

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 50

Vol. 5, No. 2
August 1999



Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
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Welcome to Newsletter No. 50

and the main topic this month has been the David Bret book which, - the press claims - is condemning George as a WOMANISER! - A DEPRESSIVE! and a JUNKIE! Bret, however, claimed in his many phone calls to me that he didn't write this in his book and it was a case of the newspapers hyping the story up to sell more papers. So what do others think?

DENNIS LEE, who received a copy from the author, claims that it is an excellent book and well written.

JONATHAN BADDLEY, who received a copy from the radio station, claimed also that it is a good book.



Beryl - treated unfairly

CHARLES STEWART claimed that Bret was just trying to make some brass and found nothing offensive in the book.

THE GFS PRESIDENT isn't sure if it is a good book or not!

STAN EVANS claims that David Bret has caused more controversy with what he's said to the press rather than what he printed in the book. Every time he speaks to the media he lays another bad egg. On GMR Radio he claimed that George's mother was a most horrible person, which simply isn't true. Why should knowledge of this suddenly come from out of the blue. I have spoken to many neighbours in Stockton Heath and not one has had a bad word for her. On the same day on Stoke Radio he claimed that Beryl was a nasty, nasty, nasty, nasty person, which again is not true. When you read Beryl's personal letters you fully realise that she wasn't at all nasty but very devoted to George's career.



To the press he claimed that GFS members are the 'Corned Beef Brigade' - 'Wield Zimmer Frames and Ukuleles' - 'Pathetic' etc. and then he rings up claiming that he didn't say these things. On summing up it all hinges on his first statement to me, "I like writing about the dead because they can't sue you!"

But why is he trying to destroy the cheeky, cheery, ukulele playing image of George Formby that all ages love and who is still remembered nearly 40 years after his death? A lot of people have been disappointed by his remarks and the adverse publicity in all the papers, press and TV.

The George Formby Story

No. 40 by Stan Evans

Wherever George went Beryl would be at his side, ready to protect him or give advice. Nobody knew George better than Beryl did and this was shown when George was invited to stand in for Gilbert Harding on the BBC TV panel game, "What's My Line." George set out feeling confident with being on the panel of four but only because a few weeks earlier he'd been successful as the mystery guest on the same show. Also he wanted to prove to the nation that he was now fit again, after his illness, and ready to get back into full time work.



Always a cheery smile even from his hospital bed.

However, he soon found himself out of his depth intellectually when he sat with brainy, book reading types like Lady Barnett and Pat Kirkwood. After the guests had presented a mime he had to guess their occupation.

It was very embarrassing for George who was completely confused with the mimes. He had absolutely no idea of how to handle the situation, but once again the fanatical Beryl stood in the background signalling, nodding and waiving her arms to make sure that he didn't make a complete fool of himself.

Lady Barnett claimed that Beryl was so convincing that even she herself was afraid to reply without first looking to Beryl for guidance. Such was Beryl's strength and influence. After the show George confessed that he was completely out of his depth and would never venture outside comedy again.

He was feeling that, although he would love to get back on stage on regular occasions, he wasn't strong enough to do long runs of the same show. He put it down to health reasons but actually he was the type of man who couldn't stand boring routine work. One night stands were ideal for him.

CHANGE IN VARIETY - George complained that his style of entertaining was rapidly disappearing from the stage scene. Older folks, the ones who loved his songs, were staying at home watching TV while the youngsters were swooning over the new stars. Thanks to Beryl's management they were in a very comfortable position financially but the stage was in his blood so he couldn't retire from it. The age of Rock & Roll was coming in and he couldn't understand how an artist could make stardom after singing one song. Publicity around Bill Haley's "Rock Around The Clock" was a typical example and so different from the world George knew. More Next Month.

Aunty Mary - We regret to report that dear Mary, who was 86 on Friday the 9th July, is suffering from a brain tumour. Mary's nephew, Des Redfern rang to say that she is deteriorating quite rapidly, - although he did manage to get her singing in the hospital when he went to visit her. It was Des's birthday on the 12th of July so he bought himself a bottle of Baileys Cream which Mary enjoyed drinking. She also added her own cheeky words to "With The Parting Of The Ways".



Only a few weeks ago Mary looked on top of the world, in fact, at the Warrington Meeting she dazzled them all and especially when she bounced up on stage and we announced how old she was.

Several members have visited her in hospital recently and reported that poor Mary is almost unrecognisable. Also she has difficulty in recognising anyone. She is not the same woman and it appears that the hospital are not in a position to give her treatment. Instead they are considering returning her back home for the attention of the MacMillan Nurses.

We are deeply sad. Mary had booked to come on the Southern Ireland Trip but unfortunately this is no longer possible. Only a few weeks ago she was asking for songs that ladies could sing and was delighted when we found "Looking For A Man" for her. Within a few days she'd learnt the song to sing at Crewe. Our thoughts go out to dear Mary. Currently she is in Ward 4 Leighton Hospital, Crewe, but they are considering placing her in an Hospice.

Ukuleles - Eva & I went to a car boot sale at Jim Bramwell's local market in Earlestown (where George made his debut in 1921) and as soon as we got there a friend shouted over to tell us that there was a whole pile of ukulele banjos for sale in a big heap at one of the stalls. I thought he was pulling my leg so ignored it. However, when we got round to the other side we stumbled across a whole pile of them (about 40). We couldn't believe it and they were for sale at about £2 each. No! it's not a dream!

Anyway we didn't buy any because they were all made out of plywood with strings and skins painted on. Possibly they'd been made for a local show, but what a let down!

The Ten Genuine UK Societies

From The Ultimate List Book

(Daily Mirror Sat 10th July.)

- The Alan Whicker Society
- The Sausage Appreciation Society
- The Boomerang Society
- The Bus Enthusiasts Society
- The Cheese Dip Society
- The Flat Earth Society
- The GEORGE FORMBY SOCIETY
- The Police History Society
- The Bagpipe Society
- The Wallpaper History Society



"The seagulls up above drop their messages of love"

Steve Royle - Did anyone see Steve Royle on "Give Your Mate A Break" which is presented by Les Dennis each Saturday night on ITV?

Well Steve, who is an excellent juggler and comic, was featured in our March 1999 Newsletter and I forecast at the time that he would become popular. I saw him in Pantomime at the Southport Floral Hall and he was so good he carried the show. I wrote to tell him that he reminded me of a young George Formby and would he consider taking up the uke?

Well I'm not sure if he has taken up playing the uke but on the ITV show he picked up three wooden ukuleles and started juggling them. He then juggled three full size guitars. Great entertainer.

We're off to Southern Ireland! - On the 30th of July (another 15 days) we will be on the coach heading for Youghal, near Cork, and we are all looking forward to it.

If the dealings we've had up to now is anything to go by I can only assume that the Irish are very laid back with their planning. Every time I write to the various Tourist Offices, Organisers, Town Halls etc. I never get a reply back. Every office over there must have waste bins full of mail awaiting reply.

Brian said, "Leave it to me, I'll sort em out" but he's now given up chasing them. I've got the feeling that we'll all be changed people when we arrive back home. "What's the hurry? You'll get your September Newsletter next July, if you're lucky"

The June Meeting at Crewe

The Crewe Society welcomed Paul Woodhead) a veteran of the 1998 version of the D.Day in Normandy Landings where we entertained the real veterans of the conflict. Paul lives in Newport Shropshire and it was his first visit to the Crewe branch. He has a lovely mellow voice and is an excellent entertainer. His songs, "Put another log on the fire" and "Body in the Bag" were both new to the Crewe audience who were sixty strong on the night.

SAM BASS - It was great to have with us again the one and only Sam Bass and his pal John Biggins. Sam has found it difficult getting out and about in the colder weather but now the sun is shining he's doing fine.

It was great to have Bill and Ivy Turner and Matthew Kelly with us again. Bill seems to be recovering nicely after his second hip replacement - wonderful. Matthew sporting a very trendy shirt sang a little song for Mary Atkinson "Ukulele Lady"- lovely.



Bill & Ivy Turner with Matthew Kelly (centre)

NEW MEMBER - Graham Dale was

also attending for the first time. Graham, also from Shropshire told me that he wanted to play the uke and it was not long before he had teamed up with Sam Bass and he got himself some of the best possible tuition from the maestro himself. We hope that Graham retains his enthusiasm then it won't be too long before he is up on the stage entertaining us.

THE LIVERPOOL BROTHERS - It was also good to see Stan and Les Watkinson again at Crewe. Now we have heard Stan entertain us with his 1950's numbers like "Singing the Blues" but Les, who owns a super ukulele, has never performed at Crewe. However, I can report that I heard he gave an excellent performance at Liverpool of "Fanlight Fanny" and it was clear that he had been practicing hard. (Actually he tells me that he is being coached by veteran Jack Jones, so he can be sure that he will soon become an excellent player). Unfortunately we couldn't persuade Les to get up this time. You know it takes an awful lot of courage to get up in front of so many people and perform for the first time but take it from me Les will soon make his debut and a jolly good one it will be.

AUNTIE MARY - We all missed the presence of Auntie Mary and we are very sad to hear the news. We all sent her messages on a card which will certainly cheer her up when she gets it. Connie put up a display of photographs of the boat trip which was a good reminder of a very happy night out on the River Dee.
ALAS - On a sad note it was brought to my notice that one of our members Dr

John Watson, a Formby lover, had died during the week. John was an Ecologist and one time member of the Wistaston Parish Council. Sadly John lost his dear wife a couple of years back, and had many worries about his Daughter's health recently. It seems he suffered a heart attack. John came to the Society whenever he could and enjoyed being with us. We certainly enjoyed having him at our meetings and we extend our sincere condolences to his family on their loss.

ARTISTIC TALENT - A competition was launched for the design of a Crewe Branch badge which can in the future be used on blazers, ties, shirts, stationery etc. Anyone with artistic flair is requested to design something ready for next months meeting when everyone will have the opportunity to vote for what they consider the best design. There are no prizes.

BIG NIGHT - Members are asked to make a note of the Crewe Branch Millennium Celebration party which is to be held on Thursday the 30th December 1999. There will be a full buffet and the party will be an old style get together with fun and games competitions, dancing. It is going to be a great night out. It will take the form of a "Tramps" party so start getting your costumes together now as we want you all to take part. This is going to be the best and most talked about party ever. So "Get Cracking" now! The cost for this Millennium Extravaganza will be the princely sum of £1.50. (One Pound Fifty Pence - written in full here, just in case Stan gets the decimal place in the wrong spot!) So start saving up now!



Ann & Trevor - looking smart. Have they turned up at the wrong meeting?

Colin Wood was missed by everyone as it was one of the rare times that Colin has not been present and in charge of the sound system. He was on holiday. Alan Chenery worked hard as his deputy. I can tell you this a real big job, setting up with all those cables and keeping everyone, performers and audience alike, happy throughout the performance. Thanks Alan you did a good job. As Alan was working the sound equipment he was unable to carry out his usual M.C.s job. Thanks here for Alan Newton who stepped in and did a fine Job.

ANOTHER MIRACLE - Stan Evans told us during the concert of his recent illness which had necessitated him going to the Doctors. He showed us his problem which was inside his shirt. It was a lump of wood growing out of his chest. Stan went on to produce a twelve foot solid pole from out of his shirt another miracle - Glory Hallelujah! I still don't believe it. *Thanks Brian, we're looking forward to the Tramps Night. Never had a Millennium Knees Up before.*

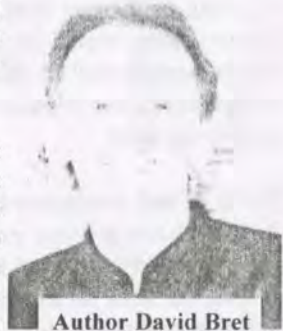
Banana Slip Up - Recently it was correctly reported in this magazine that the banana was not commonly imported into Britain until the 19th century, but a banana skin has been found, the fruit of which was consumed during the reign of Henry the Eighth

Staff at the Museum of London were excavating a medieval site to the south of the old London Bridge when they dug up a perfectly preserved banana skin from a Tudor rubbish dump. It was six inches long, with blackened skin, (which is perhaps not surprising) peeled back into three segments. Mr Thurley of the Museum's staff said "was it just a curiosity that someone had managed to grow, or have we got something here that was much more widely available".

Mr Thorley discounted the possibility of the site being salted by the well known "Bananarama" Stan Evans of Warrington. Mr Thorley concluded "Mr Evans* activities and drive for publicity for the fruit are well known to the Museum but we doubt whether even he could have breached the security of this most important site which has yielded some of the best domestic Tudor finds in the country. Brian Edge.

David Bret Might Sue the GFS. He is doing the

rounds of about 30 radio stations at the moment spreading the news about his book, "George Formby - A Troubled Genius". I've got some admiration for David. He is working extremely hard at plugging his book and let's hope he makes a fortune, but he appears to be his own worst enemy. Every time he opens his mouth he causes more controversy.



Even the title, "George Formby, A Troubled Genius" is not correct. George wasn't a genius! He had a wonderful gift and played a delightful character but he was far from a genius. George & Beryl were a working partnership who complimented each other and the talent that shone through was due to their team effort, - not solely George. "Troubled?" The only time George was troubled was when he didn't have Beryl to rely on! He wisely steered clear of trouble! She was his strength and the one who carried all his troubles. If George was a genius then Beryl was a genius also.

When assessing the strengths of George & Beryl, it is important to understand that George only lasted 3 months after Beryl died. We don't give her enough credit!

UP BEFORE THE JUDGE? - Anyway, David is very concerned that the President of the GFS first praised the book, then condemned it, and then refused permission for him to launch the book at the June meeting in Blackpool. Consequently he is considering taking court action, - unless he receives an apology. - NO CHANCE!!

Crewe's Royal Engineers

Diamond Jubilee Celebration

The above society celebrated their Jubilee in style with a church parade in the Queen's Park followed by entertainment in the Crosville Club in Crewe.

The South Cheshire G. F. Society opened up the entertainment in front of over 200 old soldiers and their wives. Some wonderful groups of medals were on display which enabled those with a knowledge of militaria to see at a glance the service history of these men.

The highlight of the afternoon was a group of Gurkhas, who in uniform were the absolute peak of smartness. The large knives which were attached to the back of their belts were grim reminders that these ever smiling little men were not to be trifled with. Nevertheless they were loved by all present who were sad when they had to leave. No doubt they were more sad to learn that two of their compatriots who were attached to the Royal Engineers, were killed in Kosova the following day.

The Crewe Branch of the GFS did two forty minute spots supporting Mike Slater the celebrated organist from the Blackpool Tower and Winter Gardens who played for ball room dancing, and Liverpool Comedian Jim Markey late of the Ken Dodd Show. The South Cheshire Pipe Band also gave a short marching display during the afternoon. The Ukulele artistes taking part were Alan Chenery, Des Redfern, Jonathan and Pamela Baddeley, Carl Basford) Arthur Newton, Glenys Huntington (trumpet), Steve Hassall, Alan Newton (trombone) Brian & Connie Edge, Colin Wood (Sound Engineer)) Don Chalkley) Ron Whiston and Walter Kirkland. Sadly Auntie Mary Atkinson was unable to take part as planned due to illness.

The TV Show on HTV

which was filmed at the last Penyffordd meeting came over great and very well presented. It lasted for about 6 minutes and consisted of various members talking to the camera and performing on stage.

CONNIE EDGE did us proud when she sang and answered all the questions thrown at her, but I couldn't quite understand what she meant when she was asked about the men's reaction to a lady performer. "Very good" she replied, "But they never feel that I'm one of them."

Oh, I don't know Connie, I've always looked upon you as one of them. You were marvellous Connie but you need more ladies joining in. So come on ladies! Join in the fun and some day you could be one of 'them!'

Gerry Sadowitz Show - If you want some experience in performing before a mad crowd, in rough conditions, you must appear on the Gerry Sadowitz Show. I've just done one, - which will be going out on Channel 5 TV in September and I've never heard so much bad language, - and that was only the ladies. Actually Sadowitz is an excellent magician and shows this when he performs a few card tricks to open his show.

Sat behind his desk, - with a huge aggressive (Kojak look-alike) minder behind him for protection - he invites members of the audience to challenge him with a topic of their choice. As you walk to his desk, his ugly face will size you up and if you show any doubts or fears he will immediately strike his bell and you are escorted from the arena by his minder. Those who confidently come up with a strong topic can stay on longer - until he becomes bored with the debate. Good presenters can go on to win up to £1,000 in cash.

As explained last month I was booked to debate on "Why I am a member of the George Formby Society" but due to the current adverse publicity on George it was considered wise to change the topic to "Music Hall."

HERE'S A TIP SHOULD YOU EVER CHALLENGE HIM - For support I took my 76 year old friend "Aber Smith" with me and attacked the problem from a different angle. While Aber was posing (hand on hip) before the audience and raising laughs, I ignored Sadowitz and appealed to the crowd reminding them that we (us old uns) were brought up in a day and age when we had beautiful old music hall songs that were like stories. Our songs had a beginning, a middle and an end. Today's music however, is grinding to our ears and is nothing more than a hum-drum. The next move was to make the bouncer an ally by giving him a cuddle and at the same time threatening Sadowitz not to ring his bell. It worked and poor Sad was caught with his trousers down. Aber and I then broke into song with a good old favourite "Chatanooga Choo Choo" and sadly, Sad rang his bell. Well at least we had a couple of minutes, - which is more than a lot did - and it was a great experience.

A WORD OF WARNING IF YOU CHALLENGE HIM - One contestant tried to be a bit smart by insulting the bouncer. He was immediately dragged off stage and given the treatment by the bouncer. This resulted in the police being called and the bouncer being carted off to the cop shop. Apart from that it was a good night out.

ANOTHER TIP is 'don't sing a song'. The copyrights people wanted £1000 for us to sing "Chatanooga Choo Choo" (or £700 for Lamp Post) so after the first couple of lines he rang his bell to get us off. Stan Evans.

Frankie Woods Knees Up

The occasion was to celebrate "The Last Summer of This Century" and we were all invited by Frankie, Jean and Alison to their home at Marina Drive, Rhyl, on Sunday the 4th July to put on a concert. They have a lovely house, - with an excellent swimming pool - which is ideal for a garden party.

About 30 of our members turned up, plus around 30 other guests - and we got the ball rolling with a grand thrash. The weather was very kind to us as it only rained at half time when we were busy tucking into the lovely, well prepared buffet.

One by one we performed the usual GF and other songs and the crowd, - Jean & Alison's large family of uncles, cousins, aunts ect. - made a great audience who joined in with as many songs as they knew.

Dennis Lee did an excellent job of emceeing the show but towards the end couldn't resist any longer the temptation of the swimming pool. He and Lesley did a vanishing act into the pool and all shouts of "where's the M/C" fell on deaf ears when he was submerged a few fathoms below the water mark.

In one of the rooms there was a large display cabinet which was full of Frankie's ukeles and uke/banjoes. His favourite instrument was the Abbott which took pride of place. After the concert, Tom Meredith couldn't resist the friendly and inviting audience so he slotted his own backing tapes into the tape deck, did his own emceeing and carried on the concert with his "one man Jolson show."

Afterwards we were all invited to the upper TV room and treated to a video of Frankie performing his Magic Show, - from way back in his brilliant show-biz days. Unfortunately in 1992 he suffered a stroke which left him wheelchair bound but this didn't prevent him enjoying watching our faces and receiving mighty applause after every magical trick. He loved every minute of it and I'm sure that at that moment he was wishing he was back on the stage changing more 'silk handkerchiefs into white doves' and producing cats and dogs from blown up balloons. He was brilliant and I'm sure that after his performance my own feats of miracleism will appear so inferior to the Formby crowd.

On behalf of the Formby members may I give a hearty thanks to Frankie, Jean and Alison for inviting us and to the excellent friends and family members who supported them. The two brewing-up and washing-up ladies in the kitchen did



Very Busy at Penyffordd - By Cliff Royle

Since the last meeting things have really been happening. A group of Formby fans from over the N. West put on a show at the Penyffordd Carnival and the organiser, Chrissie Bussingham (who attends our meetings) thanks everyone who assisted in any way. She has already indicated that we are wanted back again next year to play in a marquee.

ON TELE - Then just a few hours before the July meeting our last concert evening was filmed for TV. Yes on HTV; well part of it! The programme was called "Up For It" and although we were on for perhaps seven minutes or so it was a superb presentation, and the way HTV edited the promotion was just terrific. Unfortunately some of us cannot get these 'foreign stations' but don't worry you will be able to view it on video before long.

VISITORS - The meeting was very well attended. Especially welcome were some visitors from abroad. Barbara Eissens who is an Australian Radio Presenter, over here to visit her daughter and to suss out the George Formby N. West meetings, - and dear old Olle Persson from Sweden who played and sang in English. His rendition of "T T Races" was great.

Thanks again to the Crewe supporters. Well the bulging pockets have gone. Does this account for the increased smiles? It was obvious that a number of players had made considerable improvement over the past few months so it shows what practise (Has he spelt it right Brian?) does. I would like to mention a few in this category, but feel it may not be wise to differentiate, although I think I could be excused for picking out our own Brian Wright who played and sang what I assume was an Irish song in Double Bass. Keep it up Brian we enjoyed it.

VARIETY - It was particularly nice to have a bit of variety on stage: a few different Formby songs; some excellent singing from Brian Ensall and his brother-in-law Ken Howe; and a Stanley Holloway monologue from local gent John Armstrong.

GEORGE'S ROLLS - On Saturday July 3rd, Dennis Lee and Geoff Shone went to see George's Rolls Royce car at Knutsford. They were made very welcome by the owner of the garage, and in return for playing a few numbers managed to get copies of some of George's paperwork relating to the car.

GEORGE'S HOUSE - Next stop was "The Spinney", one of George's houses a short distance away. Alas they could not get near the house as the entrance had electronically controlled gates. Not to outdone however, they visited the grave of Beryl's parents at St Mary's Church at Rostherne. Beryl's Mother (Mrs

Ingham) died in 1946, and her Father (John James Ingham) passed away shortly after.

RHYL - Sunday July 4th saw a number of N.W. fans at the home of Frankie Woods, Jean and Alison in Rhyl. They were invited to entertain at a party to celebrate "The Last Summer of the 1900s" Some party! There were scores of friends and relations present, and we had an excellent sunny afternoon in the garden, luckily ducking a couple of heavy showers. What a day! Loads of food and drink, plenty of singing and uke playing, and free swimming in the private pool.

The highlight of the day was when Brian Edge played and sang the song, "Ragtime Girl of Mine" which was written by Frankie Woods many years ago. Then as if it were an encore we heard a recording of Frankie actually singing the song. Thanks a million Frankie, Jean & Alison; it was a wonderful day!

WAS HE DRUNK? - Unfortunately the day was marred by Tom Meredith who had to be forcibly removed from the premises. No he was not drunk; we just couldn't get him away from the mike.

At a recent Crewe meeting I met a cycling cronic of mine from the early 1970s when we rode a 100 miles veterans event. He is Harry Jones and is now a keen attender at Crewe, along with his wife.

Thanks Cliff. I notice you've sent a copy to the Vellum including the piece on VARIETY? You'll be hung, drawn and quartered if the Editor includes that in his next issue. Shame on you!!!! - Variety?

Penketh Carnival - Wise Decision - We should have appeared at the Penketh (my local) Carnival on Saturday 3rd July but something kept nagging me (no, it wasn't Eva) to cancel it. Last year we were let down when they arranged for us to share the marquee and equipment with a children's magician. Well he had some excellent equipment but it was not suitable for our requirements. It ruined our show, which gave me a good excuse to cancel this year's event.

They were unhappy with us pulling out, especially as they requested that we perform on the radio unit which was present for the first time. At 2pm the radio unit got up full steam and you've never heard anything like it in your life. You could hear it in Manchester on a clear day. The Spice Girls were bellowing out across Penketh with the result that all the gardeners quickly did a sharp exit indoors. Even there you couldn't escape from the dreadful noise.

I went to the field to chop the main cable and almost every stall-holder was complaining of the excessive noise. I thought, "Thank goodness we cancelled."

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North West Entertain in Wiggin - by Stan Evans.

We were asked to put on a show at the St Francis Church Hall, Kitt Green, Wigan to raise funds to send young Laura to swim with the dolphins in America.

Dennis Lee, Stan & Les Watkinson, Jim Bramwell and myself went along to entertain and we were met by a huge crowd of made-up Brownies who were bubbling with excitement and ready to sock it to em. No doubt they'd been rehearsing for months their parts for the show. The Brownie leaders and parents had done a good job in making each one of the kids up as old type Wiggins with cloth caps, scarves, aprons, clogs, black stockings etc. and they played the part very well. They all wore a lovely smile and a welcome, "Hi yer" as we walked past. The large hall was full to capacity and we were soon running round to find more chairs. The children packed down at the front of the crowd like a Wigan Rugby Team scrum and sang their little heads off.



Margaret, the Brownies accompanist, sang a brilliant song called Wiggin Pier, which Jim Bramwell is now learning.

We are fortunate in having a great stalwart like Dennis Lee with us in the N. West. When he heard that the organisers had no P.A. equipment he immediately

offered to bring along a complete set. Their only equipment was a single mike and a small portable tape player, so they were delighted when we walked in with a full pack. The kids were a delight! At least 20 of them invaded the stage every 10 minutes to put on a song or sketch. They robbed all Jim Bramwell's songs, "Mintballs" - "Lamp Post" - "Windows" so his act was stone dead, - but he didn't mind. It was all for a good cause.

They didn't have an Emcee so, amidst thoughts of "what am I letting myself in for," I stepped in to do the job. Now a good M/c should always have a string of "one-liners" to tell whenever there's a gap in the programme. Unfortunately I couldn't think of one joke and we had a lot of gaps whilst waiting for the kids to load on and off stage. But I'll be ready for em next year!!!

It was a sweltering day and poor Jim was almost collapsing through exhaustion. The heat played havoc with our banjo strings and skins, and Stan Watkinson's banjo/guitar went on strike. However, two ladies, all dressed in long black dresses, sweated it out with songs and Wigan Clog Dances. "How should I announce you," I asked. "Please yourself" they replied, "We haven't got a name!" - "Ladeees & Gentlemen, we have with us, and give them a big hand, - The Wigan Cloghackers." and they were great!

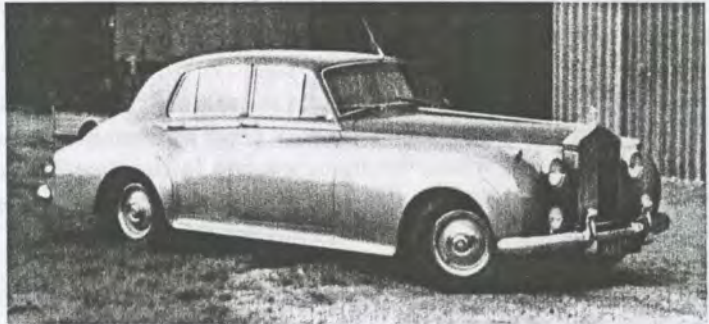
Now in Warrington, when I was a kid, we had a joke about Wigan Cloghackers and when asked what Cloghackers were we explained that in Wigan, they had a sport that consisted of two Wiganers, in clogs, who would stand toe to toe and kick the living daylight out of each other. The one left standing at the end would be the winner. Fortunately these two ladies didn't kick each other but put on a very good show. Good for you ladies. Another star was a lady by the name of Joan who sang two of our favourites "Match-stalk Men" and "Blackpool Belle." She accompanied herself on guitar. Two of the Brownies, Vicky & Sammy, recited Stanley Holloway's popular "Albert and the Lion" and the Brownies went on to perform sketches of "The Old Tin Bath" - "The Martians Have Landed" and "Bed Time" with great little songs, "I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside" - "Lancashire Leads The Way" and "Wiggin Pier" which was written by local news reporter, Jack Winstanley, who has a soft spot for George. Thanks to Wigan for inviting us.

David Bret has a number of errors in his book. He claims that Hindley House, - George's family home, is in Stockton Heath, Warrington, (information he's got from Alan Randall & Ray Seaton's book.) Hindley House is actually on Atherton Rd, Hindley Green. He also claims that Pat Howson kept the 4 ukes that she removed from the 1961 auction. This is not correct. She took the ukes to Sotheby's Auctions rooms where they were purchased by Rex Blaker. Rex was a college lecturer who studied George. He was also in the drugs world and met his death at the hands of his underworld associates. All his Formby memorabilia went on sale on June 6th 1989 at Eadon, Lockwood & Riddle's auctions in Sheffield.

George's (Silver Cloud 1) Rolls Car

Some of the members asked for more information on the Rolls car we featured in last month's Newsletter. So here it is!

Dennis Newton kindly loaned the car to us for the Warrington GF Exhibition in 1991. The car was set up on display in the town centre for people to view and enter a GF competition.



Registration No. 914 ETC

George & Beryl's instructions:- Silver, Power Assisted Steering, Tudor Grey to top and Shell Grey to lower panels, all wings, all discs and fairings. Trimmed with Grey Hide with grey piping and Grey headcloth, grey carpet.

OWNER	DATE REG'D	ADDRESS
1. George	15/6/57	Beryldene, Lytham St Annes
2. Twiss/Browning	21/5/58	Pountney Hill, London
3. Hotel de Paris		Monte Carlo
4. Leve rson/Gower	27/11/63	Capel Court, London EC2
5. Broadlands	4/12/63	Sunninghill, Berks
6. The Lord Teynham	15/12/66	Inward House, Surisbury Green

There may be other owners here

7. Dennis Newton	1989 approx.	Croft Garage, Mobberley, Ches.
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There may have been other owners here

8. Steve Bradley	1999	Alderley Edge, Ches.
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Frank, Jean and Alison of Rhyl would like to thank everyone who came to our garden party on the 4th July. We'd particularly like to thank Denis Lee and Stan Evans for arranging a great afternoons entertainment, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all our family and friends, they'd never seen anything like it before.

Special thanks to Brian Edge for bringing one of Franks many songs back to life, Frank was absolutely thrilled and very touched, he also enjoyed showing you all the video of his act. You are always welcome to call for a coffee and chat if you are ever in Rhyl. Best wishes to all from Frankie Woods, Jean and Alison.' *And thanks to you all at Rhyl for giving us an excellent day.*

DON CHALKLEY'S GETS A BIG CHEER AT

CHAPEL CENTENARY CONCERT - The Crewe Society performed a concert as part of the centenary celebrations of the Bradfield Road Methodist Chapel on Tuesday the 29th June. The evening provided entertainment for about 100 who thoroughly enjoyed the two hour show of George Formby songs and the Jazz Band. Also included in the concert was a trumpet solo entitled "Fever" well performed by Glenys Huntington. Jonathan Baddeley was the M.C. Don Chalkley, a guardian of the chapel, got the biggest cheer of the night when he concluded his performance of "Thanks Mr Roosevelt". Other artistes taking part were: Alan Chenery, Des Redfern, Pamela Baddeley, Carl Basford, Arthur Newton, Steve Hassall, Alan Newton, Brian and Connie Edge, Walter Kirkland and Ron Whiston. Colin Wood was Sound Engineer and the group was supported in the audience by Alice Cronshaw and Mary Newton.

Bulging Pockets Award - by Dennis Lee - You will all

remember that some of our lady members recently commented on the bulging pockets of our performers whilst on stage. Well let me tell you that this seems to have had some effect. At our last Penyffordd Meeting it was noted that some of our male performers discretely emptied their pockets before going on stage - and what a load of rubbish they turned out!

Despite all this contribution to becoming more professional, there was one person in particular who let us down. It was Stan Evans and I nominate him for this month's "Bulging Pockets Award." He admitted to having a bottle of beer in his trouser pocket but claimed this was part of his act. We thought that he should be given the benefit of the doubt but on leaving the stage I asked him to turn out his pockets. Apart from the bottle what did I find? - A bottle opener, a plastic glass, a quarter of cough sweets, his ration book, a nostril trimmer, a dog's bone for Max, and in his inside pocket I found 3 lbs of bananas! He's promised to smarten himself up in future.

Who will be next? Beware you are being watched by the Ladies Section so be on your guard. Next month it could be Yoo Hoo.

Thank you for the award Dennis but I'm ruined now! - Killed stone dead in my prime! Stuffing my pockets with props has always been part of the act but now they'll all be doing it. They'll do anything in Penyffordd to win awards!

Digital Cameras are great. Every time I go to a branch meeting I take a few shots and store them on computer. About 200 photos in total up to now. But we've just had an up-grade done on the computer and someone has pressed the wrong button and lost the lot. It wasn't me honest! So now we must start again. If you see me coming round with the camera give a nice smile.

Best Night Ever at Liverpool – We were amazed when they all came piling through the door. It was soon a full house of smiling faces and they all looked as if they'd come to enjoy a good night out.

By way of a change, and for the benefit of the new uke players we handed out words and chords to 4 simple songs: All Of Me, - Who's Sorry Now, - Blackpool Belle and Baby face, which everybody enjoyed playing. Even the club regulars joined in.

Once again Jimmy brought his new style Technic Keyboard and did some excellent backing for us. The other Jimmy (we've got 3 Jimmys including Jim Bramwell) brought along his dancing feet and gave us a couple of high kicking old songs. At 86 he is a lesson to us all.

At the previous meeting we got a (arm up her back) promise from Sheila that she would make her debut on stage at the next meeting. Well, true to her word she got up, and after explaining that she'd not brought her uke, - t o which we supplied a uke player, she sang her first song: "Down The Old Coal Hole" and received rapturous applause. She had such enthusiasm that no doubt we'll have a job dragging her off stage soon. Good for you Sheila.

SOLOMON HAD A THOUSAND WIVES,
HE'D SERENADE THEM DAILY.
BUT WHAT'S THE USE OF A THOUSAND WIVES,
WHEN YOU'VE ONLY ONE **UKELELE!**

Young Paul Kenny has got his head screwed on OK. He performs for us and then spends the night at the other side of the room entertaining the club members. At the same time he is listening to all that is happening so that he doesn't miss his second turn. Crafty Kenny!!! Anyway, as forecast, he is doing extremely well, expanding his repertoire and finishing his songs better. That is if he remembers to bring his Mini Disk or winds his tapes back to the beginning. **BE PROFESSIONAL PAUL!!!!** See you all next month at Liverpool – Stan Evans



LATE NEWS The 1999 Wistaston Duck Derby was won yesterday (Sat 17th July) by Joyce Sumner (Gareth's Mum) on Super Charged Duck number 133. Joyce's duck shot ahead of all the other 499 and was a clear winner. The prize for winning the event was £60 and it couldn't have gone to a better home. We are very pleased for you. I'll bet mine was last, - out for a duck.

Harry's Page - Hello! I'm back again!

You can't keep a growing lad down can you? We missed the last Newsletter because Stan couldn't remember any of my jokes, - fortunately Brian remembered some.



HOTEL - I stayed at this hotel where they had the most beautiful blonde chambermaid. That night she told me that she would wake me up in the morning and bring me a cup of tea.

The following morning I woke up very early, smartened myself up and waited for her to arrive. Suddenly there was a knock on my door and in walked the grumpiest old man you can ever imagine. Disappointed, I said, "Where's the chambermaid" to which the old grump replied (looking under the bed) "Well I think that one was made in Stoke."

SWIMMING - I learned to swim at an early age. When I was just three my parents used to row me out to sea in a little boat until we were a mile from the shore then I had to swim back. I quite liked the swim - it was getting out of the sack that was the hard part.

IN FASHION - A man walked through the streets of Crewe today wearing only a newspaper. He said he liked to dress with The Times.

WOMEN DRIVERS - Two nuns were out for a drive in the country and the nun at the wheel of the car was busy knitting. Two policemen, seeing this, chased after the car in their patrol vehicle. Drawing level with the nun's car the policeman shouted from his window "pull over". "No it isn't" said one of the nuns "it's a woolly cover for a hassock!"

TICK TOCK - The German could not get his clock to work. He banged it, shook it, but the clock would only tick. In desperation he held it at arms length) and with a threatening hiss said "I haf vays of making you tock".

'My wife speaks through her nose.'

'Why?'

'She's worn her mouth out.'

Talk about 'Measles?'

'That's a rash thing to say.'

What is White, Yellow, Green, Yellow and White? A frog butty

How many "Ds" in Colonel Bogey? - Millions of em! DDDDDDD D D D
Will be back with you next month.

N. West Meetings

North Wales Branch - British Legion, Penyffordd (10 miles from Chester) Every first Friday in the month. Tel Dennis Lee on 01244 544799 Adm 50p.

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

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

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

Crewe Branch - Wistaston Memorial Hall - Every 4th Friday in the month - apart from Dec 18th. Ring Brian Edge on 01270 569836. Adm 50p.

Westhoughton - The Red Lion Pub (Opp. Police Station) Ring Gerry Mawdsley on 01942 817346 - Every last Wednesday in the month. Uke Tuition.

Blackpool - MOVED TO SOUTH SHORE CRICKET GROUND, Common Edge Rd, Blackpool. DATES CHANGED TO LAST MONDAY IN THE MONTH. Tel Eve & Charles Stewart on 01253 768097.

Warrington - Alliance Social Club, Evans House, Orford Lane, hold special meetings only. Next meeting Friday October 29th. Ring Stan Evans on 01925 727102.

To receive N. West Newsletters by post please send a cheque for 50p plus 25p postage (or £2.25 for 3 months) payable to S. Evans - Address below.

Please join in by sending your articles, stories, jokes, etc to Stan Evans, The Hollies, 19 Hall Nook, Penketh, Warrington WA5 2HN

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