

THE NORTH - WEST

# GEORGE FORMBY

## Newsletter 47

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Specially Produced for George Formby Fans  
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# Welcome to Newsletter No. 47 and once again we've got loads of news items for you. . . .

**WARRINGTON** - First I would like to thank all those who have offered prizes to be raffled at the Warrington Concert in aid of 8 year old Brain Tumour sufferer Jordan Stevenson. Also those who have kindly given donations. Many Thanks. That is what the society is all about. George loved children so we should carry on where he left off.



George Loved Children

The **CREWE** Branch have just had another resounding success at the Nantwich Jazz Festival when they entertained no less than 600 jazz fans.

The **BLACKPOOL** Branch, who have just moved to a new venue and changed to the last Monday every month, are hoping and praying for members to give support. Could be a good move!

**WESTHOUGHTON** has started a new George Formby meeting which will be a great aid to anyone seeking uke tuition.

**SALE** is planning a war at the May meeting and you are all invited to come long. And much more so now you can read on. . . .

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**Brian & Connie Edge** would like to thanks Tom Bailey - who organises the Liverpool Branch - for the gift box of Quality Street Chocolates he presented them with when they walked into the meeting. It was a lovely surprise and a terrific way to start the evening out with friends. Many thanks Tom.

*Thanks Brian & Connie. They are always generous in Liverpool.*

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**Anthony Mason's** just told me that when he was working Blackpool Prom, with the jazz band, there was a terrible argument going on, on the beach, between a man and a woman. It was so serious that they had to call the police. One policeman turned up and when he started hitting the man with his truncheon, the woman set about him. They both had the policeman on the floor beating the living daylight out of him and nobody stopped to give a hand.

And while all this was going on the crocodile was eating all the sausages.

# The Formby Story

Part 37 by Stan Evans

George & Beryl were pleased with the success of Zip Goes a Million but not every newspaper critic agreed. Some felt that George failed while others praised his performance to the highest. One critic claimed that it was a very poor script held together and made successful by George's great talent. However, whatever the critics said the box office was satisfied and George's excellent performance sparked off several begging letters from those who actually believed that he'd inherited a million. Such was his ability to act.



Although the show was a success, George felt that he didn't have the stamina to continue the same routine over and over again. He was a free spirit who couldn't stand being tied to monotonous work and soon had the desire to break loose.

From being born he wanted to be free. He ran away when he was a child, and escaped down the drainpipe when a boy. He also ran away from the stables when he was training to be a jockey. He simply didn't want to be tied down to responsibility and now, during the run of "Zip Goes A Million" he had the itch to move on again. Maybe this is the reason why they moved into so many houses.

George had a quick brain that needed a challenge and the thought of being held down to a long run of the same production didn't appeal to him. He probably felt that having conquered the West-End he had done what he set out to do.

He needed an excuse to leave the show and soon the opportunity was presented to him. During the Good Friday week-end George & Beryl were driving from London to the Norfolk Broads where they moored their cabin cruiser. Suddenly George began to feel dizzy and complained of pains in the chest. He stopped the car and a passing motorist helped him out of the car.

Beryl took over the wheel and drove George back to their London flat. It was thought that he had suffered a heart attack so she called for the doctor. Producers actually thought that he was playing the old soldier to get out of the show but tests proved that he was suffering from a coronary thrombosis and there was no way that he could continue with the show.

This was a very difficult time for George & Beryl as they feared that this was the end of the road and perhaps he would have to spend the rest of his life taking it easy. MORE NEXT MONTH.

## Does Stan Evans Know That - Sent in by Brian Edge.

1. Alexander the Great discovered bananas in India back in 327 BC?
2. We didn't hear about this strange curved fruit until 1888? We eat more than five billion each year in Britain.
3. The 'Dodods' at the European Commission banned the sale of Bananas that are abnormally curved and ruled that the bananas must be 5.5 inches long and 1.06 inches wide. The longest banana split ever made was 4.6 miles long.
4. Elvis Presley's last supper was a fried banana and peanut butter sandwich.

*No I didn't Brian but I do know that bananas are causing a lot of problems with American and the EEC at the moment and almost every member in the N. West has mentioned it to me - as if I've caused it. All I did was sing "Bananas" and if I'd known that it was going to cause so many problems I wouldn't have bothered.*



*But didn't young Gareth do an excellent job of performing "Bananas" at your last meeting. He was really G R E A T! It's wonderful to hear these youngsters belting out George's songs at the meetings.*

*For the benefit of new readers who might be wondering why we constantly refer to bananas: George's song "I Like Bananas" is quite popular in the society.*

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Extracts from "**Signature Tune**" by Jack Payne who had a lifetime's experience of show business, the stage, radio and films. Sent in by Brian Edge.

"George Formby" that impetuous Lancashire genius who has the knack of making everything look impromptu and happy, when it has probably entailed rehearsal and hard work, scrapping 3,000 feet of film and grand sound-track just because, when he saw the rushes, he wasn't satisfied with some of the close up shots of his finger-work during some hanky-panky with the uke. The filming was grand, but George in the third spot number for his uke had indulged in fingering which he knew would bring an avalanche of letters from his fan followers. So he demanded a re-take.

It is a byword in show business that where British films are concerned everything is owned by millionaire J Arthur Rank. But at the time of writing it is significant that the biggest British film star is making pictures for an independent company. For six years George Formby had topped, easily, the United Kingdom box-office poll of the American Motion Picture Herald. To have held such a position creates an international record. I am told that during the war years he paid £250,000 income tax, and he has certainly reached a top position in the British film galaxy. Even his first picture made £30,000, and still goes on being shown at odd cinemas theatres in the North of England to the annoyance of

its makers, who spent £2,500 on it and subsequently sold the rights, never dreaming it would make a second fortune.

Now it is luck of a very strange sort which brought success to George. He didn't want to go on the stage, and indeed his father (George Formby the elder, a famous Lancashire comedian of the late 1880s and early 1900s), was adamant that his boy shouldn't go on the stage. Young George became a jockey and in seven years his mounts totalled over 3,000. He rode for Lord Derby, J Burns and Lord Stanley. But the time inevitably came when his weight was too much for the task.

George, unbeknown to his family, decided to go on the stage. But so strict had been his father on this point that young George had never heard the old man's gags in the theatre, and even had to buy early gramophone records to see what father had been up to!

Luck? No, so far there had been little luck about it, but plenty of hard work. It wasn't until 1925, when he was taking his show on tour, the real stroke of luck came along. An artiste on another bill was hard up, and George was in his dressing room chatting when the impecunious lad offered to sell George his banjolele.

"I can't play a thing like that" faltered George, but he strummed on it, found to his astonishment that he could strum a few chords, and eventually bought the instrument. He practised it in the privacy of his dressing room, mastered complicated chords by sheer dint of Lancashire persistence, and eventually included it in his act for a five shillings bet! That's how George and his 'Uke' (technically a banjolele) first began, and the profits are coming in so fast these days that I hardly dare think where it will all stop!

*Thanks Brian. I'm not sure on whether George wanted to go on stage or not in his early years. When he was about three years of age he ran away from his home in Westminster St, Wigan, and after a long search they found him posing on a pedestal in a second-hand shop window. A crowd had gathered and he was enjoying it. Inwardly, even at a very young age, he must have had the desires to perform. It was quite plain that he had no desires to be a jockey.*

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## Blackpool Meeting (New Venue) - Charles & Eve

Stewart would be pleased to see a few new faces for the first meeting at the South Shore Cricket Club (Address back cover) The meeting will be held on Monday 26th April and the venue looks to be ideal. If you fancy having a go at entertaining then Blackpool is ideal. They are a good crowd who appreciate newcomers getting up for the first time. The setting is perfect amongst the green fields and fresh air. We look forward to seeing you there on the night - Friday April 26th. Bring your uke.

# The Nantwich Jazz Festival - by Brian Edge.

It was the Crewe branch's big day of the year on Sunday the 4th April. Following successes in 1997 at the Lamb Hotel and in 1998 at Wilbraham's Hotel the concert party gained an excellent following of fans of all ages. This year the group, who have rehearsed their programmes at the regular Brach practise nights, were this year promoted to perform at the ballroom of the largest hotel, The Crown. For the event the branch were provided with the very best sound equipment and overhead lighting. Two large monitors fed back the mixed sound to the artistes. There were four stage and two drum mikes and our drummer Steve was provided with an electric fan to keep him cool as well as an enormous monitor to make sure that he didn't miss a beat!



A Very Good Sport - Alan Newton

The whole shebang was controlled by Colin Wood from a position half way down the auditorium. So far - so good, but would our faithful fans turn up to support us yet again? When the artistes began to arrive - about half an hour before the show was due to start, a fair sized queue had gathered and by the time the show started the large Regency Ballroom was packed with enthusiastic fans, An hour into our two hour show the Festival Organiser requested a short interval to allow people to leave as there was a large queue down the street wanting to get in.

In the end we were advised that approximately 600 had been in the hall during the concert. The Festival Organiser told the cheering crowd that the group would be at the top venue at next year's event, the Nantwich Civic Hall. Whether or not that promise materialises we will have to wait and see but it was great credit to an enthusiastic team who have worked so hard in perfecting their spots and top marks of course must go to Dickie Speake, Vice Chairman of the George Formby Society, for providing us with excellent backing for our musical numbers.

Those taking part were: Alan Chenery, Dennis Lee, Des Redfern, Jonathan & Pam Baddeley, Carl Basford, Arthur Newton, Steve Hassall, Alan Newton, Brian & Connie Edge, Colin Wood, Don Chalkley, Mrs Mary Atkinson, Ron Whiston and Walter Kirkland.

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**Late News - SOUTHERN IRELAND.** The Happy Trippers will be putting on a variety show at the local Community Hall on the Sunday night. It is a two hour show from 8pm to 10pm. We will receive all the proceeds from the door less any expenses: Room rent etc.

# Orders from Alice Cronshaw - The next Sale

Meeting, on May 21<sup>st</sup>, will be based on a "War Theme" and everybody is told (or else) to come along in battle dress. The exact requirements for this Special Night are . . . Tin Hat, - Steel capped boots, - Union Jack flag with 30' flag pole, - Two buckets of water, - A twenty foot ladder, - A pocket full of hand grenades, - Stirrup pump, - A long hose pipe, - Food rations for a week, - A bucketful of sand, - Gas mask, - Road map, - Rubber dinghy,



Lifeboat, First-aid box, Walkie-talkie, Six yards of parachute material and a (if possible) a Churchill Tank. Now we are not sure what we will need them for, but bring them along anyway. See you there. It'll be a good night!!! **LAND OF HOPE & GLORY** and all that.

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Ivy Lockerbie and Alice Cron-

As young Frank Murphy says when he's finished his spot, "It's Wonderful to be British." - So we don't want any more of this "Guy" stuff!

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## Raise a Smile with Joe Taylor's Contribution . . . 1.

Do Eskimos have "House Warming" parties?"

2. How do cowboys describe their 'in laws' if they are 'outlaws'?
1. When Dutch couples share the price of a meal do they 'Go English'?
2. What's the point of having page numbers in a dictionary?
3. The trouble with Undertakers is they're always letting people down!
4. Always borrow money from a pessimist - he won't expect it back!
5. Hard work never killed anybody, - though it scares some people to death!
6. Opera is where a chap (thanks for the "chap" Joe) gets stabbed but instead of bleeding he starts singing.
7. Yesterday a workman at Brown's Engineering sat on a lathe and gave himself a nasty turn.
8. Finally there's a heart warming story from Wales. Gladys Hughes was born on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, Christened on the fifteenth, met her husband on the fifteenth, married on the fifteenth and spent her fifteen day honeymoon in room fifteen. Now she's run off with the Cardiff rugby team. *Thanks Joe. Very much appreciated. Have you any more?*

Joe was dead chuffed with the song "O'Rafferty's Pig" I sent him. It took him back 70 years when his father used to sing it. Very pleased for you Joe.

## Westhoughton - We were

all invited to go along so a hearty bunch of us went to support Gerry Mawdsley and Glyn Mitchell who are keen to get a meeting going in their area. We know that Westhoughton lies between Bolton and Atherton but we've never known exactly where it actually started and finished. In fact I don't think anyone knows! Except Gerry & Glyn. Oozing with confidence Gerry said, "You



Vivian & Gerry Mawdsley

can't miss the Red Lion Pub, it's near the police station, but if you get lost just ask anybody." Well that's OK if there is someone about to ask but the country lanes were completely deserted and Eva & I were thrown off the track by a road sign which read "No Road Ahead to Westhoughton." We immediately turned back and attempted to attack it from another direction. What we didn't know is that they don't take any notice of road signs in Westhoughton and we should have ignored it and gone ahead.



Glyn & Marjorie Mitchell

Anyway, we finally arrived and were met by a host of cheery smiles. It was held in a pleasant little room which is a couple of short flights upward and ideal for about 40 - 50 people. Gerry opened up by explaining that Westhoughtoners are commonly known as "Cow

Heads" and the reason for this is because many years ago a farmer's cow got its head stuck in the hedge and to save ruining the hedge the farmer chopped the cow's head off. Probably that was the reason why we couldn't find anyone to give us directions. They were hiding from the farmers.

The first meeting was simply an experiment to see if it would be a success and personally I think that it could go with a hearty swing. However, I don't think that mixing tuition with a concert night is particularly a good combination. The area needs a group because it is neighbouring George's birth town of Wigan and there's no GF activity anywhere around that vast area. A meeting should go down extremely well.



Terry Talbot

**SUGGESTION:-** There 's plenty who want to play the uke so why not specialise on tuition for 12 months? After a few months the club would have a hard core of supporters who could perform and you wouldn't have to rely on members travelling 20 miles or so. Anyway, we wish you success.



# Formby's Film Fun sent in by Joe Taylor

Malcolm Archer of Spain writes:- I was reminded of an amusing incident in Assam in 1944. George and Beryl sang "Leaning On A Lamp Post" together with many others whilst visiting the 11<sup>th</sup> (EA) Division, who were resting up after a spell in Burma, as part of the entertainment laid on by ENSA.

As the photo shows, his admirers included many African members of what became known as the "Rhino Division." George & Beryl had been allocated to my small Information Platoon for accommodation in the tents, and hospitality.

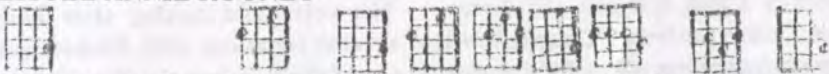


Part of our equipment was a mobile photographic darkroom and as Beryl had bought George an expensive camera for the tour, she asked us to develop his first roll of film. There was nothing on it! George in his excitement had loaded the film - no-one could work out just how - back to front. The North Country language that expleted from Beryl in their far from soundproof tent had to be heard to be believed. However, George's contagious strumming and singing, enthusiasm and humour broke down all barriers, including that of language.

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## Two More Songs for S. Ireland.

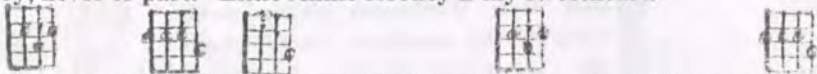
### LITTLE ANNIE ROONEY



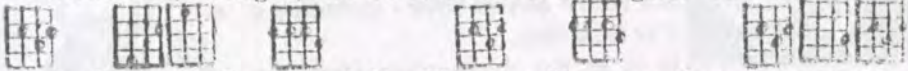
She's my sweetheart I'm her beau, She's my Annie, I'm her Joe. Soon we'll



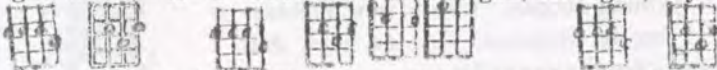
marry, never to part. Little Annie Rooney is my sweetheart.



### FLANAGAN, Flanagan, take me to the Isle of Man again. Take me where the



girls all cry - K - E - double L Y Flanagan, Flanagan, if you love your Mary



Ann. Oh oh oh oh Flanagan Take me to the Isle of Man

# Warrington Concert

An urgent appeal came in for G F entertainers to perform at the Maltings pub, in aid of 8 year old Jordan Stevenson who has suffered all the treatment for brain tumour. It was held on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April, which unfortunately clashed with the date of the Nantwich Jazz Festival. However, thanks to support from Jim Bramwell, Stan & Les Watkinson and Phil Forris it went like a dream.

We arrived at the Maltings to find a packed house all waiting for us and we were led to the smallest area we've ever had to perform in. It was 3' by 6' which was barely large enough for the P.A. equipment let alone the artists. However we got started and the crowd joined in - MORE!!!

## CHARLIE HALE

We gave about an hour's singing to warm the crowd up for the top of the bill -Charlie Hale, Warrington's favourite comedian. Charlie, who's appeared on TV many times, has mixed with all the top names and he brought along large signed photographs and posters of Mohammed Ali and George Best. He claimed that the huge poster of George Best was valuable because it is the only one ever to be signed by George twice, - once sober and again drunk. These were auctioned off and brought around £200 for the cause.



Stan Watkinson with Charlie

Charlie's jokes brought the house down and impersonations of characters of Coronation Street - mainly Jack Duckworth, Fred the butcher and helium voiced Ashley, were probably the best we'd ever heard, but the biggest laugh was when he mimicked Chris Eubank the boxer. His voice and boxing style body movements were perfect. Charlie has had several occasions with Mohammed Ali and it was during one of the meetings that he obtained the signed photo. After Charlie's spot we continued with another 2 hours and they particularly enjoyed listening to Phil Forris and Stan Watkinson giving some Elvis Presley numbers. After 4 hours they were still shouting for more. We raised almost £800 - including a Car Boot Sale.



Wigan's Phil Forris

It is at the desperation stage for young Jordan, who is now holidaying in Majorca. Let us hope that George's Light is shining for the young boy.



**Phoned in by a Group of Formby Fans** who were heavily drinking at the bar of the Crown Hotel. They are not seeking publicity because their wives thought they were working:- "The concert put on by the Crewe lot - with a load of others - at the Nantwich Jazz Festival on the 4<sup>th</sup> April was tanfastic - hic. The hall was full to cap - ap - acity - hic, er, and it was full as well, - and er, everybody was crowded up the stairs and the - er, audinence partis, - hic, partisipation was tremend - us, hic, because they all joined in.

We've never known anyflin like it and we were singin "Leaking on er Lamp Plost" and Cwenin Windlows" and "Cheenice Laundry Ber-lues" and we all sung verly loud - hic."

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**And another phone call** - "Following the concert coffee & biscuits were served at Colin & Christine Wood's home and the evening ended with a meal and get together at the "Leopard" at Nantwich - with the usual uke accompaniment. A wonderful day and thanks to Brian & Connie Edge and of course, all who took part. O.A.P (Old Anonymous Plonker) "

*Thank you for your phone call Mr Plonker. We are pleased that you enjoyed the show. Hope you get your friend home OK and we ar pleased you enjoyed the show.*

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**S.O.S.** from your Editor: Can anyone supply a tape copy of the Dan Hill song: "Sometimes When We Touch?" It's a great song but you can't buy it anywhere. At the local weekly car boot sale, all the music dealers claim they have it but can't find it. And all the shops say is: "Oh do you mean that one that goes: "You asked if I Loved You and dee dee dee dee, - No! we've not got it! So can anyone help. Please give a ring on 01925 727102 if you can help.

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**Steve King** tells me that his Black-pool show with Anthony Mason (George) Bing Crosby (Roy Chappel) and Al Jolson (Steve) is opening on Mon 24th May - until Nov 2nd. Mondays are at 7-30pm and Tuesdays are at 2-30pm and 7-30pm. At the Tangerine Club, Blackpool.



Anthony Mason



Steve, who has been a life long friend of Ronnie Hylton, told me that Ronnie is in hospital after suffering a heart attack and Chrissie, his wife is stressed out. This is a great pity as Ronnie was - in my opinion - a wonderful act with possibly the best pop singing voice in the country. His notes and timing were to perfection.

## Crewe's Variety Night - by Brian Edge

We had a surprise visit on the night from Graham Greenfield and his daughter from Swadlingcote, Derbyshire. It is four years since Graham last trod the boards at Crewe and he was amazed at the progress that we had made since his last visit. Graham gave a polished performance accompanied by some excellent backing. Brian Pearce and his charming wife also came along for the first time. They support the Stourbridge Branch. They too had a grand night and Brian gave an excellent rendering of "Our Sergeant Major."

Local chap (thanks for the "Chap" Brian - proud of you) John Twigg also came along for the first time and was suitably impressed with the evening's entertainment. Alan Newton performed a comedy sketch whilst singing the popular Jolson number "Mammy." Dressed in a black tailed coat, he performed the song in the usual fashion giving expression by the use of his arms which grew longer and longer and longer and would you believe it, still longer? Alan is a great sport and is always quick to exploit comic situations. He is full of ideas and a great asset to the society.



A future star Gareth Sumner

### EXCELLENT PUPPET SHOW

The highlight of the night was a speciality act in the form of a great puppet show which was presented by Alison from Rhyl. The fifteen minute show had many of the audience standing to make sure they didn't miss a trick. The three foot high puppets were presented on the stage in the darkened hall in front of a black curtain and were highlighted by a spotlight which emphasised the bright imaginative colours of these wonderful characters.

The puppets are the creation of Frankie Woods who watched his own show from his wheelchair. Before his illness Frankie was a Star entertainer, a great uke player, songwriter, musician, magician and children's entertainer. He has performed on radio, T.V. and on stage and regularly worked at Pontins Holiday Camps. Frankie made over seventy of the colourful puppets and he regularly changes them so that one seldom sees the same puppet twice.

The star of the show was "Ena" who was so elegant presenting her song "Tie A Yellow Ribbon" that it is not surprising to learn that she was once "Miss Avon". "Zakdaze" the violinist had the audience clapping their hands with his "Hava

Nagila" and he was a jolly sight smarter than Nigel Kennedy that's for sure! (and a better player too) The Riddle Family of psychedelic worm-like creatures were next. They had the audience completely spellbound with their antics and kept producing through the act.

Everyone seemed to think they were real and forgot that Alyson was working them. George Shuttlewick a three foot rabbit with ears disappearing through the top of his hat mimed perfectly to George's "Blackpool Rock" and certainly did the 'split stroke' better than anyone in the room! Finally the climax of the act, "Mr Bones" who appears from a coffin and performs all sorts of antics to the tune of "Dry Bones." A truly great treat for our members and full thanks to Frankie, Jean and Alyson.

Les Pearson (Les James) the Bacup comic, who does a great impression of Frank Randle, surprised us all by actually singing a full song! Les's usual technique is to sing two or three words and then let the audience do the work. Margaret Moran was requested to sing "New York, New York" which can only be tackled by the very best.

I was so pleased to see that stalwart Bill Turner on stage again - wonderful. One can never forget Bill's determination to stand on the beaches of Normandy again 54 years after landing there on D. Day and only four weeks after having a heart by-pass operation. Bill was determined to e there and he proudly wore his beret and medals. I recall him slowly walking up the beach where he landed in 1944 and he said to me "You know Brian, I didn't hang about like this the last time I was here."

Our M.C.s had a very busy night and we ran much later than we intended. We tried to give everyone a couple of numbers each and sadly afterwards realised that neither Mary Atkinson nor Peter Caine had had a go at all. We were naturally upset about this and all we can do now is apologise to Mary and Peter for their disappointment. As we are getting busier at our meetings it is perhaps advisable for all to who wish to perform to make sure that the M.C. has got your name on his list. Hopefully we hope it doesn't happen again.

Thanks to those who donated prizes for the raffle. These are gratefully received and acknowledged. Thanks too for the help everyone gives at the end of the night in clearing up the hall. Every little contribution is a tremendous help and very much appreciated.

*Thanks Brian. It was another excellent night for Crewe and the crowd, as usual, appreciated it.*

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**Don't Forget Penketh Carnival July 3rd**

**Southern Ireland** - Just received some detail on the Busking Festival and it all looks extremely interesting. It is billed as "Youghal's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Premier International Busking Festival" with a prize fund of £3000., and we are listed on the main poster (So We'd Better Be Good!!!!) The bill includes "Gig Rig, Live Bands, GEORGE FORMBY SOCIETY UK, Street Theatre, and many other attractions.

THERE IS STILL A VACANCY for one male to share a room with the coach driver. Or we could fit in a couple. Please ring Dennis Lee on 01244 544799 if you are interested in coming along.

Dennis Lee has done an excellent job in setting up the paperwork and sending it out to the happy trippers. And I like the comment at the bottom of the page "It Is Compulsory To Enjoy Yourself!"

Youghal's Deputy Stanton claims that the town was once in the doldrums but now, due to events like the Busking Festival, it is now vibrant. The grand final will be held in the Memorial Park and the event will include buskers, jugglers, mime etc. Radio Youghal will be there over the long week-end.

The festival is worth over £1m to Youghal and performers (about 50 in total) will be coming from as far as Canada and China. This year however, the festival organiser, Tim Smith wishes 'not to enlarge the event but to improve the quality.' This year there will be an increased emphasis on children, featuring a 'Kiddies Corner', with a fancy dress competition and a puppet making workshop amongst other innovations.

SUGGESTION - In the event that we reach the finals (and Brian thinks we've a fair chance) What about some sort of uniformity in clothing? Some of us have purchased waistcoats of a similar pattern so is it possible for the remaining players to buy or borrow one? And what about the ladies taking part in the playing?

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**S. O. S. from Brian Edge** - Regarding George and his horse racing career. Jack Payne (Bandleader) states that George had over 3000 mounts. George's sister, Ella, is on record saying that George never had a winner but had 42 seconds. No-one however, so far as I can see, has done an in depth study into George's racing career. There must be records, newspaper reports, race cards etc somewhere. I wonder whether there is someone out there with time on their hands to take the project on board?  
*Well we'll have to see what we can do Brian. Has anyone any ideas on how we would go about searching the horseracing archives?*

**N Wales - By Cliff Royle** - In spite of the meeting being held on Good Friday evening we had a good attendance, well supported as usual by our friends from Crewe, and a fair number of other guests.

Our M.C. for the evening, without his whistle, was Ray Davies. He suggested that to maintain order we should buy some stocks (the wooden kind) in which to lock unruly members of the audience: the first one to be Charlie Penman. Still; Ray kept us all going and again it was nearly midnight before the last ones departed for home even though the bar closed at 10.30pm.

**ALAN WHITTAKER** - A rather sad start to the evening was when Dennis Lee asked us to stand for a short time to show our respects for our own Alan Whittaker who recently passed away.

There was time for each player to perform a couple of songs, although Steve Hassall was given the opportunity to an encore since he announced that he would not be with us for the rest of the summer season; apparently it interfered with his bowels. <sup>Widccfb</sup> There was plenty of support from the Crewe members who, apart from the usual Formby menu, played some pleasant non-Formby songs. Unfortunately Fred Stevenson had a throat infection and was unable to sing. Not to be outdone however, young Gareth Sumner accompanied Fred's playing by both singing and playing.

It seems rather strange that the youngsters play without backing tapes; is it that, they either do not make mistakes, or do not care if they do? Gerald Jones (not one of the youngsters) of course is the exception for he has his own particular style of playing and never has a backing accompaniment.

Other youngsters were Stephen Ensall and Frank (It's Wonderful To Be British) Murphy; no nerves with these two. To add to the enjoyment Brian Harrison showed his dexterity with the Yo-Yo by performing a number of tricks. He took up this art form a few years ago when it was suggested as being a good rehabilitation exercise for arm injuries.

Stan Evans performed his usual miracle, but can he do one with a Yo-Yo? And where was the bag of tricks that he carries on stage? Does it contain the "Man" that Auntie so often sings for? Leslie Lee did her own miracle on the sound system when she got Stan's introductory music (Bananas) right.  
*Many thanks Cliff. Great night again.*



Frank Murphy

# Copy Cats!!! - by Bob Smith.

Well what do you know about that Stan? Morecambe & Wise have copied the GFS Lamp Post. I wonder if they actually saw our lamp post - took a liking to it and copied it? Is it possible?

Sorry to disappoint you Bob but George's leaning lamp post was only created in 1989. We were planning various items (GF Drinking Mugs - Car Stickers etc) for the George Formby Exhibition at the Warrington Museum and needed a cartoon drawing of George and his lamp. Brendan Ryan gave permission to use the GF drawing from George's Catalogue, Eva crossed George's legs with a pair of scissors and our friend, Ian Alcock, drew the lamppost. He also added the words "GEORGE FORMBY SOCIETY" and "In Case A Certain Little Lady Comes By." So that's how the logo was born.



After he had finished we discovered that the lamp post was too tall so we cut it down in height and that's why there is a flaw half way up the post.



We received a few complaints after we launched it in the Vellum. One didn't like the idea of the lamp post being bent over and another complained that we had stolen the GFS logo. I don't know where he got that idea from as the GFS never had a logo in all its 30 years. Anyway, I am pleased that the GFS appear to have established the character as the official logo. It keeps popping up on various letter headings.

The Original Drawing 1989

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## BALLO TUITION

Tom Bailey, who as you know, organises the Liverpool Branch, has a case full of tuition books on "How To Play The Banjo" (not the uke) which is on offer to anyone. All proceeds from this go to the fund for more equipment. If interested come to the next Liverpool meeting or ring Tom on 0151 289 1711. He'll be pleased to hear from you.

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**Hope To See You At The Warrington Charity Night April 30th**



**Liverpool** - Well what a lovely surprise when we walked in and found so many had turned up for the meeting. Throughout the night we were constantly having to bring out more chairs. Jim Bramwell suggested that two of the ladies could sit on his knee but we wasn't having any of that. John Shreeve gave a brilliant display of his uke ability and afterwards spent a few minutes describing how he performs the various split strokes. Once again the raffle was successful and the generous gifts from the members have helped us to collect a further 200 and odd pounds to spend on more equipment. Very much appreciated.



Young Mary

It was lovely to see 85 year old Mary Atkinson taking the stage and belting out a couple of George's songs. She steps up on stage, - presents her mini disk, - asks for a couple of numbers to be played and then puts the songs over like a professional. There is no doubt about it but Mary has got a new lease of life since she started taking the stage, and I've noticed that nobody complains about feeling ill when she is within earshot. She is a wonderful lesson to us all. And - she doesn't forget her words and chords like most of us do! How does she do it?

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**S.O.S. from Martin Fowell** - Just had a phone call from Martin who is looking for the words and chords to "I'll See You In My Dreams" He heard Joe Brown playing it on the Jim Davidson TV show - Generation Game, so he thought he'd like to play it. If you can help please send it in and I will see that Martin gets it. or give him a ring on 01745 854390.

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**Failed S.O.S. - Regret** we've had no luck finding a song for Kath Hammond of Sheffield. She doesn't know the name but it is a very sobby song about a young man, from a mining area, who, having lost his parents is going through endless grief throughout the song. It's a very touching song (in fact I was in tears when she was telling me about it on the phone). I've tried the chaps at the Music Hall Society but they must have given up searching for it. They need more clues to go on. Sorry we've failed Kath.

These sad songs were very popular about 60 years ago and I remember my father often singing a song that started with: "Oh rest your head on my shoulder daddy, mother's not far away."

My mother would go into a silence as soon as he started singing and by the 2nd verse she was soaked in tears. I don't think Cliff Richard will ever restore it?

# Harry's Joke Page - Hello,

It's me again with all me old jokes. The best part about it is that although they are old jokes they are too old for you to remember them. Some are 75 years old so I've re-cycled em. - which took some doing because I've not been on a bike for a long time.



## BRIGHTEST LAD IN THE CLASS

I was a very bright lad at school and on one occasion I was the only lad in the class who could answer the teacher's question. He wanted to know who broke the classroom window.

## SCHOOL PICNIC

The teacher took us all out on a country walk and we had a picnic near this pond. I told the teacher that the pond is only 4 inches deep so he took his shoes and socks off to have a paddle. As soon as he stepped in he sank right under the water and when he came out - all soaking wet - he went mad at me for telling him that it was only 4 inches deep. Well I told him that I thought it was only 4 inches deep because it only came up to the duck's stomach.

## HORSE FOR SALE

Anyway, this vicar lived on the edge of a very steep cliff and one day he decided to sell his horse. He advertised it in the local paper and when this man came along he asked if he could have a ride on the horse's back. "No problem" said the vicar "but you must remember to say 'Bless the Lord' when you want it to go and 'Amen' when you want it to stop.

The man called out 'Bless the Lord' and the horse bolted towards the edge of the cliff. 'Stop, stop, stop' shouted the man. 'No! shouted the vicar, 'Tell it to Amen.' The horse was on the edge of the cliff when the man shouted 'Amen' and the horse stopped on the very edge. - The man lifted his head to the skies and said "Bless the Lord."

Well, that's yer lot for this month and I'll give you some more in the next issue.

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**Burtonwood Carnival** - We've been invited to perform at the Burtonwood Carnival on Bank Holiday Monday August 30th. If you are intersted in takng part please give me a ring on 01925 727102. They will supply a marquee, generator, seats etc. to make it into a concert.

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**Editor badly needs a few short articles to fill in the spaces.**

**Music Hall with a difference!** - Jim & Joan Bramwell and Eva & I went to see the Music Hall Show at the Floral Hall, Southport, on Wed 14th April. As a very keen Music Hall fan I find these shows extremely enjoyable, quiet and relaxing and they take you back to the good old days when the songs told a story. "I'll Be Your Sweetheart" and all that, - But not this one!

The room was packed solid with about 400 silver topped ladies averaging an age of around 70. Some appeared to be in their nineties and some were extremely frail and had to be carefully watched by the carers who were on the same party.

The show started and the overture blasted out with a theme tune from something like "Dambusters" which was followed by the M/C who's high volume voice almost shot us out of our seats. He went on with about 5 songs - none of which were from the old time music hall but more suitable for a rowdy night club. This was definitely Music Hall in Disco fashion and heaven help those who were positioned at the front near the 4 huge speakers. Jim said, "It's a good job I'm not wearing my hearing aid." It was loud!!! - Very loud!!! - Very Very LOUD!!!

Next on the bill was a young woman, - Roxanne, who had a good voice but she sang about 4 modern songs that we'd never heard before. In fact I think she'd probably written them herself. Next came a young man, - Andy Squires who gave us a few rousing Scottish numbers on the accordian. He was good!

**GEORGE FORMBY** - Then Barry Wyndham (best on the bill) with his uke banjo. He reeled off a number of jokes, impersonated Frank Randall and Rob Wilton and then gave us Mr Wu and Lamp Post with his uke. He was good and the audience enjoyed it and joined in.

Back again came the M/C - Mike Donague with his blaring club act and headbanging songs. It's a wonder the speakers didn't set on fire. Some ladies covered their ears with their hands but this didn't deter Mike. He turned the volume up higher.

**SO BEWARE** - If you see Music Hall advertised anywhere, check to see that it is genuine Music Hall and not head-banging night club entertainment.

**FRANK FORMBY** - I went back-stage to congratulate Barry and Andy on their good performances and Barry told me the story of when he worked with Jeffrey's father, Frank Formby (George's brother). Frank was billed as "Song and Dance" but after every song he reeled off about 6 jokes. Barry complained to the manager because he himself was billed as the comedian. Frank apologised to the manager and explained that, due to his asthma, he had to take a rest after every song and the only way he could do it was to tell jokes. Barry felt sorry for Frank and told him to go ahead with his jokes.

# 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** - MOVED TO SOUTH SHORE CRICKET GROUND, Common Edge Rd, Blackpool. DATES CHANGED TO EVERY LAST MONDAY IN THE MONTH. Tel Eve & Charles Stewart on 01253 768097 - Future Dates: - Mon Apr 26th, May 31st, June 28th, July 26th. Adm £1 including light buffet.

**Liverpool** - Broadgreen Conservative Club - Every 2nd Friday in the month - Ring Tom Bailey on 0151 289 1711 Bring Your Uke.

**Sale** - Woodheys Club, 299 Washway Rd, Sale - Every 3rd Friday in the month - Ring Cyril Palmer on 0161 748 6550. Adm £1. All Are Welcome.

**Crewe Branch** Wistaston Memorial Hall - Ring Brian Edge on 01270 69836 Future dates - Every 4th Friday in 1999 - apart from December 18th. Adm 50p. Get there early for a seat.

**Warrington** Alliance Sports & Social Centre, Evans House, Orford Lane, Warrington - Stan Evans on 01925 727102 - SPECIAL MEETING ON FRIDAY the 30th APRIL- BE PROFESSIONAL.

**Werrington Branch** (Near Stoke) at the Werrington Village Hall - Every 2nd Thursday in the month, Ring Bill Turner on 01782 304858.

**Westhoughton** - at the Red Lion Pub - opposite Police Station. Next meeting: Wednesday 28th April - Ring Gerry Mawdesley on 01942 817346

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. Or order a minimum lot of 10 copies for £3 plus 60p post and sell them to raise funds for your branch.

**Deadline for next issue - 15th May**

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