

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY Newsletter 36

Vol. 3, No.12

June 1998

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Specially Produced for
George Formby Fans

by Stan Evans, The Hollies, 19 Hall Nook, Penketh, Warrington,
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Tel or Fax 01925 727102

Newsletter No. 36 and we begin by reporting the very sad loss of **Lottie Stanford**. Poor Harry was devastated when Lottie suddenly took ill and had to be rushed to hospital. He stayed with her over night and she died the following day.



But what a wonderful woman Lottie was. She lived a very religious life, read the bible every day and devoted her life to Harry and feeding the birds. Her back yard area is full of nests and feeding tables, which attracted all the birds in the area.

Lottie was cremated at the St Helens Crematorium on Wednesday, 22nd April, when several members of the GFS came to pay their respects: Representing Sale was: Alice Cronshaw, Cyril & Sheila Palmer, Ken & Ann Ratcliffe. Dennis Lee represented N. Wales and Tom Bailey and Bill Pope came from Liverpool. Anthony Mason, Jim & Joan Bramwell, John & Doris Myerscough and Stan Evans represented Warrington.

All the members loved dear Lottie and she will be remembered for her Stanley Holloway monologues that she recited. "Albert And The Lion" was her favourite.

Young Gareth Sumner. How pleased we were with his performance at the Crewe meeting. He sang "Down The Old Coal Hole" like a young professional and never once did he forget his lines - as he often does. He was excellent and every word was expressed nice and clear. Gareth has certainly improved over the past few weeks so maybe it has something to do with the fact that Fred Stevenson and Ray Bernard have taken him under their wings.



Well you are both doing a good job for the lad and we are all very pleased with the results. In fact we can see young Gareth making a living from entertainment someday and wish him the very best of luck. He deserves it.

It's really great seeing these youngsters enjoying themselves playing George's songs and we must give them every encouragement. They are excellent!

The Formby Story -

Part 26 by Stan Evans

George launched "Chinese Laundry Blues" which hit the streets like a breath of fresh air. They all loved it and from then on recognised the song as his signature tune. With his innocent face and cheeky grin he could possibly put over suggestive songs without too much agravation from the census people. George thought that he could make these cheeky inuendoes his trade mark for the future. However, some of the older classes were disgusted and considered him to be vulgar. The songwriters also looked on George as someone who could get through the strict controls and proceeded to add touches of vulgarity to the lyrics. George immediately returned them with orders to "Clean em up."



George, along with Arthur Mertz, the show producer, and Beryl, wrote a script for a film to be called Boots Boots. It was about a man who cleaned shoes in a hotel. The story line, which was very thin, was to be supported by George singing a number of songs. He peddled the script round the film studios but nobody wanted to take a chance on someone who was still unknown.

One day when George was playing at the Royal Court Theatre, Warrington, John E Blakeley, managing director of Mancunian Films, called in to speak to him regarding making a film.

George produced the script from his pocket and arrangements were made to produce the film in a little one room studio above a garage in Albany Street London. The camera was unable to be panned round so the players had to walk on and off the studio set from the side. Every few minutes the directors would press a button to let the garage know that they wanted "Silence."

The film, which included four of Jack Cottrell's songs: Baby, Why Don't Women Like Me, Sitting On The Ice In The Ice Rink, and I Could Make A Good Living At That, was made in 14 days on a very cheap budget of £3,000. George claimed that it was a lousy picture and jokingly said, "It was so dark we had to strike matches to see it." Unfortunately nobody wanted to buy the picture but it received a Premiere Showing at Burslem, Stafford.

Basil Dean, the producer, was touring the cinemas to see what sort of films the public wanted and the cinema managers asked for more George Formby films. Basil Dean replied with, "And who is George Formby?" to which they said, "Just look at the long queue outside for Boots Boots." More Next Month.

Complaint from Dennis Lee - Every time Stan

Evans comes to our meetings he always wins the Basket of Fruit in the raffle. *I know Dennis, and recently I've won the Banana Basket at the other meetings as well. In fact, 3 in one week - Now, that IS a miracle!!!!*

Jonathan Baddeley Writes - In the Potteries

there is a monthly publication which is produced by a local newspaper and entitled "The Way We Were." An early edition featured the Palladium in Waterloo Rd, Burslem. I wrote to the editor to tell him that the cinema launched George Formby's first film, "Boots Boots," in 1934, and he kindly included it in the next issue. This was followed by a letter from David Rayner of Stoke:-

"I write in reply to the letter from Jon Baddeley concerning the premiere of 'Boots Boots' at the Palladium, Burslem. I have made extensive search of my film programme records and find that the Palladium, unlike most other Potteries cinemas, had long spells when they did not advertise in the Sentinel. Unfortunately, one of these spells included 1934, so the date of the world premiere of Boots Boots at this cinema has been lost.

The date of the release, given by Mr Baddeley, as July 30th, 1934, may have been the date of the general release, as it was definitely shown for three days at the Roxy, Hanley, on Thursday July 19th, 1934, and shortly thereafter for three days at the Regal, Newcastle, on Bank Holiday Monday, August 6th, 1934. I hope this information is of some help to Mr Baddeley." - David Rayner.

Many thanks for your article Jon.

Stan - You are in deep trouble - you didn't

include Connie's "Thank You" letter in the last issue and she is now snorting fire waiting to get hold of you!

Oh my goodness - what have I done? Well it was like this Connie. I did include your letter, but, it was my first effort on a new computer programme and everything when wrong. Unlike the old programme, this new one will actually set out all the text and photos in book form. This means that page 2 is attached to page 19 and page 4 is attached to 17. Now all the pages should be linked together so that the text will flow from one page to the next, but the chain had become unhooked (and you know what it feels like when something becomes unhooked) on one of the pages (are you with me up to now?) and some of the text disappeared into outer space. Never to be seen again. Now with the old system I did a double check and flicked through each of the pages to make



sure that nothing was missing, but it isn't so easy with this new system.

I've always believed in slotting main headings at the top of the page and avoiding, whenever possible, "continued next page" This leaves spaces to be filled in later, which means spending a lot of time flicking back to fill in the gaps at the foot of the page. Now, to avoid losing any more articles I have simplified the job and used a different system, - called "Connie's System." This system means that headings are placed in any position and the text simply follows on from one page to the next. To complicate the job more I also installed a digital camera and a new printer. These have had a few teething problems but they are sorted out now. Has she quietened down Brian? - Terribly Sorry Connie. Phew, - glad I've got that over. Thanks for the vegetarian meal.

Kevin Bridgwater Replies - In the last issue James Singletery was curious about the two people in the photo with George.

Well the woman is Maud Miller who was a journalist for the Pictorial Magazine, and the man is St John Horsfall, who broke the speed record at 100 mph. Maud, who wrote an article on George, accompanied him round the track at a speed of 95 mph.

So now you know James. If you want to know anything drop a line to the Newsletter and someone out there will know the answer.

Top Quality Uke Banjo Wanted, Stage artist, Peter Franklyn, on 0161 304 9167, is looking for a uke of similar quality to the Gibson UB4.

Another Good Uke Banjo Wanted - Stage artist, Roy Manchee, on 01633 423375 is also looking a good sounding uke. He needs this reasonably quick as he is leaving shortly to entertain on the cruises.

George's Gibson UB3 - Can anyone throw any light on this query? - As you probably know we try to keep a record of the 19 ukes that were sold after George's death at the Lytham St Annes auction. Well, we have records of the whereabouts of 15 of the ukes but 4 of them are still missing. These are: Lot No. 444 Black Wooden uke bought by Mrs Welch. 445, Jose Fernandez bought by Hyman. 453, Melody uke bought by Turner, and 458 bought by George's solicitor, J Crowther (uke sent to America).

Now Larry Johnson of the Sale meeting, has informed me that he purchased one the ukes: George's Gibson UB3, which was played in "It's In The Air" from a Mr Gareth Holman about 20 years ago. Apparently Holman bought it for £37. 10s

at the auction and sold it for £300.

Now this doesn't make sense because according to our records all the Gibsons at the auction were bought by either Bill Logan or Eric Ramsden, - Pat Howson removed the Baby Gibson before the auction started. So, where does Larry's uke fit in? Have you any idea. Drop me a line if you have.

Practise Night. Brian Edge rang to say he was delighted with the latest Practise Night. 25 turned up and they are all showing great progress. All the members are keen to improve their spot on stage.

Wonderful Brian! They've have progressed very well over the past few months.

The Crewe Branch were 'on song' after their 'Hit performance at the Nantwich Jazz Festival and their success attracted no less than 18 new members to the April meeting. They all went home happy too, after another great concert. This featured a surprise party for one of our founder members, Steve Hassall who was celebrating his 40th Birthday. Steve's wife Val and his son Alex set up the party and Steve's mum and dad came along to hear him perform on the uke for the first time. Steve's dad said that he remembered the time many years ago when Steve played Bass Guitar in a Group.

Apparently he used to practise in his bedroom and the whole house shook! In his response to the surprise party Steve said over the mike, "I don't usually like a lot of fuss but I can say that I couldn't wish to celebrate with a nicer lot of people than you all.

Val brought along a nice Birthday Cake which was cut up and enjoyed by everyone present. It was good to see Pete, Jenny and Adam Smith again after a break of a couple of months.

Stan Evans has struck again! One dreads to think what is going to come out of his carrier bag next! When Stan went on stage everyone was whispering, 'it's Max the dog' but when Stan eventually removed his hand 'ouila' it wasn't Max, it was Gilbert the Emu who very soon had Steve on the floor! They are all alike these Emu's you know. No doubt we will hear more from Gilbert in the future.

Thanks Brian for your report. It really was an excellent night and a wonderful variety show. VARIETY - YES!!! That's the Word! - George's Variety Show!

Stan, you got the prices of the Mini Disk Players the wrong way round in the last issue. The price of the pocket model from Richer Sounds is £199.95 and the table model is £169.95. *Thanks Brian.*

Michael Mogg, who is a permanent resident at the Lymebank Hospital, Dunfermline, writes to say that he thoroughly enjoys watching George on video and listening to his songs. George means a lot to him.

Thank you Michael and we are pleased that you benefit from listening to George.

Lottie was a wonderful loving person. When Harry told me of how she devoted her life to simple things like feeding the birds it reminded me of the story of the little lady who was constantly short of money because she spent most of her pension on food for the birds.

Every Monday morning she would pack her electric iron in a small brown cardboard box, tie it up with string and take it to the local pawn shop for a loan. Now I don't know exactly how much money she borrowed on the iron but I should imagine that it would be around £2 and at the end of the week she would recover her iron for around £2.25?

This went on for many years and it became a regular routine for the pawn broker to accept the cardboard box from her and keep it on the shelf for her to call in to collect it. She always had a friendly chat with him when she called in.

One Friday morning he was very concerned because she hadn't called in to collect her iron. At 5pm he was ready for closing the doors and was wondering if she'd had an accident. He decided to call at her house to see if she was OK and was met by the next door neighbour who informed him that the poor old lady had died that morning.

The following morning he untied the string of the box to put it on display. Now although he had been receiving the iron for many years he never even bothered to open the box to see what it was worth. Although he was feeling sad at having lost his dear customer he had to laugh when he discovered that inside the box was a house brick.

Karaoke Backing Tapes - I've just had delivery of 3 new Karaoke Tapes (1) English Pub Singalong - which consists of 20 popular songs from the 30s - 40s, including Roll Out The Barrel, Lassie From Lancashire, Don't Dilly Dally, We'll Meet Again, You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You, Slow Boat To China and many more. "Windows" is on and "Lamp Post" but unfortunately the last note is missing off the end of Lamp Post. It finishes with "In case a certain little lady passes" - Production fault.

But I must tell you that I have never heard better uke playing - apart from George - It is really great!!!! I wonder who the player is? Must find out.

(2) - Also An Irish Karaoke Singalong which includes great songs like Mountains Of Mourn, Molly Malone, Galway Bay and many more.

(3) - There's also a Scottish Karaoke Tape which includes Donald Where's Your Trousers, Loch Lomond, Annie Laurie and many more.

Some of the sounds are excellent and what's more, some of the Scottish songs have a backing group of girl singers in the background. Eat your heart out Cliff Richard!!! The CDS only are supplied with song books

Price if you are interested - £3. 50 Tape and £5. 50 for the CD. All plus 50p pp.

Leave It To The Women!!! - Polyskins

We've had a few complaints from the men who have experienced a few problems fitting the Polyskins to uke banjos, and all I can is "Follow the instructions and take your time."

At the Llandudno Meeting Kath Hammond showed me her uke banjo and asked me to try it for sound. It sounded great - really great - and I doubt if I've heard one as good for clarity and volume. She followed with, - "This is the Polyskin that I bought from you and I've fitted it myself." Well I couldn't believe it! It was perfectly fitted and no-one would guess that it was a polythene material.

Of course, just like a man, her husband tried to get in on the act by telling me that he'd cut the skin out but I didn't believe him. No! This one definitely had the woman's touch and it was a credit to her.

So come on you ladies. When your husband is struggling, swearing and cursing the day I sold him the Polyskin, just quietly tell him to step at one side while you show him how it's done. Remember, - George was lost without Beryl.

Our Newsletter is doing GREAT. We send it out to all parts of the country including Birmingham, Liverpool, Cambridge, North and South Wales, Sheffield, Leeds, Wigan, Manchester, Dudley, Newark, Rochdale, Milton Keynes, Dorset, Stourbridge, Bolton, Good old Bonny Scotland, and across the seas to Spain. Also to the N. West meetings, so if you've got anything to sell, or wish to buy, stick it in the Newsletter. It'll cost you nothing! - P.S. - Don't forget to send a story with your ad.

Top Quality Uke Banjo for Sale. Peter Franklyn - professional artist, is selling a Wendall Hall Ludwig original (around 1930s) - Top condition with shaped case. £850 O.N.O. Ring Peter on 0161 304 9167.

Alan Southworth, at the Llandudno meeting told a little tale of when Billy Uke Scott played Llandudno at the Grand Theatre Music Hall. It 1941 and while he was playing "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" the management asked him to carry on playing until they received a special announcement on radio. The announcement was good old Winston Churchill with his very famous "We'll fight em on the beaches" speech, which spurred the British on into a fighting spirit.



Another Newsletter Service -

Bah Gum!!

We've now got a good sheet music contact, so drop a line if you are looking for any particular songs in original sheet music form. It might take a couple of weeks to get it to you and there is a charge for the service, averaging about £3 or £4 per song??? depending on availability. Please note that George's songs are not always available and some of them are collectors items. Note also that they vary in quality which also determines the price. Up to now the sheets I've received have been in very good condition.

Great Scoop for the Newsletter

- Pleased to report that I've has just stumbled across - and purchased - the best bundle of George & Beryl items since the 1961 Auction. George's large case (or it might be his father's) full of private letters, song assignments, copyright agreements, film contracts, bank statements, cheque books, paying in books, photos, and loads of other stuff. Altogether there are about 250 song assignments and one in particular is from Eddie Latta - Songwriter To The Stars - of 10 Druids Cross Rd, Calderstones, Liverpool 18, who writes:

ASSIGNMENT. I, Eddie Latta, hereby assign all rights, Singing, Mechanical and Publishing of the song 'Spotting On The Top Of Blackpool Tower' to Mr George Formby on whatever terms Mr George Formby states. Signed Eddie Latta 16th April 1941. And in pencil 'given to George Blitz Fund.'

Another from Fred Godfrey reads: *In consideration of the sum of £20 received I, the undersigned do hereby assign to George Formby Esq. the sole and exclusive rights (singing, performing, publishing, mechanical etc) of the songs "My Little Bowler Hat In My Hand" "Oh You Have No Idea." In all countries. signed Fred Godfrey.*

Another assignment is from B FELDMAN & CO - Music Publishers of Shafts-

bury Avenue, London WC2, and reads:- *This is to give George Formby full rights in recording "I'd Do It With A Smile" and "Swing Mama." Signed Roger Macdougall.*

HARRY COADY, The versatile Comedian of Stage, Radio, Films and Circus, writes from the Grand Theatre, Luton, on March 6th, 1942:-

SMILE ALL THE TIME

Dear Beryl & George, Many thanks for your letter and I am pleased to know that you are going to get the number over, so I wish you all the very best with it. I may say I have had a lot of small merchants after it but I said "No." Now please find the agreement signed and I hope you will send me the verse you have done. By the way, the song is called, "Smile All The Time," not "While" but if you think 'While' is better - OK, but I think that 'Time' is easier to say, so let me know what you think about it. I may say that I have done another number and it is great - so everybody says - but it is not just your type, it is Flanagan & Allen style at la Underneath The Arches, and it is called "Now That We're Pals Once More." So if you think you could use it I will send a copy to you.

I must say that I am having a busy time getting a Tenting Circus ready for the summer and I've been looking for nice trailer caravan to take on tour.

Kindest regards from us both to you both, Harry & Doris.

P.S. Let me know when the records are done and I will buy a dozen for my friends - whether they want them or not.

Attached is a slip of paper which reads:- In consideration of ONE SHILLING, I, the undersigned, agree to give to George Formby 50% of my song "Smile All The While" All monies received to be equally divided - Harry Coady.

Also attached is a letter of contract from Lawrence Wright Publishers of Denmark St, London WC2 - 9th April, 1942, which reads:-

To Mrs G Formby, Grosvenor House, Park Lane, London W.1.

Herewith the contract for "Smile All The Time" along with cheque for £10, which I have made out to George, and I shall leave it to you to send Harry Coady his share. Also kindly get him to sign the assignment and forms. I am just awaiting the words of the song and the photograph of George, and I will get it out at once. Best Wishes, Lawrence Wright.

November 11th, 1940

FRED BARNETT, of 38 Midhill Rd, Sheffield 2, writes:- *Dear Mr & Mrs Formby, Many thanks for your encouraging letter about the song I wrote "You've Got To Hand It To The Women." I thought it would be all right for 'Our George.'*

Now the reason I sent no music is that I thought George would have his own tune set to it, but now I know what he wants. I am having it set to music by my daughter who is one of Sheffield's popular club pianists and accompanists. She'll put it right

because she's played a lot of George's stuff.

I am a proud father when I say that she could accompany a singer at the age of 10 and played for dancing at 12. She was a pianist at a picture house, just outside Sheffield, at 16, and for the Gloops Concert Party. You will have heard of Gloops in Sheffield, and now she is engaged every night at one of our bigger clubs, Southey Green, so she knows her work all right. Fred Barnett.

Fred also wrote another song "In My Little Cap I Used To Wear At School" for George.

Among the Case of Memorabilia were quite a lot of George Formby senior's papers and most interesting were his Band Parts which are at least 100 years old. Now we may think we are lucky having backing tapes or a Keyboard and Drums but GF senior had, Cello, Bass, Drums, Viola, 2nd Violin, Horns, Clarinet, Flute, Oboe, Trombone, Piano and the Leader. In the Leader's book he had typed:- "NOTICE, I would esteem it a great pleasure if the GENTLEMEN of the ORCHESTRA will not damage or disfigure these books as all Books are EXAMINED before going to the Orchestra and on Receiving them back on Saturday Night. Any damage or difigurement will be reported. Signed George Formby, November 2nd, 1909."

The books, - black with gold embossed print, - are very well thumbed to the extent that the bottom right hand corners are completely worn away.

Buying a S/Hand Uke - Beware .. I received a phone call from a man who had just bought a uke banjo from a dealer in Liverpool. He claimed it was worth £275 but he could have it at a reduced price of £150. When I asked the name of the uke he told me that it was a KEECH with inside tensioners. I informed him that he had been "well and truly done" and that the uke was worth no more than £40 - if that. For confirmation of this he rang Ray Bernard who gave a value of £40 also. The man complained to the dealer who said "Tough Luck" and then contacted the Fair Trading Office who said, "You've not got a chance of getting your money back because it's a matter of opinion what the uke is worth.

Buying a New Uke . . Now we don't wish to give names with any of these complaints as it is unfair to the vendor. They may have reasons. However, readers are urged to be extra careful before ordering new ukes to be manufactured. Complaints are coming in regarding deposits (or full payments) and the ukes have not been delivered. They feel that they'll never get their goods. Two customers have waited 3 years. Please check with other members before paying out deposits to have a uke manufactured.

Computer For Sale to improve the quality of the photos we have now purchased new computer equipment. This means that the previous equipment is surplus to requirements. Details are:- 486 MB, 100 MHZ, 16MB Ram, 64 Bit w/2MB VRAM, 1.7GB Hdd, 14" NI hres SVGA Monitor, Windows 95 Keyboard, HP Deskjet Printer (very slight fault) Fitted with Windows 95, Office Pro 97, Corel Draw 6. In other words it's a gud un! Price £350 lot. Give me a ring if interested and a demonstration is on offer. Bah Gum!

D.U.K.E.S - Hardworking Fund-raiser, Ken Smith of Leeds writes:-

Thanks for the kind gifts that were raffled at our Charity event on April 6th. We raised a very worthwhile £150 with more to follow for the Sick Childrens Trust at St James, Leeds.

Lots of players turned out from the Yorkshire Ukulele Circle, the Pudsey Plonkers, (formerly Pudsey Players) and from the newly formed, D.U.K.E.S. We had an enthusiastic audience which included Burt Gaunt the surviving brother of the Gaunt Brothers, (before my time but I bet you'll remember them Stan) By all accounts he was very favourably impressed.

You asked for information about D.U.K.E.S. (Distinguished UKE Stars appreciation Society) which emerged as an idea some time ago to promote the works of other ukulele performers such as Cliff Edwards, which, we feel will attract a wider audience than we do if we just concentrate on George, - who's songs we love!



D.U.K.E.S. also gives us a useful banner under which we can carry out charity events. *Many thanks Ken and we wish you plenty of success with your work, especially for the Childrens Hospitals. George loved children so uke playing societies should help to support them. Carry on the good work.*

Left-handed Martin Thomas, writes ***No Place For A Diet.***

If you not been to the Crewe meeting on a Party Night you have missed a treat. The concerts are great and the food brilliant and plentiful, but no place for anyone watching their waistline! Congratulations to all concerned. Martin Thomas, Crewe Member.

Thank you Martin, It's very near a Birthday Party Night every time we go to Crewe, so I've been working it out! There are 365 days in a year so how can 80 or 90 members always come up with a birthday every time we go there. I think they are making these birthdays up because they enjoy eating cake. Keep writing in.



Bill Turner - Our Werrington Branch organiser, who is now recovering from a major operation, wishes to thank all who kindly send him Get Well Cards (nearly 40) and Best Wishes during his stay in hospital. It was really appreciated and he benefited greatly from your kind thoughts. Bill goes on to say that he is now feeling fitter than he was before the operation.

We are very pleased that George's light is shining for you Bill and look forward to seeing you again at the meetings. Keep smiling!

What A Cheek!!! - One of the newspaper reporters printed a photo of the Spice Girls (no not our Sale ladies) because some football fans are complaining that they are not good enough to make a recording for the World Cup. He finished off his article with, "Now I can understand Elvis Presley fans not hanging around because George Formby is next on stage, but whatever you think of the song remember the cause."

Well I guess there must be some logic in it somewhere.

S.O.S. The Blackpool Meeting at the Wainwright (every 1st Sat) is usually struggling for players and unfortunately I'll be in France on June 6th. It will be appreciated if you could pay them a visit on the night. Many Thanks, Stan.

Richard Whittaker writes - I wasn't very happy about having to go home after the very successful meeting at Llandudno. It was amazing how the people were so friendly towards me as a newcomer. After being persuaded to put my name down on the concert list, I sat back and watched the afternoon's performers. After watching brilliant performers like Andy Eastwood and Dean Spencer, who are about my age, I got worried about doing my own performance of "Uncle Joes Mint Balls" with my dad (Alan) and Cliff Royle. However, as I discovered, there was nothing to worry about.

Can I please take this opportunity to thank everybody for the encouragement and applause we received, and thanks also to those who organised the meeting. Yours Appreciatively, Richard Whittaker.

Thanks for your letter Richard. The Formby meetings are like character builders. Learn a few simple songs with easy chords like: Little Brown Jug, Knees Up Mother Brown, Kiss Me Goodnight Sergeant Major, etc. and then pluck up the nerve to have a go on stage. It's all to do with confidence!

One semi - professional entertainer told me: "I used to worry when I made a mistake on stage and for a few nights was unable to sleep. But then I thought of all the disasters in the world and decided that my little error was absolutely nothing in comparison. I now laugh them off and the crowds join in." Keep writing in Richard.

I was a bit reluctant to give **Stephen Ensall's** name to the TV researchers when they asked for any youngsters who can sing and play. I gave them Gareth Sumner's (13) name and Frank Murphy's (7) but felt that perhaps 9 year old Stephen wasn't quite ready to be plunged before a few thousand viewers. Usually he would insist on someone accompanying him with his songs and in the past he has been reluctant to sing out.

TOP OF THE BILL!

However, what a great shock we got at the May 1st Peniffordd Meeting when young Stephen went on stage. He took them all by storm with his brilliant singing and playing. You could tell that he has carefully studied George's rhythmic strokes because young Stephen came over just like him. He was absolutely brilliant and you could hear a pin drop while he was performing. And, - the applause stayed with him when he left the stage and until he got back to his seat. He will be a star of the future and we are delighted.

I had a quiet word with him afterwards and he promised that he would learn the words and chords so that he no longer requires the aid of a music stand. Good for you Stephen and we wish you tons and tons of success. It's great to see these youngsters following in George's footsteps! - Wonderful!!!

But the second on the bill has got to be Cliff Royle, who was thrown, - yes thrown, into the job of M/C at a second's notice. What a brilliant job he did and he never fluffed a line - which is very unusual for Cliff. He took to the job like an old pro. and in between announcing the entertainers he shot round the audience like "Road Runner" gathering in all the names of performers. Three Cheers For Cliff!!!

Blackpool Meeting - Once again we had a great night at the Wainwright and more turned up than expected. Tony Thornton, the Editor of the GFS magazine, the Vellum, came along to take a few photos for his next issue, and apologised for having to shoot off early. However he performed a couple of good numbers on stage before leaving.

Penyffordd Meeting from Young Cliff Royle.

In spite of the meeting being held at the start of the Holiday Weekend we still had a good attendance, including some new visitors. Our two M.C.s were both away so a volunteer was requested. It fell on deaf ears, so to the consternation of my Wife I offered my services. All jobs are easy until you come to do them. Then you discover just what is involved. Still I did my best. I have now nearly had as many promotions in the Branch in two years as I did during my working life.

Anyway we had a full programme of entertainment with excellent support from

Crewe, especially the ladies; Connie, Auntie Mary, Glenys, Pam Baddeley who sang solo, and of course the now famous Crewe Jazz Band.

Some played for the first time. Jim Murphy (trained by young son Frank) and Alan Whittaker and son Rick. Rick, who has only been playing a short time, has improved so much. So pleased with his performance he begged to play Hindoo Man on his own.

Stan Evans performed another spell binding miracle, this time without the aid of Max, his dog. But with full support from the audience.

There was a presentation to Glynn the Steward of the British Legion Club, who was retiring after 25 years of service. We will miss him for he has been a tremendous support to us over the past few years.

Dennis Lee reported on the finances of the Branch. We are in quite a reasonable position even after paying for free pasties over the past months. Well done Dennis, Leslie and all your wonderful helpers who work behind the scenes. Cliff Royle, (Publicity Officer) *Thank you Cliff. You did a great job of Compering the show and I thought - "that man is of many talents, he'll be doing miracles next! Must keep an eye on him!"*

Penyffordd - No Meeting in June Due To French Trip.

Llandudno Meeting.

- What wonderful weekend many GFS members had in Llandudno at the end of April. Young and old they came to support us from many parts of the country, even from Yorkshire. Many stayed in the same hotel where there was a real social atmosphere, and some had sleepy heads on the Sunday morning after reaching a 2am retiring deadline.

LOTTIE STANFORD

Dennis explained to the audience that Harry's wife, dear Lottie had died and asked them to give a minute's silence in memory of her. Very nice thought Dennis.

The large room at the St George's Hotel was almost filled to capacity with nearly 200 attending, of which about a quarter were visitors. It was a long day starting at 1.30pm for the afternoon session, with a break for dinner, followed by an evening session which went on until 11.30pm. Jim Knight and Ray Davies were fully employed in organising the artists; there being 59 separate "turns" to organise. What a lot of good entertainment people had for their money.

Details of all the acts would fill a book, however I must say that we were not

only entertained by a number of young members, but also four even younger ones, aged five, six and upwards who put on exceptionally good acts. A number of players performed for the first time on the "big" stage; good of them. One Geoff Shone, (the drummer in the band) was not a volunteer, but was literally hijacked into playing a uke with the rest of the rest of the band; Dickie & Tony.

The Llandudno "do" is becoming an important event in the GFS calendar, thanks to the efforts of Dennis and Lesley Lee, as well as those who provide help and support in so many ways. We should thank the Tourist Office of Conwy County Borough Council for their considerable support.

Don't forget, of course, that Llandudno is a great place for a holiday whether it be for a weekend or a longer holiday. Cliff Royle (Publicity Officer)

And thank you again Cliff. You are doing wonderful for the Newsletter; and I see you've bought a new typewriter ribbon! What will you get up to next? Great!

Thank You From Eva. Stan goes to his GF Meetings and I usually retire to bed around the 10pm mark. The following morning I wake to find that Stan - once again - won a basket of Bananas. He leaves it to surprise me the following morning.

However, what a lovely surprise when I woke up on the 19th April. A lovely bunch of flowers and birthday cards. What a lovely thought from you all. Many, Many Thanks to all of you.

Llandudno again - Eva & I went to Llandudno on Bank Holiday Monday, to see if we could lend a helping hand to the Penyffordd lads

who were performing at the Grand Extravaganza, which was held in the town centre on Sat, Sun and Monday. As last year, the streets were filled with all sorts of activities: Clowns, Side Shows, Charity Events, Jazz Bands, Dancers, Singers, Magicians (one man had the nerve to call himself "The Miracle Maker") Jugglers, and of course, our own George Formby Players: Ray



Davies, Dennis Lee and Kevin Blanchfield. The streets were packed with people. We had difficulty finding the lads, however, a few more steps down the high street and we heard the banging of banjos and the three loud voices echoing round the next corner. They sounded really great and the crowds blocked the streets to the extent that they had to be ushered forward so that others could get through. They did regular half hour sessions and each time they stopped the crowd would shout for "More." You can't beat the old songs they said as we went round with the bucket. "Ask em to sing Cleaning Windows," which they did, and "Out In The Middle East" turned out a favourite with them when every hand was thrown up in the air, - "HOY". They didn't realise that George had such a large repertoire of songs - and several held their hands out to receive details of the Penyffordd meetings.

Dennis, Kevin and Ray make an excellent Trio. They have good strong voices and sing well in good harmony. Every song came over very well and Kevin would fill in with the odd joke or back-chat. The mini disk player was ideal for requests as it is just a simple matter of pressing the right button and the song comes up. Far better than tapes.

The lads are appearing at **Congleton Carnival** 18th & 19th July when they are billed as the George Formby Outfit. This looks like it might be a good show with a Jazz Band, Sky Riders, Traction Engines, Gym Teams, Judo Display, Dance Troupes, Boys Bands, Billerettes and much more.

Don't Forget. . . Penketh Carnival (we entertain in a Marquee) on July 4th at 1.30pm. Come and have a bite to eat after the show.

Also **Wigan Pier** on Sunday August 2nd at 1.30pm. Plenty of free parking. Ring Stan for more details.

Les Pearson, Sale Meeting, rang. Saturday 25th April was the 100th Anniversary of dear old Gracie Fields and a special show was held at the Gracie Fields Theatre, Rochdale. Don Estell, of "It Aint Half Hot Mum" was entertaining along with Keith Clifford, who gave his impressions of Frank Randle, and Rob Wilton was represented. "Unfortunately," said Les, "they had no George Formby singers there."

Well this is a great pity Les, but we'd no idea that the show was on and Debbie Walker of the Gracie Fields Exhibition has our phone number. We didn't get an invite. Also it clashed with our meeting at Llandudno. Maybe next time.

Harry writes... Dear Stan, I want to thank all the friends who went to the crematorium to pay their respects to my Lottie. I also want to thank all those who sent Sympathy Cards. It was very thoughtful and sincere of them in times like this. Thanks again and God Bless Them. Harry Stanford.

We are terribly sorry that you are going through a tough time Harry. Unfortunately these are times that many have to go through and it isn't pleasant. You have a lot of friends in the society so please ring if you require any help. I'm sure that Lottie would be happy to think that you are getting on with your life. You have spread a lot of happiness in your time. God Bless.



Dinky Doos by Jim Murphy. Dear Stan, May I take this opportunity to say what a great Newsletter this really is. It's brilliant! Frank my son, aged 7, loves your magic tricks, - actually they are miracles - and it pleases me to see the other youngsters at the G F meetings. So I thought of a Junior Section to promote friendship between them. They'll also be able to help each other. I've noticed that after a convention Frank has learnt some new technique or tune from some other boy/girl

After the Llandudno meeting Frank made a new friend from Anglesey called Alex who has just started to play the uke. Since then they have been on the phone and Frank is interested in his progress. He also met Richard from Yorkshire, a 12 year old boy who taught Frank a little ditty which he thought was great enough to play on the radio the following week.

If any parents are interested in forming a junior group - we could call them the DINKY DOOS - please contact me on 01948 830700 and if we have enough interest we could meet regularly or at conventions or other dates. When they are suitably proficient I'm sure all sorts of Eisteddfods, Folk Festivals etc. will be interested. TV and Radio will give them recognition and it will be a good confidence booster and maybe life-long friendship for these young Formby fans. *Many thanks Jim. I am really pleased that someone is interested in these youngsters. In the GFS we had about 40 of them all progressing tremendously well and putting on their own show. With brilliant fingerwork some were more entertaining than us older ones and a few of them went on to learn other instruments like piano and bass guitar. It is important that George's songs don't die in the next few years, so encouraging the youngsters is essential. Jim's number again: 01948 830700.*

Great News - Harry is Coming on the D Day Trip!

Harry & Lottie should have been spending their holiday in Llandudno, in June, but as Harry said, "I'll be by myself so it won't be a pleasant holiday." So Harry's sister told him to get on the phone and book for the D Day Trip. Within 24 hours we had his seat booked, passport applied for and bags packed ready for the off. He's still a fast mover is our Harry.

Just Done a Session

at the Granada TV Studios with three of our Dinky Doos. Gareth Sumner 13, Stephen Ensall 9, and Frank Murphy 7. They were being interviewed by Lucy Meacock and asked why they liked George. This was followed by each of them singing their most popular song and then as a group playing Windows. Unfortunately, Granada didn't know what was required of the lads until the last minute and consequently we couldn't practise together.

It was nerve racking at the rehearsals when all three opened their mouths and nothing came out. However, after a short session off screen they gave their best and produced excellent results.

It is very important for these youngstars as they wont feel half as nervous when they go for filming next time. Very good experience for the lads! Proud of em!

Not the dreaded Banjo Harry

No five string banjos allowed

N.W. BRANCHES

OFF TO FRANCE

STAN'S TOUR

UKE 2

"I know what they mean when they say oui oui"

"Imagine me on the Maginot Line"

"But it's no different anywhere"

"I'm a fro Give us a song Dennis!"

Following George

We are looking forward to a good trip to France and if a success maybe we'll make it a regular event. 5th - 8th June.

Sent in by Brian Edge

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
DUE TO THE FRENCH TRIP THERE WILL BE NO MEETING IN JUNE.

Blackpool - Wainwright, Hornby Rd, B/pool - Every 1st Sat. in the month -
Tel Eve Stewart on 01253 768097 - Future Dates: - Jun 6th, July 4th, NOTE -
AUGUST 22nd, NO SEPTEMBER MEETING, Oct 3rd, Nov 7th, Dec 5th.
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 Alice Cronshaw on 0161 727 9829 or Cyril Palmer on 0161 748
6550. Adm £1. NOTE CHANGE OF DATE FOR JUNE ONLY - THURS 18th.

Crewe Branch Wistaston Memorial Hall - Ring Brian Edge on 01270
69836 Future dates - 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 - Ev-
ery 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 June
So as George would say -
"Get Cracking"

