

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 32

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**George's sister, Ella
has passed on**

Specially Produced for
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Welcome to Newsletter No.32 and

Unfortunately we start with the sad news that George's sister, Ella, who lived in America, passed away on the 12th of January. Over the past two years she has suffered through ill health and loss of sight. Also she lost her 88 year old husband, Herb, about 12 months ago.

Many GFS members have special memories of Ella. In 1992 she came over from America to meet them at the Patten Arms, Warrington, and to be filmed for the George Formby edition of the South Bank TV Show. What a lovely woman she was and it was a pleasure to speak to someone so near to George who didn't envy him of his riches. She was so happy in her own American world and so outgoing. It was a treat to be with her.

She often wrote to say how she and her daughter, Pam, enjoyed their short stay here and how they appreciate the dedication the members have towards George. At first she couldn't believe that George was so important to us. She was delighted with the children singing George's songs, and playing the uke, and told all her friends in America of the wonderful reception we gave her.

We are fortunate to have such good memories of a dear soul. God Bless Her

Christmas With Sam Bass - by Stan Evans.

Car Cassette Players are great for taking the boredom out of driving. Some like to play George Formby tapes while others play a selection of evergreens by Jim Reeves or maybe Sing-alongs by Max Bygraves. However, over the Christmas period I was compelled to listen to a good old favourite, Sam Bass, - over and over and over and over again.

Sam kindly gave me a tape at the Christmas Crewe Party and I slotted it into the car cassette player on the way home. It was really wonderful to hear all the old songs again and Sam puts them over very well. However, at the end of the tape I pressed the ejector button and the tape refused to pop out. After several attempts the tape still wouldn't budge so I played Sam again. The following day we went the rounds, visiting the folks, and again we had a full session of Sam, - over and over and over again.

It appears that one of the labels on the cassette had rolled back and glued itself to the case of the player. After several prods at the tape, to dislodge it, the cassette was still determined to stay in, so all over the Christmas period we listened to Sam, over and over and over again. Sounds like a good title for a song Sam. "So we played it over and over and over again."

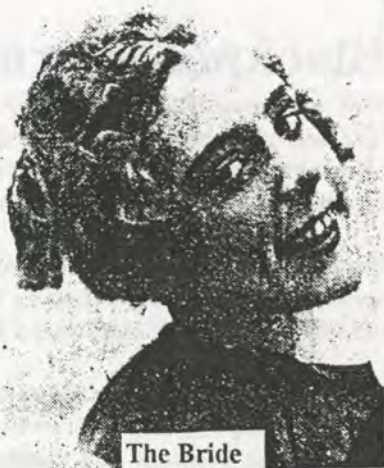
Looking For Music? Send an appeal to the Newsletter

The Formby Story

Part 22 by Stan Evans

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George, eager to be a great entertainer, was making the mistake of imitating his father, using his props and singing his songs. This wasn't going down too well with the public and it most certainly didn't catch the eye of Beryl Ingham, who, on many occasions was appearing on the same theatre bill as George. Just like his father, George needed a partner who could steer his career and in Beryl he saw the ideal woman. However, she was hard to win over and on one occasion was heard to say that she would be pleased to bombard him with rotten fruit. George, a man of determination and ambition, wasn't deterred by this and continuously kept Beryl in his sights.



The Bride

George's mother, Eliza, wasn't too pleased with George's association with Beryl and some claim that it was due to the fact that George was born of the Catholic faith while Beryl was Protestant. There were other claims that the reason why Eliza didn't approve was because Beryl would be taking her place as partner and tutor to George.

Now we are not sure of when George actually won Beryl over, but as George was only 20 years of age, he needed his mother's approval to marry and she refused. George's sister, Ella, claimed that when permission wasn't given George told his mother that they had to marry because Beryl was expecting a child. This was not true but Eliza believed the story and was very upset when she had no alternative then but to grant permission.

After this, Beryl's and her parents had to be made faced so on Friday the 12th of September 1924, George, who was playing at the Royal Court Theatre, Warrington, made a quick dash after the final curtain, hired a taxi cab and arrived at Beryl's house, 5 Richmond Terrace, Darwen, at two in the morning.

On arriving outside Beryl's house, George decided to make some impact on his future parents in law and paraded past her bedroom window singing,

"How I love these Darwen girls.
With their bright and sunny curls.
From their red and ruby lips.
I get the tack of fish and chips."

Beryl's father immediately slid up the sash window and shouted to George, "What do you want?" To which George replied, "I've come to marry your daughter," and her father answered with, "Go away man, you must be mad!"

The Warrington Examiner newspaper reported that George persuaded the family to let him in the house where they discussed the proposal until seven in the morning. After that they, along with Beryl's sister, May, took a taxi to the Wigan Registrar Office where they were married. George's uncle, Eugene Fawcett, was the only other witness.

Later George returned to Warrington where he gave his final performance the same evening. Beryl had several stage contracts to be completed with her sister, May, but at that stage wasn't sure of her future.

Blackpool Formby Friends

Well we broke the record at our first meeting of 1998. We had more players than non-players, but what a cracking evening it was. The stars of the show were Anthony Mason and John Shreeve, a really great multi-talented duo, both excellent on the Keyboard and when together on the Ukes.

Our compare, Alan Middleton, keeps coming up with the Folksy Ballads and he performed a most unusual seven beats to the bar number - ideal for practising the split stroke - and composed a Formby verse to insert, - most interesting Alan.

Ever faithful Jim Bramwell, never fails to give us a giggle with his jokes and with his latest hit, *The Marrow Song - Oh What A Beauty!* Cyril Palmer always gives a most pleasant and contrasting performance on his Baritone Uke and sings some lovely melodic numbers. Steve Abbott and Iris are an up and coming duo, blending their voices very well with some good old fashioned singalongs.

The progress John Taylor has made in such a short time is really great. He is now getting excellent Formby syncopation on his uke. Last but not least Frank Bennett arrived with Cyril & Sheila Palmer and told us that he had not played for two years. Well we'd never have known Frank. Alan's wife, Carol conducted the raffle and kept us out of bankruptcy. She is always a willing hand, stepping in as compere when Alan is away on business. Steve's wife, Eileen, Carol and Eve supplied the butties and organised the buffet. We are constantly pleased by the friendliness and support and on this occasion the weather was really foul but the meeting was "Proper Formby" and here's to the next meeting on February 7th.

Thanks Charles. Terribly sorry we couldn't make it on this occasion but Eva and I had the most awful colds over the Christmas and New Year period. The Blackpool meetings are always enjoyable and we are sure of getting up to do a number - or two - or three - or four - or you can stay on all night if you wish. Now that's what you call "Free & Easy!" So don't forget folks, - if you go to Blackpool take plenty of songs with you.

And Charles also included a cutting from an Olde Tyme Music Hall book with a few drawings of various old stars. One of them was Little Tich and the others were from the same era - around 1910 - 20. But what had me beat was the drawing of Alfred Lester. Surely they've made an error here. It looks very much like our old Wigan favourite, Frank Randle. What do you think? Is the cartoon drawing on the right one of Frank Randle? Drop a line to the Newsletter.



Frank Murphy of Horseman's Green, Whitchurch. His dad is Jim and his mother is Carol. Frank is doing exceptionally well at Penyffordd and performing with tons of confidence.



It is essential that we encourage these young players as much as possible otherwise all knowledge of George & Beryl will begin to disappear in about 20 years time. This will be a terrible disaster and should be avoided at all costs.

George's songs are wonderful for youngsters to learn. They are stories in song:-
 "Mr Wu was a Laundry Man in a shop with an old green door. He irons all day your linen away he really makes me sore. He's lost his heart to a Chinese girl and his laundry's all gone wrong. All day he'll flirt and scorch your shirt, that's why I'm singing this song." This is a musical story!!!!

Songs like these will die completely unless we do something about it. The ukulele or ukulele banjo will die also if we don't sow the seeds now. The uke is a wonderful simple instrument that anyone can learn to accompany with and which should be taught in schools.

So - Branch Organisers - Give the youngsters every encouragement.

Raw Beginners Tuition Book & Tape

Since Anthony Mason & I produced the Uke Tuition Book & Tape we have had quite a lot of good reports from those who have gained benefit from using them. Dick Walker is part way through his book and wants to know when he can expect Book 2.

Well, Dick, A few months ago I spent considerable time researching another 14 uke songs that were out of copyright (otherwise the publishers would want something like £4 per book) and typed them all down on my computer.

One morning I switched on the computer only to find that the songs had disappeared. The headings were still there but no songs. Apparently there is some sort of a Bermuda Triangle built into these computers and every now and again things disappear.

Anyway, as soon as they decide to come back I will make them into a Book and Tape, and let you know. Thanks for purchasing Tuition Book & Tape One.

6 Sam Bass writes . .

Dear Stan, First let me congratulate you on your very fine George Formby Newsletter, which this last four months or so has given great pleasure. I had very little to do with the society until recently, but I am so pleased now, even though no longer able to sing.

I do enjoy meeting and hearing such great folks, and new found friends, with the same common interest. - "George & Beryl." One of life's greatest happenings to

me will always be when I shook hands and talked quite excitedly to this wonderful couple, in Feb, 1954, and in George's dressing room when he signed my ukulele and we talked about music.

I shall never forget what George said when I told him that I impersonated him on stage, - with a broad grin he said, "Yer cheeky devil." What a pity that I didn't have a camera, or tape recorder handy at the time. This would have been a treasure to keep, but then I should have been performing myself that night. - The snow cancelled my long trek to Leek, but what a great night it was as I sat in the front row and watched him perform, - backed by the Coventry Hippodrome Orchestra. From time to time he would nod to me. Great memory!

How sad to hear the rubbish about George being illiterate and poor Beryl being pummelled into the ground. It makes me cringe! I remember though, at the Victoria Hall, Hanley, a bunch of so called fans singing with ukuleles outside George's dressing room door, creating a disturbance and having to be forcibly removed. I couldn't believe it! But it was true!

I read in the Vellum of John Wilson and wondered if it was the same man who wrote to me in the early 60s asking if I would be interested in starting a GF Society. Would anyone know if it is the same man? The other name I remember is Bill Logan. He came along with John Walley and Ray Bernard to watch me on the North Pier, Blackpool (25 weeks in all). I never met Bill again after that but it was interesting to read the article on him and George's ukuleles.

Victoria Hall, Hanley	DOOR 1
SUNDAY, 28th FEBRUARY, 1954 at 8 p.m.	
ARTHUR KIMBRELL presents	
George Formby and Big All Star Show	
This portion to be retained by Purchaser	
STALLS (reserved) 4/6	
Row 3	Seat No. 20
J. C. SHERWIN & SONS LTD. Market Square, HANLEY	
Telephone 124	
No tickets can be exchanged or money refunded	

I went on to do five years in Blackpool Summer Shows and was followed in by Mr Randall. The next eighteen years I worked the Ice Shows and other day shows in various theatres up and down the country. *Thanks Sam for your article. It would be George Wilson - not John - who contacted you. After George died he arranged for the notice to be published in The Stage magazine and a meeting was held at Blackpool. George became the first GFS secretary.*

New M.C.s at Crewe - Jonathan Baddeley - our resident

M.C. for almost three years - is having a break from the job but he will still be on stage, as usual, playing his clarinet in the band. From the January meeting Alan Chenery will be the front man and Carl Basford will be out in the audience arranging the concert. Their roles will be reverse in February and so on.

Jonathan has set a high standard, but both Alan and Carl are determined to keep the ball rolling and do what they can to improve our concerts month by month. Jonathan has worked hard over the past three years to help put us on the map. He has made our concerts more interesting with his in-depth knowledge of "Formby" history and George's sound recordings. He has ensured we always start dead on time, liaised with the kitchen ladies, maintained full continuity and saw to it that everyone had a turn on stage. A special thank you to Jonathan I'm sure we will see him up front again at some time in the future.

Perhaps it is an appropriate time to mention that whilst your M.C. will always do his best to ensure everyone gets on to perform please do remember that the onus is on the individual to advise the M.C. (or programme arranger) that they are available to perform, or when they are unavailable.

Thank you Brian. One of the toughest jobs is trying to slot everybody in.

Beware - Anthony's Here - Anthony Mason has a

tremendous effect at the Old Folks Homes where he entertains. At one in particular he was singing his heart and trying to get them into a "Knees Up" when suddenly some poor old soul, who was sat on the front row, decided to "Pop his Clogs." Anthony was in the middle of his "Sing-along" and he had to motion to the nurses to come and attend to the old man. They immediately gathered round him and instructed Anthony to carry on singing.

During the Christmas period he performed at 28 different venues, including Milton Keynes (twice) playing to the bosses in the Argos head office. The Ged Hone Jazz Band CD - that was mentioned in the last issue - is now completed and should soon be on sale in the shops. More news on this later

He is playing Blackpool Tower sometime in March (as usual, doesn't know when) and Warrington's John Hickinbottom will be accompanying him on the huge Wurlitzer Organ.

Crewe Christmas Concert - It was wonderful to have Les & Margery Edwards at the Christmas Concert. In the war Les was in the R.A.F. backing the Army in the Egyptian desert and during his time at Tobruk he was entertained by George Formby and Beryl. In the same setting Les appeared at our concert dressed as an Arab complete with fez (You buy pretty postcard) and gave us an entertaining speciality act featuring his collection of mechanical and speaking animals. It is true to say that his dogs did virtually everything on the stage!!

Arnold Osborne turned up in a snowman's outfit this time which was really excellent. It is a fact that although most of the people in the hall suspected that it was Arnold, none of them were quite sure! His nose was a large carrot and how he performed with that, and put up with it for most of the night was most remarkable.

Not only is Arnold a great sport but also a talented songs-smith. What did you think of his song, "Diana Princess of Love" which was played during the evening? We wish him every success with it and hope one day he will have a great hit.

Des Redfern looked great in his sailor suit and he gave us a really good performance of, "It Serves You Right." Ivy Turner trod the boards for the first time at Crewe and along with her husband, Bill, gave us sang a duet.

Yours truly hit the jackpot, this time by 'performing' a song using no less than three ukuleles. A feat which is best forgotten.

Sixty five enjoyed the evening as well as a fine buffet laid on - on the society's behalf, by Thelma and Betty.

Thanks again Brian. I must admit that I missed your act with the three ukuleles. Did you play em all at the same time? - remarkable!!!

APOLOGY:- Sorry for the slip-up in editing your last Crewe Report. It didn't sound courteous in the least. Although when we read it later we had a good laugh.

Walter Kirkland, of Crewe, rattled his bones on stage for the entire three and a half hour concert, in November, and suffered for several days with his hands and wrists with a result of his efforts. Walter loves playing the bones but thinks it will be better for him if he shakes and rattles in moderation in future! *Thanks for the item Brian. You are doing extremely well with a backing group. Steve on Drums, Jon on Clarinet and Walter on Bones. Fine!*

Another Uke For Sale - Mrs Betty Wood Jones, on 01824 704052 has a Windsor Premier (MR Pixe No. 3) for sale and is looking for offers.

74 year old Cliff Royle

is so super human fit that he can't wait to get going. This Road Runner, Fell Walker and Cyclist All Action Man is usually finished well before everybody else has even got started. The Crewe Christmas party was a typical example. He'd finished his song, and had his hat and coat on ready to go home, even before his backing tape had finished. What a keen lad he is. So this month we are giving him the "Let's get the timing right" treatment.



Cliff will be strapped to a huge pendulum and exhibited in the centre of Frodsham Market for a full month. At the end of the 4 weeks he will be "time tested" and if he's not slowed down then he'll be swinging merrily for another month. Cliff is such an asset to the society that we've got to get him right.

Frodsham "Nightingale" Hits Gold! - Brian Edge.

Cliff Royle, the N. West Magazine's Star Reporter for N. Wales put on an excellent performance at Peniffordd's January concert. It was surely Cliff's best performance to date. He has obviously been working hard on his microphone technique, every word was heard loud and clear and he was totally in charge. Cliff finished off with a composition of his own which was seemingly about his charming wife Margaret. However, there was quite a twist to the story! Cliff worked very hard on his act for some time now and it has not been at all easy for him. Nevertheless he has battled on and therefore it is wonderful to be able to report that he is now "Hitting The High-spots!" Well done Cliff. Thanks Brian. The Frodsham Market square treatment (top of page) is working quicker than we thought. We expect big things from this lad. Keep swinging Cliff.

Harry - We had a phone call from Lottie telling us that Harry had fallen in the street and damaged his face. He was taken to hospital but insisted on coming out again so that he could look after Lottie. We called to see him a few days later and, although still feeling a bit groggy, he is slowly improving. Within an hour he was getting back to normal and we had difficulty in shutting him up. He wouldn't stop talking. Good for you Harry. Keep going.

Hillcrest - Just had a phone call from a gentleman who is interested in buying George's Stockton Heath home. He is a Wiganer and very interested in George. He wanted a few details about the house. More news as it comes in.

Brian Edge Replies - Yes Stan, it certainly was nice to hear from Doreen Crosby in the last issue. Doreen sings some really funny songs and is certainly missed when she can't get to the Sale meeting. In answering her query, Tommy Handley was the Winterbottom of the Murgatroyd and Winterbottom duo which was formed in 1934 with Ronald Frankau. Their act was described as "Two minds without a single thought!" The spelling of Winterbottom brought about a letter of complaint from a real gentleman of the noble British family of Winterbothams, but Winterbottom won the day.

Thanks Brian. The name of Winterbottom reminds me of the old war joke when the Quartermaster Sergeant was dishing out supplies of bed blankets to the new army recruits. - Smith, one blanket. Brown, one blanket. Jones, one blanket. Winterbottom, er, er, two blankets.

Brian Edge says . . . Did You Know that George played the part of a private detective on a Sunday morning serial on Radio Luxembourg, broad-casted from Normandy, France during the Summer of 1938? Do any of these recordings still exist, and if so, can they be transferred to audio tape? Plenty of GF enthusiasts will be delighted to hear them.

Thank you Brian. Now if anyone has got a copy of the recording it has got to be John Guy. In fact it is a certainty that he will be on the phone as soon as he receives his Newsletter to tell me that he can supply a copy.

According to Brendan Ryan's Catalogue the show was sponsored by Feenamint - a chewing gum company - and was broadcast twice each Sunday: 8.30am and 8.45pm. George was supported by Beryl, and John Firman and his Orchestra. George's signature tune to the programme was "Keep Fit" and the programmes were recorded in lots of 12.

George Tyrer writes - Happy New Year to all Stan!

Now - On Sunday December 7th on BBC1 "Get Well Soon" George was singing "With My Little Stick Of Blackpool Rock," and on December 9th "Today's The Day" he sang "Swim Little Fish" and three questions were asked about George.

It's nice to know that George lives on, and I've just been thinking: It's all down to George that my wife & I have made so many nice friends in the GFS. Keep the news coming Stan. *Thanks for your article George. I'm very pleased that you got through the bad period with your health. It's surprising how the kind thoughts of good friends can help us to get over these tricky situations. Keep Going George!*

We want snippets of news for the Newsletter

Bananas Again . . .

According to a recent programme, on TV, the banana has become one of the most popular fruit (probably since George recorded the song) and apparently it started in China some many years ago. At Chatsworth House, England, in 1836, the Duke instructed his gardener, Joseph Paxton, to go over to China to see what it was all about. Later he returned with a bag of banana seeds which were planted at Chatsworth.



Some many years later there was big typhoon trouble in the South Seas area and all the fruit crops had been wiped out. A Mr Williams came over to Chatsworth House and collected fruit seeds of every sort to be taken back. After the long journey back, the only fruit that survived was the banana. They planted it and it grew like wild fire. The banana then became a very popular food in that part of the country. In fact the output grew from 750,000 tons to 4 million tons per year.

Unfortunately, after Mr Williams helped them to enrich their crops they got so fed up of eating bananas they decided to eat Mr Williams. Poor man.

Apparently the saying, "Going Bananas" was first said by Judy Garland's daughter, Lisa Manelli, after performing in a show. Also the banana was the last fruit to be eaten by Elvis Presley and Robert Maxwell before they died.

Some readers may wonder why a George Formby Newsletter is interested in Bananas. Well George recorded an excellent song called "I Like Bananas" (because they have no bones) Not many people know this!

Talking about "Bananas"

I mentioned in the last issue that another good song for Jim Bramwell would be one that was sung by Bernard Cribbins, "I've Never Seen A Straight Banana." Well Jim had just read about this in the Newsletter, at the Sale Meeting, and was giving the idea some thought when suddenly someone jumped on stage and sang it. Of all the millions of songs in the world he had to sing this one - what a coincidence!!!!

Anyway, listen out for Jim with his latest number: "The Marrow Song," It's a good un!! "I never seen one as big as that before" G R E A T !!!

Harry told me that he sang the straight banana song at Warrington and that it was inspired by a young boy who wrote an essay called, "I've never seen a straight banana." His teacher was so impressed that he passed the work over to a songwriter friend who paid the boy 10 shillings for the idea.

So if you've got any queries on anything just drop a line to Harry Stanford, 4 Rydal Street, Earlestown, WA12 8JY and he'll answer 'em

Frank Randle from Charles Stewart

Scrumping led to outburst

The recent reference to the comedian Frank Randle took me right back to my school days in the 1950s.

At that time I attended the late lamented Tyldesley School on Condor Grove. It just so happened that Frank lived close to the school yard, in fact only an alleyway separated the school yard and the rear of his house - we could see into his back garden from the yard.



In that garden stood a lone apple tree which bore the most delicious apples I have ever eaten. Daily, several of us would climb the garden wall and raid that tree, gleefully we ate our spoils and all for free. That is until one particular day, we sneaked over the wall, - there were three of us that day, - slowly we edged our way towards our goal, when all of a sudden a man leapt from behind a shed and started pelting us with apples. We were stunned, it was none other than the great man himself. How he laced into us with those apples, each one homed in on us like missiles, bah gum they didn't half sting. Each boy made a mad dash for the garden wall, somehow we scrambled and escaped never to return again I might add.

The most measurable event from that day however was not the barrage of apples, hurtful though it was, no it was the veritable barrage of language, the like of which I at least had never heard. This is neither the time or place to record the verbal message or our ill-fated foray, suffice to say that if such an account was written then the term 'expletives deleted' would certainly come into play. Terry Regan, Lincoln Rd, Blackpool. *Thank you Charles.*

Kevin Bridgewater of Stourbridge writes to say that

his close friend (didn't know he had any) Tommy Ashmore (Tommy's not fussy who he mixes with) brought in two 78 rpm records that his neighbour had given to him. He claims they were GF Senior's records. However they turned out to be not GF Senior but an artist called Arthur Peel and he sang "Send For John Willey" in Formby style.

Does anyone have any information on Arthur Peel? if so would you please send it in. *Thanks Kevin. I've just received a Christmas card from your old pal, Alan. He didn't send his address so he didn't get one back. Serves him right!*

Many thanks for all the Christmas cards - loads of 'em. There was a message with Bob Drinkwater's. It wasn't the usual Christmas cheers, but "Get some decent wooden ukulele articles in your Newsletter." So come on readers, - have you any articles on wooden ukes. 1998 is "Keep Bob Happy Year!" Thanks Bob.

JINXED Ghost Haunts Formby Show

Spooked actors are convinced that a new show based on the life story of George Formby is jinxed following a series of mystery mishaps that have hit production. And they believe that it is all down to Beryl, the late wife of the ukulele star who died 31 years ago, coming back to haunt them because she does not approve of the way their marriage is portrayed.



So far the musical, *Turned Out Nice Again*, which is due to open next week, has been plagued with problems including: *Members of the cast falling suddenly ill.

*Scripts and props going mysteriously missing.

*Scenery crashing down on stagehands.

*A picture of George Formby throwing itself off the wall.

*A ukulele which once belonged to George vanishing.

The show is due to come to the Mill At The Pier on March 19th and will also open at the Grand Theatre, Blackpool next week, the anniversary of Formby's death.

During rehearsals Alan Randall, who plays George, said: "The cast is convinced that Beryl has come back from the grave because the show gives a candid insight into the couple's fiery marriage. I was ill for four days last week and the scripts all went missing. George's own Gibson ukulele mysteriously vanished, I put it in the boot of my car and when I arrived home it had gone. Suddenly it turned up on a chair in the studio. We have had no end of trouble with the set. First it was built the wrong way round so we had to adapt the play to fit it."

Alan was due to open the show when it was first mooted six years ago but the production fell through due to financial backing. Now, at the age of 56 - the age that George died - he is hoping he won't be disappointed again. He added, "I am so nervous at the moment."

Thanks for the report John. It was a great show!! We booked a solid block of seats in the front stalls and hired a coach from Warrington to the Grand Theatre, Blackpool. Alan opened the show by introducing us to the full house. Personally I didn't go along with all this about the show being spooked and put it down to excellent publicity - which paid off. Beryl wasn't bothered what anyone thought about her when she was alive so I'm sure she doesn't give two hoots what anyone writes about her now. Thanks again John. It's great to think back on the old times when we had loads of GF publicity floating through every newspaper.

More News on the D Day Trip. Kevin

Blanchfield, who is an organiser for the British Legion, has arranged with the French Legion (hope it's not the Foreign Legion) to find a concert room for us to hold our Saturday Night Concert. The French organiser (who's wife is a Scouser - from Liverpool) rang back to report that a concert room, which holds 200 people, has been booked and it is in the Town of Caen.

Please note that there are still around 14 seats available on the coach - bring your uke. We are looking forward to an excellent trip.

Eva & I set out to spread our Christmas Tidings to a few of our friends. At the first call Ethel - who does our wonderful Gracie Fields impersonations - was out shopping. At the second call, the couple were fast asleep in bed and at the third call - Harry & Lottie - they were out for the day. So we went back home!

Albert Seaborn Writes . . . Stan, I wonder if any of your readers remember the following records of the late thirties, when I was a schoolboy and avid listener of the radio. I've placed them in order of preference.

- 1) George Formby singing "Window Cleaner" or "Chinese Laundry Blues" or anything of George's.
- 2) Paul Robeson singing "Ole Man River" and the "Canoe Song" from Sanders Of The River."
- 3) Frank Crummit singing "Grannie's Old Armchair" and Abdul Abulbul Amir."
- 4) Carson Robison (not Robinson) and his Pioneers, singing "Home Sweet Home On The Prairie" and "His Bridle Hanging On The Wall" which was a very sad cowboy song.

I was born in 1927 so I would be from the age of 10 when I got the thrill of hearing these songs.

Thanks Albert. I certainly remember these songs very well. Paul Robeson made a lot of recordings and also appeared in films but he died in poverty. I often wonder how much of the Song Royalties go to the artist. Surely he should have earned a considerable amount to keep him in his old age.

S.O.S. from Derek Ball . . . has anybody got the words and chords to Honolulu Baby which was sung by Laurel & Hardy? If so please contact Derek on 01782 279841.

I'll bet some of the Laurel & Hardy fans have words and chords to the songs. Ken Ratcliffe on 0161 430 8290 is the lad to ask.

And **Brian goes on** to explain that at the Werrington Meeting the M/C - Derek Ball, organises the concert, and then by a variety of mysterious signals, made from the door at the side of the stage, tries to indicate, during the performance, who is on next. Nobody really knows who he is pointing to. It may be you or it might be someone three rows behind. Jonathan Baddeley got up to play three times last month only to find it was not him at all!! After a deep study into Derek's movements Brian has supplied the following "Guide to Who's on Next"

PERFORMERS GUIDE FOR WERRINGTON.				
				
YOU ARE NEXT	YOU'RE ON AFTER THE INTERVAL	TWO SONGS PLEASE	ONLY ONE SONG	GIVE HIM A NUDGE
				
NO, HIM ON THE RIGHT!	NO, HIM ON THE LEFT!	WAKE HIM UP PLEASE	QUIET PLEASE!	STOP LOZZAKIN! ABAHT.

With apologies to Joe McCaffrey



We mustn't forget to send an article to the Newsletter



Well, what's wrong with asking for "Grandad's Flannelette Nightshirt?" They asked for requests!

While we are Talking About M.C.s

All Programme Arrangers should be aware that there is some skill in setting out a programme. We have seen it so often at our meetings when the M.C. will start off the programme with a complete novice who invariably can't remember most of the words or needs song sheets.

Well, this is wrong! After the Opening Thrash we should always start the evening off with a bang by bringing on someone who can set - or maintain - the standard for the rest of the show. Someone with a fast moving tempo who can keep the audience alive with a lively rhythm. Number two on the programme should be another artist who can keep that tempo and enthusiasm going. As it is a Formby meeting we should always start with good rousing Formby songs, and let the opening acts do no less than two songs each.

Once the meeting has got going then we can introduce a novice, to do 'one song only' but as soon as there is a lull we must revive it with another strong artist. Other acts can then be invited on stage to do non-Formby: Monologues, Magic, Children etc. But if the show starts to wane we should be ready to bring on a couple of good performers. We should always end the programme with at least one good artist who can set the mood for the final thrash.

The same applies when there is a shortage of artists! We should always start with a good rouser (assuming we have one) and finish the same.

Mind Reading Puzzle by Brian Edge

- 1) Think of a number between 1 & 10
- 2) Multiply your number by 9
- 3) If your answer has two digits add them together
- 4) Subtract 5 from your answer
- 5) Convert your answer to letters (1 = A, 2 = B, 3 = C etc.)
- 6) Think of a country beginning with your answer.
- 7) Use the second letter of that country and think of an animal beginning with that letter
- 8) What is the colour of that animal?

THE ANSWER IN YOUR MIND IS ON PAGE 19

How on earth did you read my mind Brian? I've just gone through it and you are perfectly correct. Another Miracle Man!!!

Another from Brian - What is a Geriatric?

Answer - A German cricketer who has taken 3 wickets in 3 successive balls.

This is what

the older generation has been saying for a long time.

Today's entertainers are **RUBBISH - RUBBISH - RUBBISH** - and more **RUBBISH** compared with the talented artists we had some years back!

Great stars like George and Gracie didn't need artificial hand clappers like they do today. They were real stars!!!

Our country is oozing with potentially great artists but they need a stage, encouragement and an audience to bring the talent out.

I am personally looking forward to seeing one of our young female members impersonating Gracie Fields dressed with old clothes and a head scarf, singing great songs like, "Out In The Cold Cold Snow" or "I've Never Cried So Much In All My Life." Just like Gracie used to do. What a wonderful talented entertainer Hilda Baker was.

Great stars like Tommy Cooper only had to walk on stage and the audience was in uproar. In fact many times his act would start in the dressing room when the audience would hear him say, "I can't find the way out." He was magic!!!!

Ken Dodd is one of the few genuine artists existing today. Good Old Ken.

Bring Back Music Hall

Show our youth some real entertainment

ON BEHALF of the Warrington Arts Council and the wonderful people of our town, who fully support our campaign for the return of a live performing theatre, I would like to thank the Warrington *Guardian* for the marvellous effort and encouragement of signatures supporting the petition.

A theatre in the town would encourage those for whom there is at present very little entertainment, with the exception of the Parr Hall which is more suited as a concert hall.

In the 1950s, when we boasted our own Royal Court Theatre, I was engaged there as a spotlight operator up in the 'gods'.

Many great artists visited the town to perform, including Nat Jackley the rubber man, Crochet the mad pianist, George Formby, Billy Dainty and that wonderful tenor Joseph Locke, plus many more top line variety acts.

Incidentally, they had real talent, without the aid of synthesising electronics.

In the repertory season, Robert Marshall produced many first class, quality plays.

At all of these productions, the theatre was well supported and the Theatre Bar was the place to be seen. Here the manager, Mr Barrie, sporting his dinner suit, khaki shirt and

black dickie bow, was 'mine host' for the evening.

Wonderful memories of wonderful days.

So Mr Mayor, listen to the voice of the ratepayers and at least make a comment. Better still, bring back the theatre and show the youth of Warrington real entertainment.

GORDON COOPER
Snaefell Rise
Appleton

If you would like to join our campaign to bring back live theatre to Warrington - simply sign the form below and send it to Wendy Hampshire, Warrington Guardian, 138 Bridge Street, Warrington.

Bring back live theatre

Name

Address

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Phone



Liverpool Meeting - One of the best ever for attendance, thanks to the Crewe stalwarts who kindly came along to give support. We were pleased to meet Peter Pattison and his wife - who travelled from Exeter - and also his son and daughter in law. They thoroughly enjoyed the night. Jim Bramwell performed his new song, "The Marrow Song" and it went down very well. Great song for Jim!

We were all very pleased to see Steve & Doris Raymond with us again after a break. Steve has finished his hospital treatment now and we are trusting that George's light is shining for him. Keep going Steve.

Ged Jenet - the Widnes Wonder - created history on the night! In all the 37 years of the GFS existence I'm sure that no-one has ever come unstuck - half way through the act - with the words of "Lamp Post". Everybody knows "Lamp Post" and you can go in any club and they'll all sing it for you. Well Ged (the lad who needs Wimpey scaffolding to hold his sheet music) actually forgot the words - SHAME!!! Thanks to all who gave support on the night. It was great fun!

Just been thinking! - When Jim Bramwell sings "Uncle Joe's Mint Balls" he always goes round, after the meeting, handing out mint balls to the members. With his latest song I wonder if he'll hand out marrows?

Werrington - By Derek Ball -The January meeting was our first anniversary and What A Treat!!! They say that variety, well it certainly wasn't at Werrington. We had loads of super GF songs and also opera singers, comedians, liquorice stick players, harmonica blowers, and *monologuists*. Sid Handforth gave us a monologue and also a harmonica medley. Peter Burrows sang "Aint She Sweet" - including the verse, which we don't hear often. Janice Bentley once again charmed the audience with her beautiful singing voice when she gave us "The Hills are Alive With the Sound of Music," and our oldest member, Matthew Kelly, who incidentally was 85 on the 3rd of Jan, sang "Ukulele Lady" - cheeky wazack, pinching my song. Peter Gratton had us rocking with his gags and finished with George's "Count Your Blessings."

Alan Chenery sang the Walter Longshaw song "A Lancashire Lad And His Uke" and Brian Edge, with Jon Baddeley on clarinet, sang had us stamping our hands and clapping our feet to "I Wanna Be Like You." Arthur Newton sang the American Civil War song, Auri Lee, also lots of naff jokes by yours truly (Harry would have been ashamed of me). A Happy New Year to everybody. *Thank you Derek. Well I wouldn't have believed that Matthew Kelly was 85. Marvellous!!!! It was also Alan Chenery's birthday on the 6th. Did you know that Capricornians usually take the hard way through life rather than the smooth one? It's the sign of the mountain goat so they choose the hill tops. Bah Gum!!!*

Answer to Brian's poser - The colour is GREY

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: - Feb 7th, Mar 7th, Apr 4th, May 2nd, Jun 6th. Adm £1 with Buffet. All are made 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

Crewe Branch Wistaston Memorial Hall - Ring Brian Edge on 01270 69836 Future dates - Sat 21st Feb, Sat 28th Mar, Sat 18th Apr, Fri 29th May, Sat 27th June, Fri 24th July, Fri 28th Aug, Sat 26th Sep, Fri 23rd Oct, Fri 27th Nov, Fri 18th Dec. Adm 50p. Get there early for a seat.

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.

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 Feb.

So as George would say -

“Get Cracking”

Support Your Newsletter



Confucius he say -

If you are standing, - Stand!

If you are sitting, - Sit!

For goodness sake don't wobble.