wishes, Yours Sincerely George & Beryl Formby.

The second letter went on: *We met your husband also in Malta. He sends his love to you and to Shirley. I had a long chat with him and he told me that he was missing your cooking very much and also told me to tell you to get him plenty of stuff ready - especially Hot-Pot - for his home coming, whenever that may be. Don't worry Mrs Hamer. He is nowhere near any danger so you can rest assured that he is O.K.*

Thanks Ken for the copies. Dear Beryl was all heart. She didn't deserve the brick-bats she received.

Warrington Exhibition Material

Alan Randall has just rung again to say that he will be leaving Lytham St Annes to return the show exhibits back to the Warrington Museum - and did I fancy meeting him there - no problem - we had the van unloaded in short time and all the items back in store. They're all in perfect condition and well preserved with loads of packing paper and bubble wrap. Handling the props brought back happy memories of the exhibition - George's photos, dummies, cartoon drawings, memories of Blackpool - Great - Turned Out Nice Again! Many thanks to good old Graham Greenfield for also coming along to supervise the job.

Where's Harry

- Well we've not seen anything of him for the past few months. He's had a holiday in Llandudno so let's hope he and Lottie are well. Must give him a ring. The problem is - he might start telling me a load of 75 year old jokes over the phone - I'll be ready for him!

Eve Stewart

is progressing very well with her music studies. She has passed her theory test on piano with flying colours and is now ready for the next test. Good for you Eve. We need some piano accompanists in the N West!

Don't Forget The NEWSLETTER



Mr Clarke: at the White House

THE former Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, took his reputation for fiscal prudence with him into opposition when he booked into a £20-a-night bed-and-breakfast establishment yesterday for the conference.

Mr Clarke and wife Gillian checked into the White House in Adelaide Street — not to be confused with an identically named B & B in Withnell Road — shortly before noon.

He admitted that they could have stayed at the five-star Imperial Hotel — where William Hague is occupying a £442-a-night suite — but had chosen the cheaper option on the personal recommendation of John Gummer, the former Environment Secretary. A room at the White House runs to an

en suite bathroom and tea-making facilities. There is no mini-bar and the television is in the guests' lounge.

And while the best rooms at the Imperial offer sea views, The White House overlooks the tradesman's entrance to the Winter Gardens. Mr Clarke said he turned down the Imperial to "avoid the crush of photographers".

"The Gummars have been staying here for more than 20 years," he said. "We agreed that one year we would stay here with him."

Mr Clarke admitted he did not vote for Mr Hague in the leader's ballot as he was not sent a voting paper. He added: "My agent must talk to me about whether or not I am a member."

The White House, which is only a few hundred from the Wintergardens, is a very comfortable hotel to stay at and they love to encourage George Formby members to stay with them and give a late night concert after the Wintergardens. In fact when the members get back to the hotel they often find a tray of sandwiches waiting for them and a request to get the entertainment going.

Dennis Lee and members from N. Wales, along with Brian Edge, and the Crewe members, always stay there, so if it's good enough for Dennis & Brian's crowd then it's got to good enough for the politicians.

What a contrast!!! I wonder what the politicians do when they get back to the digs?

Well you can bet your right arm and your bike that they don't have a "Knees Up." That's for sure!!!



He'll never get the hang of that uke!

Next uke practise night
at Crewe, Tues 4th Nov
7-30pm ring Brian on
(01270) 69836.

Dear Stan. It was great LOZZACKING about in Italy, but Bill would have been quite SNEEPED that you didn't know that Lozzacking is what posh folks call lazing around.

Our October meeting was another super, song filled session. The room was BOSTING at the seams. We kicked off with the usual tuition session. (what a racket! - just like the side room at Blackpool where they sell ukes).

Our oldest member, Mat Kelly, was suffering from a bout of bronchitis and sadly couldn't be with us, and Barry Bowler had an attack of asthma. You were missed lads so we hope you make the next one.

We were happy to welcome John (sorry I didn't get the surname) from Wigan and look forward to you coming again. Now that Connie Edge has made her debut you can't keep her down! She did a super job! There's a shortage of lady performers so we could do with more. Peter Burrows made his debut on the night and every one of our performers did a grand job - it's great to have so many members willing to entertain but the trouble that at the end of the night I am RAZZERED with all the running up and down to introduce them. What about a Stannah Lift? All the best - Derek Ball.

LOZZACKING, SNEEPED, RAZZERED - it all sounds like a different country in Staffordshire! They'll be having referendums for independence next and flying their own flag! Anyway, foreigners or not, I'm very pleased that you are all progressing well in the Potteries and some day we'll pay you a visit. Keep sending them in Derek.

The D. Day Trip - June 5th to June 8th is going very well and about 20 members have booked their seats. To date we have, Dennis & Leslie Lee, Bill & Ivy Turner, Mac & Milly McGee, Stan & Eva Evans, Brian & Connie Edge, Kevin & Jo Blanchfield, Cliff & Margaret Royle, Alan & Liz Whittaker, Tom & Nora Meredith and friend, Charlie Penman.

The cost is £94. 50 which includes everything - Ferry, Hotel, B/B, but there are extras if required, such as a Two Berth Cabin at £16 each or a Four Berth Cabin at £12 each. Half Board will cost £19.50 extra and a Single Room is £25 extra. There's no need for cabins on the return (day time) journey.

If you wish to book please send your deposit of £15 each to Dennis Lee, "Eljar" Ash Drive, Pentre Lane, Buckley, CH7 3PR - TEL. 01244 544799 or contact Stan Evans on 01925 727102 for details. It'll be a great trip so don't miss it!

You've not sent an article two months - Was it something I said?



FORMBY'S THE NAME.—Seventeen-year-old Francesca Formby is making a big name for herself as a ventriloquist in cabaret shows. Francesca, of Albert-road, Widnes (pictured here with two of her "assistants"), is niece of famous ukelele-playing George Formby.



"I don't care if you are a member of the George Formby Society."

**Keep me up to
date with the
news**



**Another photo from the early days of the GFS-
see if you can recognise any faces.**

Stop Press - Just received a call from Jim Bramwell who reports that the SALE meeting, which suffered low attendance through change of venue, is building up again. The Woodheys Club is ideal with an excellent bar and very comfortable seating. They make you very welcome there and the gorgeous Dolly Sisters - on the back row - join in with all the songs. See you there!

Beware! It's not always plain sailing when you go out to perform to the Old Folks Homes. Dennis Lee and I went out to perform at one of the Golborne, near Wigan, centres and unfortunately it clashed with the retirement of one of their dearest carers. After 25 years service at the home she was due to retire that day. The old folk were very sad about her leaving so we were brought in specially to cheer them up with a few Formby numbers.

Harry's Logic
 Footballers are over paid!
 They only play for 80 minutes
 so if you divide 80 into 22
 players they are only kicking
 the ball for 4 minutes each.
It makes a lot of sense Harry.

In between the GF songs we tried to give them a few little tales about George but they were having none of it! Just before the opening number one old lady shouted "I don't like George Formby!" which was probably the only comment that brought any response. To make things worse the management were gathered round another table - in the same room - having their own little occasion and clearly expressing their sorrows at losing their favourite staff member. The old folk, who were not in the least interested in us, strained every muscle to see what was going on at the other table. It was very hard work! Dennis & I slowly made our exit and put it all down to experience.

So! If you are engaged to do a show anywhere, take my advice - check to see that it doesn't clash with the main star's retirement party. It can be very embarrassing!

Another Great Night At Liverpool As usual we were short of artists but this didn't stop us from having an excellent evening. We were pleased to see Cliff & Margaret Royle with us for the first time. Cliff, who writes songs better than Andrew Lloyd Webber, gave us one of his latest efforts - "Mr Wu and Lay-By Lill" and it went down very well. The words are great and if Cliff Richard used them in his show he'd make a name for himself - but I don't suppose he'd do it - professional jealousy and all that!

Jim Bramwell was on very good form with a new batch of jokes. Even Joan hadn't heard some of them before.

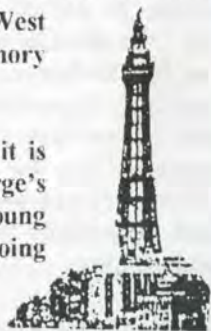
Joe (I keep forgetting the words) McCaffrey is coming along very well with his playing and Paul Robinson is looking more like George every month. I think that Liverpool is the only meeting where the Grand Thrash is played to an audience of two . . . who, incidentally have been instructed to applaud twice as loud. Anyway, as usual, we all had an excellent night and always look forward to the next one.

Don't Forget SALE Red White Blue MEETING Nov. 21st

Do We Need a Statue? by Arthur Newton

After reading comments in the October issue of the N. West Newsletter on whether or not there should be a statue in memory of George in Blackpool.

Well I suppose it would be all right, but the way I look at it is this: We have a number of clubs in the N West where George's music is very much alive and kicking. We also have young people who play the uke well and will no doubt keep things going for years to come.



I am sure that if George was alive today he would be far more pleased with what the clubs are doing than the erection of a statue. And I'm certain that he would be pleased to shake the hand of young Gareth for instance, at the Crewe meeting, and many other young and old who run and support the clubs.

Arthur Newton

Many thanks Arthur for your comments. We all agree that the GF Clubs are far better than a statue and quite honestly I can never see Blackpool honouring George with one. They have had so much talent passing through their doors over the years that no matter who they chose it would unfair to someone. The Blackpool Council are also honouring George when they give us free publicity and sponsor our meetings at the Wintergardens. They have high respect for George!

Douglas, Isle Of Man, erected a statue of George in the town centre simply because of his "No Limit" fame and also to create some interest in the shopping area. George, along with Norman Wisdom appear to be their most popular characters. Unlike Blackpool, they don't have the number of stars to chose from.

Sheet Music Wanted

- I mentioned three songs that were performed by Sam Bass:- "Bluebirds Of Happiness", "You Can't Be True Dear", and "If I Give My Heart To You". Has anyone got the sheet music to any of these lovely songs? If so, please ring me on 01925 727102.

SALE - November Meeting

They're Going to Hang Out The Washing and sing all the old War Songs in support of Armistice Day - So bring your old Gas Mask, a Tin Hat, a Bucket of Water, a 20' Ladder and loads of Red, White and Blue with you on Friday November 21st. I'll be a great night! - I can't wait! "It's a long way to Tipperary" - Pack Up Your Troubles - Goodbye Dolly Grey - Great songs! See You There.

Talking About

the Isle Of Man -

It was about 1991 and we were tidying up after the Warrington Museum Exhibition - sending all the photos and articles back to their owners etc. when the phone rang and it was a representative of the I O M Government. They were considering erecting a statue of George in the Douglas town centre and would I give them permission to go ahead? Well, I must say that I felt "reet praud" to think that they'd asked my permission, but, as I told them, "You don't need to ask me for permission!" "No!" he said, "But we need to ask someone and your name is the only one we have.



He asked if the family would be offended if a statue was erected, to which I replied that I'm sure that they wouldn't but he was welcome to contact them if he wished. I gave him the phone numbers.

A few days later another call came from them asking for photos of George and within a few months the statue was made. Due to the positioning of George's statue (on the pavement) it has become quite a popular feature over there and several people ring to ask if I require a photo.

Blackpool Evening Gazette 23/1/39

George Formby - The Doctors Order Him To Rest

George Formby was compelled by illness to abandon his part in pantomime at the Manchester Palace Theatre and is now returning to his Beryldene home, Little Singleton. It is probable that after a short rest he will visit the South of France to recuperate. Mr Formby has consulted a Harley Street specialist from an acute infection of the respiratory passages.

The places of George and Beryl in the pantomime have been taken by Billy Caryll and Hilda Mundy.

Mrs Ingham, George's mother-in-law, told the Gazette that she wasn't sure of the length of time George & Beryl would stay in France. "It will depend on medical advice," she added.

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: **NO MEETINGS 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 3rd Friday - Ring Ken Ratcliffe on 0161 430 8290. Adm £1. The November Meeting is an Armistice Day "RED - WHITE - & - BLUE SPECIAL" - Great!

Crewe Wistaston Memorial Hall - Ring Brian Edge on 01270 69836
Future dates - 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 - Next one British Legion Fund Raiser Friday October 31st - Red/White/Blue.

Werrington Branch (Near Stoke) at the Werrington Village Hall - Every 2nd Thursday in the month, Ring Bill Turner on 01782 304858. Future dates - 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 Nov.
So as George would say -
"Get Cracking"
Support Your Newsletter

