

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 38

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Specially Produced for
George Formby Fans
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Welcome to Newsletter No. 38

And what have we got this month? Well we have news of David Bret, the writer who is being accused of trying to destroy George & Beryl, pulling out of a radio challenge. We've a report on Dennis Lee turning the village of sleepy Horseman's Green into a rave up, John Taylor's invitation to the Normandy Video Preview. A report on the Penketh Carnival which could have turned into a disaster, and news from Blackpool and their plans to make the Millennium Celebrations into one of the biggest in the country.

GEORGE'S SUITCASE:- We've also got another article from George's Suitcase, which includes a copy of a letter from Beryl and details of how much they earned during the Panto season. Plus much more - So Read On . . .

Crewe's Biggest Success to Date ...

On Thursday 9th July the concert party entertained over 250 invited guests at the world famous Stapeley Water Gardens. The performance was given in "The Palms" a Tropical Oasis, probably the most unique setting ever to host the ukulele.

The large audience, comfortably ensconced in settees, sat around a huge pool overflowing with colourful fish, amid the foliage of Banana trees, Coconut palms and tropical flowers of indescribable beauty. The foliage was inhabited by colourful Macaws and other tropical birds. The strains of George Formby's music stirred the savage Piranhas and the 3 foot long Koi Carp also responded by shoaling at the end of the pool nearest to the performances as soon as the music began. Is there no end to Formby Magic?

The concert group gave an excellent two hour show which was well received by the audience who remained in their seats until the end of the very last number. It was a truly great night for the group who were indeed a credit to the George Formby Society. Our oldest member/performer, Mary Atkinson was 85 years old on the day. Jonathan Baddeley introduced the turns in his confident style, passing on to the audience interesting snippets of Formby history.

Front Cover: It has been suggested that whenever possible we give a few details on the photo on the front cover, so here goes. . . This particular photo was taken when George was still using his father's act. George's sister, Louie, claimed that her father was very tired on stage so he painted two dots on his forehead and dabbed talcum powder on his eyebrows. He performed with his eyes closed and the audience thought that the dots were his eyes.

The Formby Story

Part 28 - by Stan Evans

The making of the film "No Limit" brought a turning point for Beryl. She had starred alongside George in his first two films, "Boots Boots" and "Off The Dole" and performed with him in his stage shows. But her services were not required for this new film. Instead, Monty Banks, who needed a well known personality to lift George's career to a higher level, chose Florence Desmond as his leading lady.



Florence, who signed a contract that would give her equal billing and publicity, was extremely annoyed when the large vans and billboards displayed huge posters, "Associated Talking Pictures are now making 'No Limit' starring George Formby." She immediately complained to the production manager who claimed that it was not his responsibility. Not to be put off she contacted the producer, Basil Dean, who promised that he would look into the matter.

However, after a few days the situation was no different so she threatened to go on strike unless they listened to her. She knew that she had a good case against them because it was the producers that had broken the 'equal billing,' contract, not her. At this the studio had no alternative but to remove the offending billboards.

Florence quickly tried to make up the differences between her and George explaining that she would expect him to complain if the roles were reversed. However, there was still tension between them and the film extras put it down to her being a little too aloof while George was at all times a friendly sort of chap. In her autobiography, "Florence Desmond, by Herself" she wrote that although she made every effort to bridge the gap between them the relationship didn't improve."

Beryl also wasn't happy with the situation. Apart from having to stand on the side lines while George was performing, she was also being elbowed out by the management and constantly told that they knew what was best for George. It was their intention to phase out the singing so that George would eventually be a comedy actor. They were not interested in his songs or his ukulele playing.

This angered Beryl who immediately wrote to her friends asking them to get as many people as possible to write in praising George and his songs. It was her opinion, and quite rightly, that George had become popular through his songs and it would be foolish to leave them out.

More Next Month

Christening Invitation - by Stan Evans

Jim Murphy enjoyed the D Day Trip so much he decided to re-create it by inviting the merry gang of trippers to the christenings of his three children. There's one thing for sure, if ever he falls behind with his tax payments he can rest assured that the tax man will never find him - that's for sure! Finding Jim's home - Horseman's Green - is like travelling down cart tracks on an undiscovered planet, however, we arrived in good time when friends and neighbours were tucking into the grub. We were invited to grab a plate each so Eva & I, along with Jim & Joan Bramwell, joined in the feast. It tasted really great.



A marquee, erected on the lawn, was filled with tables laden with food and in the empty space, Jim had prepared a sound system with plenty of disco CDs. Unfortunately he hadn't allowed for Dennis (the menace) Lee - who immediately set about unplugging all Jim's work and crashing in with our own version of what a disco should sound like. We opened up with The War Medley, followed by all George's top songs. - Windows, Wu and Lamp Post, and gave it a right bashing. The non-Formby's wondered what on earth had landed in Horseman's Green and I'm sure they could hear it in Blackpool, where the convention was still operating and where Dennis & Lesley had arrived from. Unfortunately, Dennis, who had a sore throat (through singing his heart out at Blackpool) couldn't really get into the swing, however he made sure that everybody else did.

After about 90 minutes of Formby bashing we were asked to vacate the marquee to give the disco dancers a chance, - which we did. But Dennis, who wasn't to be outdone by this, immediately led the Merry Band of Banjo Bashers into the house, - (where quiet discussions had been going on) - and within 5 minutes we'd set up stall again. There's no doubt about it but you can't keep these Formby members down, - no way!!! They'll set up shop anywhere!!!

Now, no-one had the nerve to chuck us out this time because the main stars of the show, - the newly christened babies - were having a rare old knees up. They never stopped dancing to the music but went from lap to lap tiring out all the ladies, - who enjoyed every minute. I thought, "I hope these ladies don't go broody otherwise it could put an end to the society." That's for sure! Although they were only a few months old they were already giving Cliff Royle a few tips on timing. They were great!

Anyway Jim & Carol, many thanks for the invitation. Please invite us to any future christenings and we'll be there like a shot.

Sale Meeting - I'm very pleased to report that enthusiasm is building up again at Sale and more members are turning up at the Woodheys Club. It's a grand little room and under the leadership of Alice Cronshaw, Cyril Palmer, Ann & Ivy, and gang, we have a great evening.

Alice writes - The June meeting went very well. Sheila and Cyril Palmer are back from Canada and Cyril did a great job as compere for the first half of the show with Stan Evans taking over the second half. Each of the artists performed four songs each and we had a number of jokes from Jim Bramwell, - I don't know where Jim gets all these jokes from. Stan sang a lovely song "A Rose In A Garden Of Weeds" and at the end of the song magically produced a beautiful red rose. Roy Fielding from Yorkshire gave us a few unknown songs like "The Rawtenstall Annual Fair" and it went down very well. Alan Southworth & Dick took control of the backing music and all went well on the night. We couldn't go wrong with perfect people in charge!

We were pleased to welcome, for the first time, Walter Kirkland from Crewe who rattled his bones for us and enjoyed the show so much that he promised to come again. We'll be pleased to see you Walter and don't forget your bones.

Unfortunately the gang from Crewe, Connie, Brian, Mary, Des, Colin and gang were unable to turn up but they said that they would be back with us in July. Many thanks to all.

It'll turn out nice for George

I AM extremely surprised that the Wigan Reporter and the Blackpool Gazette - both well known newspapers of towns that were made popular by George Formby and his songwriters should unite in condemning the star without first seeking a few facts.

Both condemning reports assume that because David Bret opened the lid on various other stars like Marlene Dietrich and Maria Callas, he is about to do the same on George.

Well I have spoken to David on this and he assures me that it simply isn't true. In both cases the newspapers are making a headline sensation out of a book that will give a few facts. There is definitely no intention to degrade George and Beryl in any way.

With regards to "creaming off the cash from charity shows," David claims that they transferred funds from one charity to another which was more in need. They supported the Fleetwood Trawlers whenever possible and they most certainly didn't transfer funds for their own benefit as the newspapers wish you to think.

But, what does it matter if he does intend defaming Wigan's most famous couple, and disturbing their fan club? Not two hoots!

George and Beryl are both dead and consequently can't be touched. David Bret will never rock these two giants of show business. Like the Wigan Rugby League team they are typical of the down to earth Lancashire type that will always bounce back and Wigan should be proud that they have this quality.

Our society revolves around the positive side of George and Beryl, singing and playing the songs that uplifted the troops on the fighting line during World War Two. We are not interested in any sort of tittle-tattle spread around by writers and newspapers.

We have just returned from a D-Day Trip to Normandy where we entertained - just like George and Beryl the English and French alike - with George's uplifting and rousing songs.

The French loved us and we filled the pubs and clubs wherever we went. George's 50-year-old songs actually had them dancing in the streets and they loved every minute of it.

Would George Formby fans please note that we are appearing at Wigan Pier on Sunday, August 2 and collections are donated to worthy causes like the children's hospitals.

Stan Evans,
editor of the George Formby newsletter,
Hall Nook,
Penketh,
Warrington.

Banjo Uke For Sale - If you are looking for a Baby Gibson uke, ring Graham Greenfield on 01283 223074. He has one in very good condition with Sunburst effect, Snowflake finish on arm, Original case. £750. 00.

Chickened Out??? - In the last issue of the Newsletter we reported the Wigan Reporter newspaper and the Blackpool Gazette articles on a new book being written by David Bret and how both newspapers feared that the book would damage the image of George & Beryl and the plinky plonky GFS members.

Well David, was due to appear on Lancashire Radio on the morning of the 29th of June and Anthony Mason and I were all set to travel to Blackburn to appear on radio with him. David rang me the night previous and was surprised when I told him that we were appearing on the same show. He said, "I hope it's not going to be 'handbags at 50 paces'" and I assured him that we would debate the matter sensibly.

However he must have been a bit concerned because the phone rang just as we were about to set out and it was from the radio station. "Sorry Stan! David Bret has been advised by his publisher not to turn up for the programme. So there'll be no point in you setting out." Round One to George & Beryl!

Jeffrey Formby Booth rang - George's sister, Ethel, who lived in South Africa, has died. This is only a few weeks after her daughter, Franchesca died. More news as it comes in.

In the Formby family this now leaves: Louie, who is still at Brimsworth Artists Home, aged 92, and Ted who occasionally attends the Wintergarden meetings.

Young Gareth Sumner was as chuffed as little mint balls with his Dallas "C" uke that Dave Peerless left him in his will. Ray Bernard has just done an excellent job in refurbishing it for him and it shone better than a new un. Thanks a lot Ray.

Gareth's mum told us that he was asked to play his uke in church on the 26th June, and it went down so well they invited him back again at the evening. Good for you Gareth. We are very pleased for you and hope that someday you'll be a star. Keep practising.

Wigan Pier Sun 2nd August at 1.30pm
ALL ARE WELCOME

Penketh Carnival - by Stan Evans.

Well this was certainly a right mix-up! We were not informed that the Carnival organisers had arranged for the marquee to be shared with Mervyn the Bubble Blower, and consequently we had quite a shock when we found that he had moved his P.A. equipment in. I told him that Dennis Lee was on his way with a car load of speakers etc. but unfortunately it was too late to do the swap. Mervyn, - a good professional act, had set up excellent equipment with all sorts of funny sounding squeaks, rattles and distorted voices built in, - ideal for children's shows, but unfortunately not for our group. He started with some head-banging pop stuff which was soon given the boot.

Some of the equipment was controlled by radio frequencies and if any of our group crossed the signal line, the explosions would erupt. It was OK if our group members stood in one spot but as soon as anyone walked to the mike to add the vocals then it was like a fanfare of bangs rocketing through the tent. Many times we had to tell Mervyn to stop blowing his bubbles and come to fix the sound. It unnerved our group and consequently it got through to the crowd.



Anyway, all in all it was a good day and the weather was kind to us. Lesley Lee and her merry band of helpers did a grand job in setting up a bric-a-brac stall (bric-a-brac? -actually it was more like a jumble sale with old boots and underpants) and raised some 30 quid for the branch. Great work ladies!

After the show the band of about 20 descended upon "The Hollies" for a fine nosh-up that had been wonderfully prepared by my daughter-in-law, son and grandson, (Jenny, Stuart and David) and everybody enjoyed it. Unfortunately she prepared enough for 50 and I've been living off it since.

Our thanks to Jeffrey Formby Booth, and Christine, who did a great job in taking snaps for the Newsletter. They were on their knees when they left us to go back to Milton Keynes, and must think that we are barmy in the N. West. They arrived Friday afternoon and as soon as they'd had tea they were quickly whipped away to the Penyffordd meeting. Saturday afternoon was the Carnival and as soon as Jeffrey had finished the washing up they were off to Blackpool for the Saturday night Wainwright meeting. They were probably glad to get back home to have a rest. Many thanks to all who came to give support.

Alan Newton writes . . . Dear Stan, We enjoyed the Penketh Carnival show very much so we'd like to thank you for the hospitality welcome, food and drink etc. you and your wife gave to myself and Glenys and everyone else. Although I've only been a member for a short time your enthusiasm and friendliness to everyone does certainly bring happiness to each person you meet. It reminds me of Ken Dodd's song, "Happiness".

I must say that I enjoy reading each month the Newsletter as it certainly does let everybody what is happening in the area, local meetings, your knowledge of George and various tit-bits. Incidentally, can I mention a error in the latest Newsletter? On the details of the D Day Trip you listed in the party, - "Alan & Mary Newton" when it should have been Arthur & Mary Newton with Alan Newton separate. I suppose from time to time there will be some confusion between Arthur's name and mine as we both have the same surname.

Another little error, - You claim that there were 39 on the trip but it should read 40. See you at Wistaston.

Thanks Alan (or is it Arthur?) My apologies for the error. I'll bet it was because you all took your name badges off! Actually there was another error in the last issue. The lower photo on page 4 reads John Taylor senior when it should read Arthur Newton. You are wrong about the number in the coach party. There were 39, but you'd get away with 40 if you count the driver. Keep writing in.

There's Always One!

You can guarantee that if ever you organise a coach trip there is always one person who holds up the boat. We were just approaching Portsmouth Docks, with only a few minutes to spare, and the driver had repeated many times that everybody must have their passports ready. The driver had to collect so that he could get them cleared at the control office, and just as we were collecting them a voice boomed out "Mine's in my suitcase!" and at that all the whole coach load shouted out, in one voice, "There's Always One!"

Poor John Taylor, (junior that is!) who boarded the coach at the first stop - Penketh - and who's suitcase was under all the others - wanted to disappear under his seat as the driver gave him the "Wigan stare." It was pitch black outside but fortunately the driver managed to grope amongst the huge stack of cases to find John's without too much effort. With this, John was smiling again and playing his uke. For the rest of the trip the common saying was, "Have you got your passport John."



N. Wales Branch - By Cliff Royle. Still another good meeting with the usual full-house, again well supported by members from Crewe and many visitors, including a bevy of young ladies who came in for a pre-nuptial night out. Apparently they were friends of our able M/C Ray Davies, who in spite of many requests refused to do a "full monty". These young ladies entered into the spirit of things and enjoyed their time with us.

There was a special request for Aunty Mary (now 85) to sing, "It's Somebody's Wedding Day", ably assisted by her nephew, Des Redford, it went down very well and the girls gave them the cheers of the evening.

We then went from the sublime to the deafening as we were entertained by visitors Ron Clinch (the crooner who used to sing with the big bands) and Paul & Andrew who played some blues on acoustic guitars.

Apart from the usual turns there were some turns that were somewhat different. Brian Wright played on stage for the first time giving a rendition of Vilandria (?) a highbrow musical piece that soon generated into "Run Rabbit Run" which caused some merriment. Keep it up Brian. "I Am The Music Man" was played by Dennis Lee and Brian Edge, assisted by our own dolly birds; Pam, Liz, and Dolwyn complete with the chirping bird blowers from France, and other effects. Not to out done our young stars Frank Murphy and Stephen Ensall both performed to a very improving standard.

By kind permission of the British Legion we are now able to connect directly into their P.A. System. Apart from one or two hiccups, it has proved to be a great help to our presentation. Cliff Royle.

Thank you Cliff. Although I was expecting Ron Clinch's classical masterpiece to develop into a Tommy Cooper type finish, I still enjoyed the switch. These are the type of comedy shows that we should build up on. However, I wasn't in favour of the Blues on guitar number. Compared with our type of music it was too heavy and simply doesn't fit in. Sorry! Anyway it was a grand meeting.

A Night At The Taylor Residence - To help to re-live the D Day Trip, the Taylor family, John, Maureen and John junior, invited a few of the trippers to a preview of the video that he had taken.

They live in Walkden, near Leigh, and after a few instructions on "how to get there" from young John, Eva said "Don't forget to take a map." "Ha, ha, ha," said Jim Bramwell, "We don't need a map to go to Leigh, do we Stan?"

An hour later we were running round the outskirts of Manchester looking for Walkden, and the girls (girls?) on the back seat were taking the Micky, "Ha, ha,

ha, we don't need a map, do we Stan?"

Anyway we finally arrived at the house and received a warm welcome from the Taylors. John invited us to some of his home made brews, - bah gum that stuff is powerful! - and after a number of songs (Dennis Lee started it off - again!) We sat down to see the TV show. There was about an hour's showing altogether and John had mainly captured the theatre show, for the British Legion, and the two nights in the Cavern Bar. John explained that he hadn't, at that stage, edited the video but as soon as he does he will make it available to the other members.

Anyway, John and family. Thank you for the invitation which was very much enjoyed by all. These get-togethers create good relationships in the N. West.

Shame on you Jim! - Ever since Jim Bramwell started playing the uke it has been impossible for Joan to get any help with the housework. While Joan is up the ladder cleaning windows, Jim is singing "Cleaning Windows" in the front parlour, and while she is hanging out the washing on the back yard line, Jim is on the Siegfried Line.

The other wash day Jim was plonking away, as usual, in the front room, when Joan's voice boomed out, "Are you going to put that line up for me?" Without further ado, Jim dropped his uke and ran out to the back garden, - only to return a couple of minutes later with a huge smile on his face. "No problem" shouts Jim. "Job's done!" Two seconds later he was back on his uke again.

Five minutes later Joan boomed out again, "The line's too slack and my clothes are all on the floor!" Once again, Jim, like a knight in shining armour, ran to Joan's aid and within a couple of minutes he was back on his uke again.

Two minutes later and Joan is shouting again, "Jim! - this line's too high and they're down again!"



Blackpool Tuition Night - Charles Stewart has changed to Tuition Session (at his home) to the 2nd Tuesday in each month. The next session will be on the 9th August. You can ring Charles on 01253 768097.

Just Bought a Uke and in the case was a receipt from Dawson's Music shop of Warrington, Earlestown, Leigh, Stockton Heath, Altrincham, Northwich, Wigan, Cadishead, Widnes and Latchford.

The receipt is dated January 7th 1938 (60 years old) and it was for a set of ukulele strings for sixpence, - (6d)

Now what amazed me is that during the war years I worked at the Warrington branch (main shop) and I would never have thought that Charlie Dawson was out-going enough to have so many branches. At the rear of the main shop was a workshop where the pianos were stripped down and completely renovated, - which was the main part of the business. Charlie would place a simple advert in the Warrington Guardian, - "Piano wanted to suit learner, must be cheap, no dealers" and the ad would be put under a Box number.

If he got any offers, he and I (16) would go in the big blue van (which was hidden round the corner) and I would go to the house to get details to take back to him. Charlie would then tell me how much to offer for the piano and if they were satisfied with the price we would then load it onto the van. If they recognised Charlie as a dealer the story was that I had asked him to move it for me. It was all a "big con" to buy pianos cheap.

I rather enjoyed the job, with lots to learn, and it was brilliant listening to the piano tuners (usually blind) playing the classics on the pianos they'd just tuned. However there was a snag with the job. Once a week, - usually when the town was busy, I was expected to clean the big front shop windows and, being a macho 16 year old, there was no way that I would do that while my friends were possibly passing by. So if George Formby was Cleaning Windows at that time, Stan Evans certainly wasn't.

Daily Mail Friday 26th June 1998.

In reply to your query, 'Why were the first auto-pilots used by the RAF named George? The most likely explanation of the nickname George is that its introduction coincided with the release of the film "Let George Do It" starring George Formby.

Similarly, we called the Wellington Bomber 'Wimpey' after J Wellington Wimpey a character in the Popeye cartoon strip. E K A Nelson, Wimbourne, Dorset.

The Millennium is Coming!!! -

There will be big celebrations going on in Blackpool when the year 2,000 comes in, and Blackpool is to be one of the forerunners. They are most certainly not letting grass grow under their feet and already they have had meetings and invited organisations to take part and share interest. Fortunately we have Eve & Charles Stewart living in Blackpool and they are in close contact with anything, and everything that is going on there.

Up to now they have reported that the Blackpool Council intend holding various shows and events throughout the town and organisations have been invited to put forward plans and ideas.

If you have any ideas on what you would like to see in Blackpool for the Millennium then please drop a line and we will offer it to them.

Ray Leach of Cambridge is organising a village fete named; "It's In The Air," and he rang to ask if I could supply him with GF posters from the film. In exchange he would send any GF material he manages to obtain, when the fete is over. Apparently he is expecting some from I. T. N.

No trouble, Ray. There's a bundle of posters on the way. Hope you have a grand show. Turned Out Nice Again.

From The Weekly News - "I've done a bit of pub and club singing in my time, so I was quite pleased when a friend mentioned that his local pub was looking for an old-fashioned singer.

I popped along to follow up the lead and was both disappointed and amused to find that the advertisement was for an old-fashioned, cast iron Singer sewing machine, which they obviously wanted to convert into a table." Mr A Dawson.

Top Quality Uke Wanted - Les Bouchier on 01438 714482 is looking for an Abbott, or a Gibson, or a Ludwig. If you've got one for sale please give him a ring, and please mention that you saw it in the Newsletter.

George Cheetham - We haven't heard from George for some time but if anyone would like to contact him please write to George at . . . Flat 12, Oakleigh, Upper Chorlton, Manchester.

Iris Hillman of the Blackpool George Formby

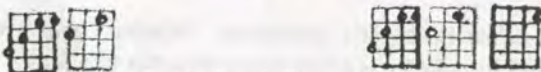
meeting thought it was an excellent idea to print the words and chords to "Happy Birthday To You" in the Newsletter, because we always seem to be having birthday parties wherever we go. So, what about following it up with, 'For He's A Jolly Good Fellow?' Good idea Iris and here it is . . .



For he's a jolly good fel - low, for he's a jolly good fel - low, for he's a jolly



good fel - low. Which nobody can deny. Which nobody can deny.



Which nobody can deny. For he's a jolly good fel - low, For he's a jolly good



fel - low, For he's a jolly good fel - low, Which nobody can deny.

Blackpool is Doing Well! - Eve & Charles Stewart.

We are very pleased that Blackpool is progressing and Saturday 4th July turned out to be one of the best meetings, - a real celebration for it was Paul Kenny's 18th Birthday. He had the choice to go anywhere he wished for his birthday but he chose to come to the Wainwright, which turned out to be a great occasion for us. Mum made a very yummy cake which we all helped to eat.

We never cease to be amazed at the bubbling enthusiasm of some of our members. Stan & Eva Evans, John Taylor, Alan & Pat Chenery, Jeff & Christine Booth from Milton Keynes, entertained at Penketh in the afternoon and yet they turned up and threw themselves into the festivities with great gusto.

Jim Bramwell got the party going with his popular sing-alongs and jokes, Cyril Palmer is always a delight with his contrasting style. Youngsters Helen & Richard Cunningham came from the other end of Yorkshire, with mum & dad, to give us a beautiful duet and dance and Frank Bennett was in good form giving us a selection of Chaz & Dave songs. Alan & Carol Middleton pull the whole thing together. So it happens, not by arrangement but unexpectedly people, - Formby Friends, turn up to sing, play and give their fun and happiness to whoever will accept them. It all comes to life and the evening becomes a party. *Many thanks Eve & Charles. It was a grand night and we're very pleased for you.*

Wheeltappers & Social Club by Stan Evans.

Just lately we've been watching the Wheeltappers Social Club on Sky TV, which is presented by Bernard Manning and Colin Crompton. They are all very old repeats going back to the 1970s but it 's a great little half-hour programme that invites popular stars along like Alan Randall, Tessie O'Shea, Roger Whittaker, Frank Carson, Max Wall, Beverley Sisters, Eddie Flanagan etc.

Now we realise that George & Beryl were dead when this series was recorded but, after watching an episode, Eva & I were discussing the quality of the stars that performed on the show and we both agreed that, although they were all very highly appreciated, George & Beryl would never have fitted into the club type of atmosphere. They were on a far different, and much higher plain than any of the stars that we have seen perform on the Wheeltappers.

Personally I put it all down to Beryl's guidance. Maybe George would have turned up at the club and knocked out a few songs with his uke, but I'm sure that it wouldn't have gone down too well with Beryl. Not a chance!!!

I'm Fine!!!

There's nothing whatever the matter with me, I'm just as healthy as can be
With arthritis in both my knees, and when I speak I talk with a wheeze
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin, but I'm always well for the shape I'm in
My teeth will eventually have to come out and I can't hear a word unless you shout

I'm overweight and can't get thin, but I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in
Arch supports I have for my feet, 'cos I'd never be able to walk down the street
Sleep is denied me most every night, and then in the morning I'm really a sight
Memory's bad and my head's in a spin, but I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in
The moral is this, as the tale unfolds, for you and me we are growing old
Better to say 'I'm fine' with a grin, than to let people know the shape we are in.

The Drinkers Prayer

The horse and mare live 30 years, and never know of wines and beers
The goats and sheep at 20 die, without a taste of scotch and rye
The cow drinks water by the ton, but at 15 life's almost done
The dog at 14 packs it in without a taste of rum or gin
The modest, sober, bone dry hen, lays eggs for years and dies at 10
But sinful, gin-full, rum-soaked men, survive till 3 score and ten
And some of us, - the mighty few, stay pickled till we're 92.
Many thanks to whoever handed in the two pieces above. Very Good!!!

Saturday Night Out

Every Saturday night we hold a "Free & Easy Night" at the Alliance Social Club in Warrington. Ron, our excellent Organist plays a medley of tunes while everybody has a warm up chat. At 9pm we have one game of Bingo (B O R I N G) - Then a raffle to help to pay the overheads. Immediately after we hold a two hour session of Free & Easy when anyone can get up to give a few songs.

Playing the organ and giving backing at a Free & Easy Night isn't the easiest job in the world as, unlike the GFS members, very few of those who get up have any idea of what they are going to sing, or the key. Many times the organist has never heard the song before and the singer is switching from one key to another. Well, Ron is a very experienced player and many times, even though he's never heard the tune before, he will follow the artist.

Ron reminds me very much of our old friend and GFS member, Ron Holliday who passed away a few months ago. They have quite a lot in common:- Both the same size and height, same build, similar face features, both dedicated to playing music, both quiet spoken, both good hearted, and both excellent musicians. But the similarity that struck me the most was that Ron, just like Ron Holliday, is partially sighted, and over the past months his sight has worsened. Ron has been attending the hospital for Laser Treatment but unfortunately he claims that, to date, his sight hasn't improved.

Life has a habit of dealing out punishment to the most vulnerable, in the most delicate places, and none more so than it did to another excellent organist who came to the Alliance many years ago. He was totally blind but he found his way around the club very easily. He had a wonderful gift of music and could accompany in any key. He lived his life for music and was never happier than when he was sat at the keyboard.

Alas, this poor man was to be dealt a very bitter blow when he fell off the local railway station platform under the oncoming train. His right arm was chopped off. Although a young man, his life has finished.

During your quiet moments please pray that George's light is shining for Ron our brilliant organist who lives for his music. Many Thanks.



What Lovely Members we Have!

- Alan Davidson and his young son travelled from Aberdeen to the Blackpool Wainwright meeting, and amidst the excitement of receiving new guests, from such a distance, Eve undercharged them at the door. However, all was not lost because a few days later an apology popped through the letterbox with a cheque for £20 and a big "Thank You" for such an excellent night. *Thanks for the news Charles.*

Crewe Entertain - Again - On the 19th of June the Crewe Society entertained the Northwich branch of the "Arthritis Care." The artists taking part were Des Redfern, Mary Atkinson, Connie & Brian Edge, Colin Wood, Alan Chenery, Arthur Newton, Steve Hassall, Walter Kirkland, Don Chalkley. Mr Warburton the secretary of Arthritis Care wrote: "Just a note of thanks for the excellent show your group put on for us. Our members thoroughly enjoyed the performance, the material being pitched just right for our age group. Several of our members personally expressed their delight."

Harry Stanford - By Brian Edge. Harry wore his four military medal with pride during our recent trip to Normandy. For the record they are the 1939 - 1945 Star, the Burma Star, the France and Germany Star and the 1939-45 War Medal. In addition he wore his Burma Star Veterans tie and above them all he sported his Ukulele badge! Well done Harry!
Thanks Brian, but did you notice the nifty way he clipped his medals on? No messing about with pins and clips, or having to get someone to fasten them on and checking to see if they were attached correctly. Not our Harry!!

His medals were permanently attached to a piece of hardboard that was just the right size to slot into his top pocket. That's why he was up and dressed before everybody else in the morning. You can't keep this growing lad down!

Great Show at Crewe again!!! - The word got out that it was Mary Atkinson's birthday on the 9th July. As this was midway between the Crewe meetings Mary Newton, Christine Wood, Connie Edge, Pamela Baddeley, Phyllis Snow and Joan Cain got together and baked cakes and sandwiches to put on a wonderful surprise buffet for Mary.

When it was Mary's turn to perform she thanked everyone and then really gave us a star performance which everyone was convinced was her very best. One often wonders if, as the years go by, whether it is still possible to perform well and indeed keep improving ones performances, well Mary certainly answered that question for us didn't she?

Whilst on the subject of performances, what about Arthur Newton's rendition of "Down On The Farm?" He certainly got to grips with that number and surprised us all, including our M/C Carl Basford. It was certainly Arthur's best performance to date and a reward to all the practising he must have done. Mind you it couldn't have happened to a nicer person. Arthur and his charming wife, Mary have supported us faithfully since they picked up a leaflet in the Sandbach music shop in 1997.

Stan Evans performed a new miracle by restoring a damaged rose as he sang, "Just A Rose In A Garden Of Weeds." A nice one Stan. Also our own Arnold Osborne, who always joins in with the spirit of the party, came along as the Sheriff of Dead Man's Gulch!

We had a surprise visit from John Taylor of Morecambe along with his father John. It was their first visit to Crewe and I am sure they were suitably impressed with our set-up. John is a nice uke player and it was a pleasure to have him with us. Mind you! I haven't forgiven him for sitting on my silver hat on the way back from France. He wasn't satisfied with just creasing it a bit - he flattened it! I might forgive him some day.

Steve Hassall completed his stage decor by setting up a back-cloth with the biggest Union Jack I have ever seen. I'm sure it must have once been on the top of the Houses of Parliament or Manchester Town Hall! Anyway thanks Steve for your efforts. Our stage is now a pleasure to behold.

Thanks to all for buying the Duck Race tickets. The proceeds all going to a very good cause, the Wistaston Memorial Hall, a War Memorial, where we hold our meetings. The hall is requiring money for their eventual rebuilding fund so the £60s worth of tickets we sold will be a splendid contribution.

It was good to see some new faces at the meeting and I hope they all went home feeling happy. Thanks too for the donations of raffle prizes which gratefully received.

Thanks Brian. Mary is looking really wonderful. But she is pulling our legs with her age. No way can she be 85 years of age. More like 55!

Arnold Osborne loaned me a tape of 6 songs that he has written: - I Love My Computer - Cat Walk Kelly - The Rhythm of the Blues, - Sam The Snowman, - Diana, Princess of Love, - and Aggravating Woman, and I must say that they are really excellent. Arnold has certainly put a lot of effort into these. Especially the vocals and backing. Very good Arnold.

Elaine Kenny writes - Many thanks to all at the Wainwright on the 4th of July for the cards and presents and for helping make Paul's birthday special. He thoroughly enjoyed himself and especially when Alan, our M/C let him play both at the beginning and the end of the concert. John Taylor bought him his first real beer and that went down very well. We'll have to keep an eye on you John. Many thanks to all for making us feel so welcome.



More from George's Suitcase - Only recently I was asked when G & B lived at Beryldene, Mere, Cheshire, (although I'm not sure who asked the question). I looked through George's suitcase and found letters to and from Julian Wylie Productions Ltd (under the direction of Tom Arnold) - dated April 1st 1949 and addressed to Beryldene, Mere.

On the 26th June, 1950 (14 months later) they received a letter from their accountant, Whinney, Smith & Whinney, 97 Church St, Blackpool, addressed to Beryldene, Lytham St Annes. The letter from Julian Wylie was relating to income they received for the Dick Whittington show at the Grand Theatre, Leeds for the 1946/47 season. . . .

Week Ending	Paid to GF	Paid to BF
26/12/46	£833. 6. 8d	£54. 3. 4d
4/1/47	1000. 0. 0d	65. 0. 0d
11/1/47	1000. 0. 0d	65. 0. 0d
18/1/47	1000. 0. 0d	65. 0. 0d
25/1/47	1000. 0. 0d	65. 0. 0d
1/2/47	1000. 0. 0d	65. 0. 0d
8/2/47	1000. 0. 0d	65. 0. 0d
15/2/47	1000. 0. 0d	65. 0. 0d
22/2/47	1000. 0. 0d	65. 0. 0d
Totals	£8833. 6. 8d	£574. 3. 4d



Beryl sent the above figures to the accountant along with the following letter:-

"Dear Mr Parks, I am enclosing the figures paid to Mr Formby and myself at Leeds and Blackpool, along with letters from the Tom Arnold office.

As mentioned to you on the phone, and to the Income Tax man, the £83. 6. 0d (does she mean £833. 6. 8d?) was for one show at Blackpool, which was the opening night, - the show you will remember was on a Saturday night, therefore we didn't get paid for that right away, but later on, so I suppose the matter and the money was forgotten and not entered.

Re. the £574 at Leeds, that is purely my mistake and I take the full blame for it. I showed my books to the Income Tax man at Northwich and he saw where I entered Mr Formby's Panto Salary in large letters and figures, and my own in very small ones along side his when copying it out to send to you. I have done Mr Formby's all right when going through the book, and at the finish have forgotten to go back and enter mine, I sincerely hope I didn't forget it before, otherwise I might be in trouble, but I don't think I did.

Re. the £200 Leeds engagement I don't know where that comes in at all and if

the Tax man can give further information, I will gladly help . . . Beryl Formby. Very little credit has been given to Beryl for the amount of work she did for George, and sorting out his taxes was only one small part of it. She signed all the paper work and took responsibility for any errors and commitments. George was left free to concentrate on his shows, films, songs, recordings etc. so perhaps this is the reason why he needed someone quickly to rely on, when Beryl died, and Pat Howson was close at hand at the time.

ON A SAD NOTE:- Towards the end of her days Beryl was very ill with Leukaemia. From George's suitcase I read that she bought a considerable amount of whisky during her last few months. This is so sad for a lady who has worked so hard. Without Beryl's efforts there would be no GFS today. Perhaps we should dedicate a particular annual meeting to her and give her the credit she richly deserves. She was born on Sept. 9th 1901.

Des Redford celebrated his 50th in style on Sat the 11th July. This was held at the JESTERS CLUB, Crewe, and some of the members were invited

Des wasn't aware that it had all been set up and consequently had a shock when he walked through the door and about 150 friends savaged him. But he'd another shock when a bubbly "Kiss - a - gram" nabbed him and put him through a series of terrible ordeals. Ordeal or not, he was enjoying it and he said he can't wait until he's 65 for the next party. Freddie & the Dreamers were there and a disco. It was a great night for Des with no expense spared. The only disappointment was that strict instructions had been issued "NO UKES ALLOWED" which was a shame considering that it was HIS night. A quick spot of Formby would have gone down well and our gang would have gone home feeling that they had added something to the occasion. We were all very pleased for you Des.

Duck Derby at Crewe - I couldn't believe that I was actually stood, - with about 200 others, on the banks of a stream, watching (and shouting at) little plastic ducks racing to the finishing line. This is a major event at Wistaston and all the dedicated villagers turn out to watch it. The weather was kind to us, and it's a good job it was because they'd spent hours setting up various stalls to help them to collect money for the village hall.

The Concert gang turned out in full force, - try stopping them - and at the drop of a hat they'd struck up with Chinese Laundry Blues etc. One thing had me confused however! As soon as they hit the first chord, everybody disappeared to either end of the field and I was the only one left in the audience. . . Why?

Leslie Lee and the ladies were there selling more Jumble to raise funds. They do a great job! Where else can you buy a pair of boneless corsets for 20p?

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: - 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.

Crewe Branch Wistaston Memorial Hall - Ring Brian Edge on 01270 569836 Future dates - 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 July.

So as George would say -

"Get Cracking"

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