

THE NORTH - WEST

# GEORGE FORMBY

## Newsletter 30

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December 1997



Specially Produced for  
George Formby Fans

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**Welcome To Newsletter No.30** and we'll start by asking . . . .

# Who has a Birthday

on the 26<sup>th</sup> of Nov. . . Well it's none other than our top news gatherer and N. West Stalwart -  
**Young Brian Edge.**

Brian must be the hardest working member of the GFS! He grafts extremely hard with his Crewe members putting on meetings every month, organising the hall, bearing the responsibility, arranging tuition lessons, chasing up items for the Newsletter - fetching, carrying, moving, shifting, arranging, gathering, collecting, - and all the other jobs that he gets involved in. He is Mister (let's get the job done) Reliable!! And it is great to have him batting on our side!



We wish you many happy returns Brian and tons of luck, success and prosperity in the coming year. You deserve it!!!

**Brian was born on November 26<sup>th</sup>** which makes him a Sagittarian! Did you know that Sagittarians (half horse and half man) have a licence to foul the streets and footpaths? - very enlightening!

Also the Crewe meeting on Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> will belong to **Pam Baddeley** who will also hold her birthday celebration. We all thoroughly hope that you both enjoy your night.

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## Overheard

Professional Music Teacher:- These George Formby players only know three or four chords. . . . . but they're always happy!

# The Formby Story

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Part 20 by Stan Evans

George was struggling. He was realising that following in his father's footsteps, and taking over his songs and patter will never work. He was too big a star to be copied and the crowds were constantly reminding him that, although he was billed as "A Chip Of The Old Block," he will never be as good as his father. World war one had helped to broaden the minds of the public, and they were beginning to be no longer amused by simple and pathetic artists, dressed in old clothes, who sang dull songs to receive sympathy. They were looking for something with a little more life added to it, and George was struggling to find the answer.

Now there are many reports on how George first took up the uke so I will stick to the most popular one.

(Although Louie, George's sister, did claim that, in their childhood days, there was always a wooden ukulele in the house and all of them learned how to knock a few chords out of it.) On one occasion George walked into his dressing room and asked one of his fellow artists why he was looking a bit sad. When he explained that it was due to money problems George agreed to buy a Keech banjo ukulele from him for two pounds ten shillings. At this stage George never thought for one moment that introducing the uke into his act would be answer to his problem. He simply admired great artists like Ukulele (Ike) Edwards and Frank Crumit, and in his dressing room, he made pathetic attempts to copy them. It was during these noisy sessions that other artists dared him to use it at the end of his act, and Frank Formby, George's younger brother, claimed that the theatre manager told him to take the uke on stage to George to embarrass him into playing it.

George - always a gambler who enjoyed a challenge - introduced the uke and the crowd loved him. He had found the right prop to suit his style and character and thoughts were beginning to run through his mind on how he can use it for the full act.

We have already reported that George used the name "George Hoy" until he became famous, and some reports state that Beryl was the inspiration behind George changing his name to George Formby, and also taking up the uke. Well none of these are true!

George didn't wait until he became famous to change his name! During the week of 10<sup>th</sup> September 1923, (at 19 years of age) he played his uke at the Morecambe Tower Theatre, under the name of George Formby, and during this time he was still struggling to make a name for himself. MORE NEXT MONTH.



**MORECAMBE TOWER**  
THEATRE, BALLROOM & GARDENS  
PREMIER PLACE OF ENTERTAINMENT IN MORECAMBE  
MONDAY, SEPT. 10th, 1923  
TWICE DAILY at 2 and 7 P.M.  
N. DOROT  
**WOOD**  
At the Piano, L.I.L.  
**THE ACT BEAUTIFUL**  
TOM FAGAN | HALMA  
HELEN JOAN | DINGLEY  
**DANCING**  
FANCY DRESS CARNIVAL : 2 BANDS  
BERT NEILSON  
MARIANO MANGRO TROUPE  
GEORGE FORMBY | FRED HUTCHINGS

## Great Success at Warrington . . . We all

shared a wonderful night at The Alliance Social Club, Warrington. Thanks to Dennis & Leslie Lee, - towers of strength who supplied and set up the PA equipment and did an excellent job with the Red/White/Blue bunting, the night went with a swing and without any hitches (so unusual for Warrington).



We expected to be a bit thin on the ground for artists because the Crewe members were otherwise involved entertaining and raising funds for the Parkinson Disease Society, however, we were greatly blessed when members from the Yorkshire Ukulele Circle turned up to give support and perform.

Our sincere thanks go to them:- Paul Mountain, Jack Sharp, Lionel Owen, Charlie Hever, Tony Marshall, Ken Smith, George Butterworth and David White. Knights in shining armour every one of them!!!!

They came from everywhere to support the occasion and to raise funds for the British Legion - 150 miles away, from Milton Keynes, came Jeffrey & Christine (Formby) Booth, and Dave & Janet Hawkins and John Taylor and family came from Morecambe. We were pleased to see George Tyrer and his wife from Abergavenny, and many more who travelled long distances.

### ICING ON THE CAKE

But what a wonderful sight to see - Charles & Eve Stewart on the door!!! They greeted everybody as they came into the hall and made them feel so very welcome. There was a warmth from them, that is impossible to explain, which added tremendously to the musical atmosphere that filled the room. Old friends were re-united and they had so much to talk about.

A cheque for £200 was given to Cliff Royle for his British Legion Appeal and Cliff, who came in dressed as a 74 year old Spice Girl, with a ginger wig and cycling gear - pushing his bike, with two flat tyres, a string of onions round his neck, and claiming that he had just pedalled from Dover Docks (we didn't believe him) after his London to France sponsored journey, entertained us with "I Wish I Could Play The Ukulele." - (we were all wishing he could) What a great sport he is!!! At 74 he's a marvel!!! The response from the packed crowd, who found it hard to believe that amateurs could perform so well, was really encouraging. They wanted to know when the next concert would be held. Everything went as smooth as silk! Our thanks to all.

# Crewe star performer injured by Hit & Run driver

Crewe uke specialist and resident drummer, Steve Hassall, had to pass a late fitness test for the October concert after being knocked off his bicycle by a hit and run driver, who abandoned the van and did a runner soon after the accident. Steve landed up in hospital but was allowed to go home after treatment. He has had a lot of pain in his shoulders but to our delight turned up on the night. Our concerts would not be the same without him.

The October concert in my opinion was the best we have put on since our inauguration. All our acts are improving all the time and new artists are appearing each month which is a very healthy state of affairs. Our sound system has been modified and as a result there is a much better mix of backing music and vocals. It has been a tough job to get right. Theoretically it is quite simple people say "Its just a matter of twiddling a couple of knobs", but in reality it is much more complicated than that. Hopefully we have now got it right and your enjoyment of our concerts will be greatly enhanced.

Stan Evans excelled with his monthly bit of magic able aided by Colin Wood and Alan Chenery. Readers will be pleased to hear that Stan's guillotine has now been suitable modified after the problems he experienced with Colin Woods neck, which incidentally hasn't been quite the same since the operation!

Nice to see Pamela Baddeley complete with uke in the thrash. We now have three lady players at Crewe and there could well be more before long. Mary Atkinson (whose hails from scouseland) performed for the first time "In my Liverpool Home" along with nephew Des. Mary is getting quite a repertoire these days.

The dates for the 1998 concerts and the practise sessions were distributed in October. Anyone who hasn't got one please ask Brian as we don't want anyone missing a concert.

Please note the normal subs of 50p is increased to £1 on party nights where buffets are provided. Remember there is another party (celebrating our third anniversary) in December and there will be another in January to celebrate a special birthday for our friend Carl Basford so that is something else to look forward to. Its all happening isn't it?

Don't forget keep up the good work with the costumes for December and January and for those who haven't yet got fixed up with something, do get your thinking caps on. Lets make our concerts something really special. Brian Edge  
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**Jim Bramwell** is doing well with his jokes! He's just received a huge batch of new ones (possibly from Harry) and he's going round all the N. West branches telling them. Every one a Cracker. Good for you Jim.

## Upstairs and Downstairs - Hot-Pot Drama at the Alliance Social Club!!!!

While we were all enjoying ourselves watching the concert at the Alliance the audience was not aware of the excitement that was going on in the upstairs kitchen.

George's nephew, Jeffrey Booth, bravely stepped in and offered to take charge of the cooking of the hot-pots - which meant heating up the ready made pies and organising the distribution.

Three small ovens had been switched on previously, plus a hot plate with an unbreakable glass top. Now we were informed that the glass top could be used as a heated plate for the pies so consequently we loaded this up with about 50 hot-pot pies.



### FLYING PIES

Jeffrey came down to tell me that all was well - all the pies were warming up very nicely and they would be ready in about 20 minutes. He then went up to the upstairs kitchen and was just walking through the door when suddenly there was a loud explosion. Hot-pots were flying everywhere - the glass top had blown up and bits and pieces of glass and hot-pot were hurtling through the air. Fortunately he managed to duck just before a large chunk of pie zoomed his way. He quickly spun round to make a quick exit but unfortunately he was too late to avoid a huge chunk that hit him at the back of his head. He said "I've never moved so quick in my life - the room was full of flying pies and it was like a D Day Invasion. They were shooting out at every angle! I thought I'd escaped the blast when suddenly a huge dollop hit me at the back of the head. It was fortunate that we purchased extra pies."

Well there is one consolation - the pies tasted wonderful and Jeffrey did a marvellous job in cooking them. Also the World War Two Society are to be praised for doing an excellent job in distributing the food round. It was all done to perfection.

Jeffrey! The committee - in their wisdom - have decided that in future you will be our resident chef in the hot-pot department. You were GREAT!!!

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### JUST IMAGINE

Just imagine a world without cello tape  
Or a telly to watch News at 10  
Or a video to tape Eastenders  
Or playing your uke now and then.

Just imagine a world without Dennis  
Where we couldn't see Kevin's face  
And Harry's five stringed banjo  
Well it wouldn't be such a bad place!

**Beryl Knits for the Babies** - On top of all the other war work she and her husband have been doing lately, Beryl Formby has been knitting for poor babies.

This week she handed a parcel of bonnets and booties to Coun T Roberts, Chairman of Fleetwood Publicity Committee. A message is attached to each set bearing "the compliments of George & Beryl Formby." Councillor Roberts told an Evening Gazette reporter today that he intends to hand the parcel to a member of the Women's Committee at Fleetwood Child Welfare Centre, so that she can give the sets to the poorest and most needy children.

Beryl Formby had particularly asked that they should go to Fleetwood children, for both she and her husband take a big interest in the town.

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Blackpool Evening Gazette 4<sup>th</sup> September 1940

## Beryl's Dress Of Triumph

One of the most important features of any act on the stage is the dresses. And it was a further tribute to the resources of Beryl Formby, who with her husband, George Formby, entered the Blackpool Opera House at such short notice, when she wore dresses that were the envy of every woman in the packed audience.



Most admired of all was an oyster grey dinner dress in the wartime style that is to sweep all others aside for the social occasion this winter. Designed on moulded lines, and toe length, the dress had fitting sleeves finishing in a point over the wrist, and silver beading on the shoulders, fastening the draped neckline.

### GEORGE'S MODEL

"How do you like my model?" asked George, pulling on that ridiculous little cap of his. "I wouldn't part with this for a fortune," he added, "It's one of the treasures that I brought back from the grand time I had with the lads in France."

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**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.

## N. Wales Meeting by Cliff Royle

We had another excellent attendance at our November meeting, again with over 60 attending. The Penyffordd British Legion really do us proud. The lounge we use has been very tastefully decorated and refurbished. We have superb lighting systems, a solo dance area, and expensive carpet on the floor. In addition of course we have our own "Lamp Post" and now a large caricature of George, painted by our new signwriter/sculptor member Brian Wright.

Again we were supported by the Crewe members including their two dollie birds, Connie and Auntie Mary, who delighted us with an excellent duet. Nice to have feminine interest. Dennis & Christian Lee, with Ray Davies, joined us later. They had been performing at the British Legion Remembrance event at Llay. They were accompanied by the BL Welfare man, Kevin Blanchfield.

We still hold our training sessions at Dennis Lee's home on Tuesday evening. He recently came back from the Black Forest with a Cuckoo Clock but we are not sure what "key" it is in. The Llandudno "Do" is to be held at the St George's Hotel on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April.

Our Fancy Dress Party is on Dec 5<sup>th</sup>. when the theme will be "George Formby" Please come suitably attired. There will be a buffet for which all contributions will be appreciated. Kindly let Leslie Lee know what food you propose to bring.

Our members, Cliff Royle and Kevin Blanchfield, raised a good deal of money for the British Legion "Pedal to Paris" Poppy Appeal. They thank the various local branches of the GFS for their support.

*Thanks Cliff for your report - sorry for editing it down from 500 pages.*

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## Two GF Plays - What A Coincidence!

A Liverpool writer has written a script for a play which features George Formby. It all takes place in heaven where several well known entertainers are settled. If they want to continue their careers they must not repeat anything that they did on earth. If they do so a raspberry sound will be heard which means that they have lost a few points towards gaining their wings. George sings 7 out of the 9 songs. The writer rang to asking for a singer.

Two days later a phone call from ITV. They are producing a play which takes place in heaven and they want a GF look-a-like singer in his mid-thirties to play the part. "Hang on," I said, "We've already dealt with this one!" "Well" he said, "you can't have dealt with it because it's hot off the press and nobody outside our office knows about it!" "What a coincidence" I thought! Two plays with a similar theme. It should be screened sometime around January - will keep you up to date.



# Crewe Branch Entertain Parkinson Soc. 9

The South Cheshire George Formby Ukulele Society provided the entertainment for the annual dinner of the Parkinson Disease Society in the Adtranz Canteen on the 30<sup>th</sup> November. About 100 attended and after a very enjoyable meat and potato pie supper the group entertained for about an hour.

Brian Edge gave a summary of George's life story during which a variety of George's songs were sung with lots of audience participation. The hall acoustics were excellent as was our sound system. The Mayor and Lady Mayor of Crewe glistened in their Civic Regalia and were clearly well pleased with our performance. The Mayor gave a vote of thanks to all who contributed to the evening. The players were Jonathan & Pam Baddeley, Don Chalkey, Walter Kirkland, Connie Edge, Colin Wood, Steve Hassall (drums & uke) Alan Chenery and Brian Edge, not forgetting Gareth Sumner who gave a very confident performance of "Windows" to the surprise of most of the audience.

*Thanks for the report Brian . . . . Now it's your turn to make an error!!! Your concert was on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October not the 30<sup>th</sup> of November!!!*

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## Spotlight on Brian Harrison - Penyffordd Branch.

Brian was born in Wrexham and has lived in Penyffordd for the past 32 years. He works as an administrator for Halifax PLC.

He had no musical background but the love of George's films, from an early age, prompted him to join the North Wales Group from its inception. He is a keen photographer and very passionate about vintage restoration spending most summer week-ends travelling to various steam rallies up and down the country.



He attended his first Blackpool Convention in June this year which left a lasting impression, and now under the patient guidance of Dennis Lee is improving his playing style.

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**One-man Meeting** - Cheers to Cyril Palmer who ran a One-man meeting at the Liverpool Branch. He was the only one to turn up so he had the stage entirely to himself. With good old British grit he said to himself "The show must go on" so he compared the show and then performed to the crowd. After the show was over, and the applause had died down, one of the regulars told him that the George Formby lot were due the following week. We were all enjoying ourselves at Penyffordd! *We are proud of you Cyril*

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The **Liverpool Branch** have now raised about £180 and are almost ready to purchase a new Karioké player for the meetings.

## Sam Bass is creating Interest!!!

Old established GFS member, Alex Barrett, of 16 Whitehaugh Ave, Peebles, Scotland EH45 9AF, writes . . . . .

Dear Stan, Thank you for issue number 29, again very informative on Branch activities and on members. What caught my eye was that our old friend Sam Bass was back in circulation, and we are delighted to hear it. I was in touch with Sam through the 60s and followed his career, however we lost touch. I have his "Sam Bass Sing George Formby" tape, which, of course was issued on a reel tape - which predated the cassette. It was on Global Tapes No. 651 and as well as listing the 7 songs it has the following on it, - Star of Stage & Radio, Sam Bas has also played the part of the late George Formby in the CBS film 'O Be Joyful.' Few sound so uncannily close to the late star as does Sam Bass."

### APPEAL

If any member recorded Sam - on video or cassette, - or other performers, I would be grateful for a copy and I'd be pleased to send a Blackpool tape in exchange - or pay for same.

We always feel that we would like to get to the Branch Meetings but now that I am retired, and have the time, there is a shortage elsewhere. I did try to get a meeting going north of the border but without success, so we miss out on the extra treats that other members are lucky to get. Best Wishes from us both.

*Thank you Alex & Kitty. What's the weather like up there in Peebles? Hope you're not snowed up again! We've not heard from our old friend Alan for some years and miss his exciting letters - so informative. If you are still in touch ask him to drop a line.*

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## Sam Bass Writes

- Dear Stan, Having spent many years working alongside old pro's and guest performers of yesterday, it's always so very sad to hear that yet another one has gone. The latest was my very dear friend Roy Rolland, who was the Old Mother Riley impersonator who preceded Crewe's own Georgie Beak in the early fifties when Arthur Lucan died - Kitty McShane carried on with the act. She was a very difficult person to say the least, and Georgie soon found that out. I was working with Georgie when he left Kitty and re-joined our show at the Crewe Theatre. Roy took over the act and did a great deal of nice work with her.

It was very sad to lose another friend I worked with at Blackpool: Danny (Ooo heck) Ross, who appeared in the film "The Love Match" with Arthur Askey. They will always be remembered if only by me. Sam Bass.

*Thanks for the article Sam. You must have many tales to tell us humble amateurs.*

**The Formby Range of Ukulele-Banjos** (each complete with case)  
**obtainable from all leading musical instrument dealers**



**SAM BASS**  
*and his DALLAS Ukulele*



4510



4511



4512



4514

**da**  
 DALLAS ARBITER LTD

DALLAS ARBITER LTD., 10-18 Clifton Street, London, E.C.2.

## Error in the last Newsletter!!!!!!

**Sam Bass** - As most readers will know George Formby gave his name to the Dallas Range of Banjoleles. When George died the Formby range of instruments continued but Dallas Arbiter Ltd 10-18 Clifton St, London EC2 featured a photo of Sam Bass and his Dallas "E" when advertising their range of instruments. I didn't report that the metal plate on the ukes bore Sam's picture for I don't think that it is correct. Brian Edge.

*Thank you Brian, but if anyone knows any different please let me know.*

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**Don't Forget The (...can't remember the name)**

## Where are all the Southern GF Fans? by

**James Singleterry . . .** George clearly has a tremendous following in the N. West which unfortunately doesn't extend to the South. Living in Norfolk doesn't throw up weekly branch meetings, nor does it make for a neat drive to Blackpool four times yearly. It seems that Norfolk has forgotten George despite his well earned breaks on the Norfolk Broads.

Apart from myself I knew of only one other society member in the region, who I meet up with whenever possible. Opportunities to set up branches are therefore non-existent, but the spirit of George still lives on, at least in my house with the banjolele happily strumming out numerous Formby hits, thankfully enhanced now by the 'split stroke' George may not rate alongside the modern day talent of the Spice Girls, and Oasis, but as long as my friends sing along to a few chords of "Hindoo Man," I'm a happy man! James Singleterry (17)

*Thank you James for the article. You are right! George doesn't rate along the Spice Girls and Oasis. He's on a far higher platform than they will ever reach. These hyped up so called entertainers, who rely on souped up equipment to enhance their voices, will be forgotten in a few months, but George will still be up there being remembered by his fans.*

### BRANCH MEETINGS

*Now the setting up of a regular meeting may not be as difficult as you think. It is no use relying on the Formby society in the area because they possibly don't exist. I would advise that you contact as many newspapers, and radios stations as possible and they will be pleased to give you some publicity. You can then put out an appeal for interested Formby fans in the area and start a basic tuition class on how to play the uke. I would advise building the meeting around the playing of the uke - with general songs - rather than purely George Formby. This would open up a broader interest, with more songs, and help to catch a bigger crowd.*

*Now some years back we had a system of supplying names and addresses of the members who live in your area. This was done through the post codes. Drop a line to the GFS committee for help on this. If you want any help with posters etc. I will be pleased to supply you with some. Best Of Luck.*

**James's Lousy Jokes . . .** Two peanuts were walking down the road and one was assaulted!

Two fish in a tank and one said, "How do you drive this thing?"

Two birds on a perch and one said, "Can you smell fish?" (get it? - perch, fish)

Mother: "Stop reaching across the table for cakes, haven't you a tongue in your head?" "Yes mum, but it won't reach!"

*Thanks James - you'll upset Harry now! Don't use em on the radio.*

**S.O.S. for old Songs** - from the Editor. If anyone has any old song books would you please search through them to see if you can find the words (and music) to comedy songs that my father often sang. They go something like this . . . . .

. . . Come home, come home, the old church steeple strikes one  
The cat and the lodger have searched the moon looking for your two pounds two  
And mother's there with the rolling pin, waiting for you to come in  
Father, father please come home, come home, dear father please come home.

Another song that he sang was . . . .

My pa and I went out one day, across the country fields we'd stray  
When a bull broke loose and oh you see, the farmer shouted out to me  
Don't let him see anything red sir, don't let him see anything red sir  
Don't let him see anything red sir, So I covered up me father's nose.

And another song was . . . .

Oh we all came in the world with nothing, no clothes to wear  
When you die, bear in mind, all your money you will leave behind  
You'll finish up the same as you began without the strangest doubt  
Oh we all came in the world with nothing, so we can't take anything out.

Another song was called "Here We Are Again" which, like the others, was written in or around the 1920s.

A sad song that I vaguely remember used to have my mother in tears whenever he sang it. It was something to do with a child having lost the mother and trying to console the father. It went something like . . . "Rest your head on my shoulder daddy, mother's not far away"

If anyone can supply any more words or music to these great old songs it will be gratefully appreciated. Stan Evans.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Blackpool Evening Gazette 21<sup>st</sup> June 1937

**Mrs Formby's Operation** - No first night for her this week For the first time in 13 years George Formby will open a new show without his wife, Beryl, as stage partner, when he appears on the first night of "King Cheer" the new Jack Taylor revue at the Opera House. For Mrs Formby underwent an operation for appendicitis on Thursday in a London nursing home and although now quite out of danger will not, of course, be fit to appear in the show for some time. "King Cheer" open on Friday this week. "I shall feel very queer and so will she" George told me, "But I ring her up three times every day and she is making a wonderful recovery."

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**Have You Written To The Newsletter Yet?**

Blackpool Evening Gazette 19<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1940 - In The Thick of It

## George & Beryl Formby

I am not surprised to hear that George Formby has accepted a BBC invite to sing a few of his songs about Mr Wu and the rest of the gallery in one of London's underground shelters. He'll be the first star to accept such a commission.

HAVE YOU ANY  
IDEAS FOR THE  
NEWSLETTER  
IF SO  
SEND EM IN

"It would be nice to give a few shows to the London people in the Tubes" he reflected, when I said Goodbye to him a fortnight ago on the day he left for the capital to make his new film. The concert is to be broadcast from the Aldwych Tube on Wednesday of next week. Distinguished compere, Sir Edward Evans - Evans Of The Broke.

Nearly everything has happened to George since he left his home in the Fylde for this latest of his six weeks sessions in the studio. Day after day he has been playing his ukulele as the bombs have come down. Once, too, he nearly lost his ukulele when in one air-raid, a bomb set fire to the quarters reserved for him in the film colony, and nearly all his possessions, including his ukulele were snatched from the flames by two of the staff

### IN THE THICK OF IT.

Both George & Beryl too have been in the thick of it. Driving one night from the studio to the hotel, 20 miles outside London, where they are in residence, their conversation was almost entirely limited to a repetition of the phrase, "My word but that one was close." The following day they had to make several detours. There were eight craters on the road which they had taken twelve hours earlier. And it was only a day or so ago that as Beryl was typing her correspondence, a bomb fell so close that her typewriter was blown off the table. Yet I don't suppose, knowing them, that either is losing a lot of sleep over it.

### NUMBER 13

And why should they? Are they not under the magic protection of No.13? Thirteen, the number which other people dread has been George's talisman for years. The new film, "As You Were" began production on the 13<sup>th</sup> and it is George's 13<sup>th</sup> film. His present contract was signed on the 13<sup>th</sup>. His first contract for revue was signed on the 13<sup>th</sup>, too. And George & Beryl were married on the 13<sup>th</sup>. What. I ask you, could be nicer than that.

*Thanks to Charles Stewart for the above newspaper article.*

*The reporter is slightly confused because the film he is referring to is "Turned Out Nice Again," which was taken from the play "As You Are", by Hugh Mills, - not "As You Were."*



Looking For Music? Send an appeal to the Newsletter

# CAB-ARET SINGER



ROAD SHOW: Cabbie George Hope

**SINGING taxi driver George Hope has been told he can carry on his rock and road act — despite a complaint from an angry passenger.**

The joker keeps a ventriloquist's dummy, musical instruments and funny hats to entertain customers.

But George, 67, nearly faced the final curtain when a punter protested

**EXCLUSIVE by MARTIN STOTE**

about his singing. He was hauled before taxi bosses but sang his way out of trouble with a Frank Sinatra ballad.

Terry Trout, chairman of the Birmingham and Solihull Taxi Association, said: "He had to show us what he had done in the cab. It was quite good. He was just asked to tone it down."

*So George is back on the road singing, playing his ukelele and doing his ventriloquist act. He said yesterday: "Whenever I stop at traffic lights or in a queue, I grab the ukelele."*

"I love entertaining my passengers even if they don't always appreciate it.

Birmingham-based George also offers passengers a go at cab-aoke. He said: "Most sound like drowned rats."

Radio Programme 9pm

**A NIGHT AT THE  
MUSIC HALL**

**BILLY SCOTT COMBER  
INTRODUCES...**

**MR HARRY DAWSON**

Musical Memories

**MR TOMMY ELLIOT**

Mirth and Music Man

**MR BILLY MATCHETT**

The Mirth Quake

**MISS JOANNE MICHELLE**

The Golden Voice

**MR FRANK BURNS**

Lad From Tyneside

**MR SAM BASS AND HIS  
UKULELE**

**AND THE GENTLEMEN  
OF THE PIT ORCHESTRA  
CONDUCTED BY MR**

**MORRIS MCCLEAN**

**PRODUCED BY PETER  
PILBEAM**

**SAM BASS IS IN  
"THANKS FOR THE  
MEMORY" AT THE  
ESPLANADE, BOGNOR  
REGIS**

## How's Harry?

Well I've just been speaking to him on the phone and he tells me that he is currently visiting the dentist. When the dentist was probing into his gums he looked a bit sad so Harry asked why he was looking "down in the mouth."

From there he went to Littlewoods Stores to buy some clothes - which was on the top floor. He asked the young lift attendant how he liked his job and he said, "Well it has its ups and downs."

## See Alison at "Essence" and sound your best.

The best sound from your uke can only be achieved by having a good nail on the first finger of the right hand. A damaged or worn down nail never gets the chance to grow and this one strums with the fleshy end of the finger which does not produce the clear tone that is produced with a good nail. If you have such a problem there is an easy solution. Telephone Crewe 214587 - Essence Beauty Salon, 192A Nantwich Rd, Crewe for an appointment. Alison fully understands what sort of a nail uke players prefer as a result of creating nails for many of our members both male and female. . . It takes about half an hour - cost is £3. 50.

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## Improved Stage Lighting at Crewe

The Crewe Branch are always trying to improve the quality of their concerts for their audiences and this month we are able to report that the Management Committee of the Hall have agreed to improve the overhead lighting so we soon will be able to add more colour to our setting.

**Crewe welcomes our Yorkshire friends** - We are pleased to have GFS Chairman Dennis Mitchell, Vice President Dickie Speake and Assistant Secretary Peter Pollard with us at tonight's concert. We hope they have a good night. Dickie has very kindly offered to bring his keyboard along and play for us. This is much appreciated particularly when he has had to take the day off work to enable him to do so.

**Catastrophe at Crewe!** - Poor Colin Wood was distraught after accidentally dropping his prized possession - his ukulele. One of his geared pegs was smashed which could have been an expensive job (perhaps £60) However the next day he was all smiles for after a thirty mile trip he had successfully found a replacement for a mere £14. An expensive accident nevertheless.

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**TVs "Call My Bluff" - Again . . .** Alan Corrin, one of the contestants on the programme must be a fan of George. The programme is shown each week-day and at least once a fortnight he will bring George into his explanation. On 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. he gave the word "Kaleege" and explained that it was something to lean against. He then went on to say that George Formby could sing, - "I'm Leaning On A Kaleege At The Corner Of The Street."

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**John Walley . . .** John, a founder member of the GFS in 1961, has just been TV interviewed for a Channel 4 programme - "Collectors Lot" which will be screened shortly. The date is not certain but it will appear at 3.30pm. John spoke about his collection of ukules.



# S. O. S. From Sam's Accompanist, John Higgins. . . 17

Dear Stan, Would you please ask your readers if they have the music to any of the following three Tangos? Por Una Cabeza - El Chocio - A Media Luz. If so, please ring John on 01782 613742 and John will be delighted.

*Thanks for the article John, and also for the sheet music that you gave me at the Penyffordd meeting. Thanks also to Alan Newton who kindly send along copies of sheet music. Very kind of you all.*

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**John Higgins** told a nice little (although painful) story at the Crewe meeting. He was appearing on the same bill as Harry Worth, - the very popular comedian who blundered his way through many TV comedy shows. He said that Harry had asked him to put his hand down on a table and to spread out his fingers. - which he did! Harry then took a hammer and gave John's thumb a belt with it. He burst open John's thumb (blood everywhere) and then looked up at him and said - "Why didn't you take your hand away?" Bemused John said, "Well, I didn't expect you to hit it," to which Harry said, "Well, why do you think I had the hammer?" Harry was convinced that it was John's fault which is so typical of the man. He must have been a "nut case" in real life also and John still has the scarred thumb nail to prove it!

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**The D. Day Trip - June 5<sup>th</sup> to June 8<sup>th</sup>** is still going well and at the last count 30 people have booked seats. To date we have, Dennis & Leslie Lee, Bill & Ivy Turner, Stan & Eva Evans, Brian & Connie Edge, Cliff & Margaret Royle, Alan & Liz Whittaker, Tom & Nora Meredith and friend, Ken Smith, Tony Marshall, Charlie Penman, Colin & Christine Wood, Arthur & Mary Newton, John Taylor with Mother & Father, Alan & Pat Chennery, Craig Tinsley & Daughter, Anthony Mason.

Now the notice will appear in the GFS Vellum this month and the coach holds only 49 - (19 seats are available). So don't be disappointed. If you want to join the trip please send a deposit of £15 (each) to Dennis Lee "Eljay" Ash Drive, Pentre Lane, Buckley CH7 3PR.  
TEL. 01244 544799

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## NOT FORGOTTEN

Should the D Day Trip to France be a success - which we are sure it will be - then it will be our intention to make it a regular event. George did a lot of work entertaining the fighting troops so he would be pleased that they have not been forgotten.



## From Cliff Royle . . . THE BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL

Dear Stan, Many thanks indeed for all the effort you put in for the above appeal. It was a good night out which was really enjoyed by everyone. The ten people who came with me thought it was super and they say they are looking forward to the next concert evening. Keep going with the miracles - you should have been a doctor. Cliff.

PS. Just published by Frodsham Town Council, a booklet, written by me: "The Frodsham 100 Mile Challenge." The country walks, each of about 10 miles all starting and finishing in Frodsham. It includes sketch maps and numerous notes of interest.

*Thanks Cliff. As a kid I always thought a 'fell walker' was someone who kept falling over. Pleased that you all enjoyed the concert. We've had a lot of response*

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## Les Pearson writes . . .

Dear Stan, Everything about George is worth reading or listening to, and so it should be. It's a great shame that today's entertainers are not of the same standard that George and a few others have set. Many one or two are but in the Good Old Days of family entertainment a theatre would be a show full of the best.

I sometimes mention - and with great pride - that I worked at the Stockport Theatre Royal when Hilda Baker and Frank Randle were on the bill. I remember Frank only once but Hilda came quite a number of times. They brought their own company and they were the main act and run the show. Josef Locke also was on with Frank Randle and the show was called "Randles Scandles" which was very funny. Sandy Powell was godfather to the Manchester Artists and Arthur Delaney. Frank Randle was Arthur's father.

Josef Locke, who, due to tax demands, made a quick exit after selling his house to George, did come back into country. I met him at the Mersey Hotel, Manchester, and had a good chat with him in the dressing room. We talked about George and Frank. He later made a tour of the Blackpool and Manchester theatres and also made a TV advert for Greenalls Breweries. He was also asked advice on the film "Hear My Song" which was later shown on TV, after which he appeared on "This Is Your Life."

*Thanks Les for your article. Hope Margaret is keeping well and back with her singing. Any other items on your experience back stage will be appreciated.*

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## Do you Know? -

No I don't, please tell us:- "There was never such a person as George Formby Senior!" Why? . . . Well GF senior was dead before young George changed his name to George Formby! Well I'll be blowed! It's amazing what you learn in the Newsletter!

Also - There is no such word as "Lampost!" Well I'm Gobsmacked!!!

## Did you hear his song?

AFTER I recently watched the film *Hear My Song* on Channel 4, a romantic comedy about the Irish tenor Josef Locke, my mind went back to when he appeared at the Mersey Hotel, Princess Road, Manchester.

It would have been in the early 1960s, when he had trouble with the taxman. The film has prompted me to wonder if it was him, or a very good impersonator! Perhaps others who remember this great night might know the answer.

A Woodall, Withington.

● WELL, can any other readers remember that night in Manchester?  
Postbag Editor.



■ JOSEF LOCKE in his heyday

THERE is no doubt that the person your letter-writer (*Postbag*, July 19) saw at the Mersey Hotel was the great Josef Locke, because I was there myself. I went into the dressing room after his act. There was a very good impersonator, Mr X, and I worked with him as a club compère. Where is he now?

Les Pearson, Bacup, Lancs.

JOSEF Locke's last appearance in Manchester was at the Golden Garter, week commencing Sunday, January 26, 1969. My old band, The Kentuckians, were standing in for Shep's Banjo Boys on the Sunday night.

Poor Joe's voice was not very good in the afternoon, so Big Phil Kelly came over from Blackpool and sang some of his numbers.

Dermot Maguire, Cheetham.

JOSEF Locke was definitely at the Mersey Hotel in the early 1960s for several weeks. He lived in a caravan in the hotel car park for some time. There was a very good impersonator of Josef Locke, a Phil Kelly, doing the northern clubs.

Peter Broderick, Heaton Mersey.

JOSEF Locke's performance at the Mersey Hotel was more like 1967 or 1968. I remember that night very well, as I bought his LP, *Hear My Song*, and he signed it. I still have it.

B Nylan, Fallowfield.

YES, it was the one and only Josef Locke at the Mersey Hotel. I was on the front row. It was in the early 1960s. He is now, like me, 80 and lives in Co Kildare, Ireland.

No 1 J L Fan, Levenshulme.

I SAW Josef Locke in about 1950, at the Salford Palace on Cross Lane. I also saw him as Mr X in Blackpool.

Dora Glass, Salford.

JOSEF Locke is reputed to have appeared at the Brooklands Hotel, Sale, as Mr X.

Gerry McNeil, Sale.

I, TOO, was at the Mersey Hotel when Josef Locke appeared, and can definitely say it was him. I was a great fan of his. There was no mistaking his lovely voice.

Mrs D Waite, Alkington.

**Stop Press - Werrington Meeting** - About 50 turned up at the November meeting. We had new faces and new tunes and only time for one song each. The atmosphere was lively and our sound system is getting better. We are now in the process of buying two better speakers.

The boys & girls came from the Crewe branch, John Mason came all the way from Wigan - What a journey! What a fan! Derek Ball was on a dancing holiday in Blackpool - "Lozzacking" again. Des Redfern operated our sound system and Brian Edge enjoyed himself so much his chair collapsed under him. After a grand evening we were all feeling "Fair Clemmed" so we went "Wom" for some "Snappin" Next meet - Xmas Party, Dec 11<sup>th</sup>, Bill Turner. *Thanks Bill.. Foreign readers note:- Snappin =Grub. Clemmed = Hungry. Wom = Home.*

# 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. 1<sup>st</sup> Nov, 6<sup>th</sup> 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 Branch** Wistaston Memorial Hall - Ring Brian Edge on 01270 69836 Future dates - Tues 25<sup>th</sup> Nov, Thur 18<sup>th</sup> Dec, Mon 6<sup>th</sup> Jan, Tues 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb, Tues 17<sup>th</sup> Mar, Mon 20<sup>th</sup> Apr, Tue 19<sup>th</sup> May, Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Jun. 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 - Nov 13<sup>th</sup>, Dec 11<sup>th</sup>.

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

*in case a  
certain  
little lady  
comes  
By*

