

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 52

Vol. 5, No. 4
October 1999



Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
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Welcome to Newsletter No. 52

And it certainly has been a hectic month in the N. West.
Starting with . . .

Granada TV – End Of The World??? – Stan Evans

We had a phone call from Granada who wanted to hire a coach load of George Formby players for a film they are producing. “No problem” I told em! - “Right, I’ll ring you back in a couple of hours.”

First phone call, Dennis Lee, OUT! - Second call, Brian Edge, OUT! - Third, Cliff Royle, - OUT! - Walter Kirkland, OUT! - John Taylor, OUT! - Stan Watkinson, OUT! - Les Watkinson, OUT - Anthony Mason, OUT - Dennis Gale, OUT! They were all OUT and immediately I thought, “Is this the end of the world they’ve been talking about, - there’s nobody at home! Granada rang back to ask how many players have been signed up, to which I replied, “er – none, yet, but don’t worry, they’ll all be there on the day.”

Once word got round we got the 20 members OK and information was passed to each one to turn up on Sunday 12th September. “Where?” - “I don’t know, but we’ll let you know soon.” “What time?” - “I don’t know but they’ll tell us later.” “What is it all about?” - “It’s all hush, hush at the moment but they’ll tell us when they’ve written the script.”

The whole thing was a mystery but we gathered that it was some sort of a “Candid Camera” type of show with someone in the middle who had been ‘set up.’ We thought that maybe we - the GFS members - were the subjects!

TOP SECRET

All the members taking part were asked to sign a contract stating that they will not disclose any of the details to outsiders so unfortunately we can’t give any more information in the Newsletter. However, I can report that the show was based on a kind of Faulty Towers sort of theme and three couples were set up to spend a week-end there. Two of the couples opted out after the first day which left one couple to receive the full treatment of extremely poor service. When we moved in playing Mr Wu they wondered what on earth had hit them.

GRANADA PREVIEW

We have just been notified that Granada, in Manchester, will be inviting us to the preview in November and it might be possible for us to have a spot warming up the audience of 250 people. We’d better be good on that night, so get practising. We are also hoping that the programme will go national - What publicity that will bring us!

The Formby Story

by Stan Evans

It was 1960 and George was feeling very much his age. The stage was still in his blood but he was lacking the energy to carry on with the work. The excitement of entertaining was no longer there and he didn't know what to do to satisfy his needs. He was hungry to keep himself well and active, but simply didn't have the energy to carry it through. Compared with the earlier years the last seven years had been a terrible drag.



George could be an excitable sort of chap who thrived on new ideas and ventures, but nothing was forthcoming. He was disenchanted with the modern type of artist who relied on false props like laughing machines etc. and refused to become part of it. The age of entertainment was changing and George was feeling out of place.

The truth was that George wasn't looking in the right places for his inspiration. Beryl, who had been the power behind his throne throughout his career, and provided the drive and ambition for the past 37 years, was a very sick woman who no longer had the energy to give.

Throughout this Formby Story I've emphasised on the fact that George couldn't accept responsibility while Beryl thrived on it. She now needed his support and comfort but he was too irresponsible to recognise that she was desperately ill. He simply put it all down to drink and attempted to carry on with his work without her. Consequently the marriage was breaking down and Beryl became angry with him for not supporting her.

In May 1960 George was invited by Pye Studios to make two records: "Happy Go Lucky Me" and "Banjo Boy." The studios thought it strange when he made the recording without bothering to take his coat off and then walking out before listening to the finished copy: "That'll do" he said, and walked out.

Later that year he made a programme for BBC Television, "The Friday Show" or "Confessions Night." In it he thanked Beryl for doing the business for him because he'd received very little education in his life. Also he knew nothing about music and wasn't worthy of being a star. It was the people who made him a star.

According to Alan Randall and Ray Seaton's book, "George Formby," the BBC was overwhelmed with telephone calls that night after the show. A spokesman said it was the biggest congratulatory call for years. More Next Month.

George's Mother - Eliza - The

more I delve into George's Suitcase the more interesting it becomes. I've just been reading a 4 page estimate received by George's mother, Eliza, soon after the death of GF Senior for work to be carried out at Hill Crest, Warrington.



It has been claimed that George's mother, although a wonderful woman and a tower of strength to her husband, was a poor manager after his death. In the will she was left about £26,000. 00, - an awful lot of money in those days.

One of her close friends stated that she could easily be persuaded to invest in anything and never considered if it was a sound investment or not. Fred Harrison, who owned the little theatre in Earlstown, asked her to invest in his business and she would have signed the dotted line if her friend hadn't stepped in and told her that the theatre was a white elephant.

George's father died on February 8th 1921 and left the family in a very secure position. But, according to the friend they lived a life of luxury as if the wages were still pouring in. Eliza received an estimate from Ralph Johnson, Cabinet Maker, Upholsterer and Decorator of Rylands Street, Warrington on the 31st December 1924, for £407. 9. 8d, for work carried out in Hill Crest.

The work included complete renovation of every room in the house: Curtains, wall-papering, building new cabinets, carpets in each room, new fire places, replacing or repairing sash windows, fitting new shelves, new hand rails, etc. and the bill was paid on the 2nd September, soon after the work was completed, and without question.

£407 is very little today but it was a lot of money in the 1920s. Probably in the region of £25,000. 00 at today's value and can you imagine anyone investing so much into a house in one lump and especially when the bread-winner had just departed leaving 7 children to provide for?

At the same time she paid £500 for the grave headstone in the Warrington Cemetery. According to Louie, the Artists Benevolent Fund Committee offered to pay for this but it was never forthcoming so Eliza paid the bill.

Also around this time Eliza was investing into young George who set out in his stage career six weeks after his father's death. Now, I wonder if this is another reason why George left nothing to his family? He maybe thought that his hard earned money would be frittered away. More Next Month from the Suitcase.

Neil Kirton sent in an article from Punch Magazine dated December 20th 1939 - "You get an utterly different kind of laugh, if you get one at all, from 'Come On George' (Director: Anthony Kimmins) - who goes to see George Formby pictures? The provinces, they tell me; quite often he isn't given a first show in London because it wouldn't be worth it, but in the provinces they lap it up. Personally, as a solo performer, he is all right: he has an amusing way of singing to his ukulele (if only his songs were better and didn't include such lines as : *One another we'll stand by to prove my worth I mean to try*). and he can always raise a laugh with his face; but the films he is in are marred by what I have grown used to describing as "All British faults," and we nasty stuck-up Londoners are put off by such things. "

Why do so many British directors refuse to attend to details - trivialities of background, lighting, dress, intonation? Presumably because their films can make money in the provinces without taking too much trouble. All the same I don't think it can pay in the long run. This is a horse racing farce, involving George Formby, in which he gets most of his laughs - I assure you people do laugh - by leaping in the air and saying, "Oo" when anybody chases him, (and everybody chases him) Now you know practically everything about the film. *Thanks Neil. Not very complimentary to George or the producers of "Come On George" but, like "No Limit" the film is still one of the favourites*

Young George - At the recent Granada TV posh dinner, Brian Edge argued - yes 'argued' that I was wrong in claiming that George never went on stage until after his father had died, - when he took over his father's act.

He claimed that two year old George went on stage with Hackersmid the Body Builder and the evidence is in the "George Formby Complete" with a photo. "Gerr-Off," I said, "That wasn't Hackersmid! That was the next door neighbour when they lived in Westminster St, Wigan. After an accident while working in the pit he had to stay off work for two weeks. During this time he took young George to the photo studio to have their photo taken. I know this is correct because his Grandson came to see us at the Warrington Exhibition and laughed his socks off at our caption under the photo. Take one look at the photo and you'll see that he looks nothing like Hackensmid the body builder. - Hackensmid, tut, tut.



George Formby and the Mill

Millennium Trip? Anyone got any ideas on where they'd like to go next year? If so, let us know. But it is essential that we can take part in some musical activity there.

Southern Ireland – Rose of Tralee. When we were in Southern Ireland someone suggested that next year we should consider taking a trip to Tralee where they hold a massive Music Festival. "No problem!" Well, as soon as we arrived home, Eva was reading the paper and spotted that there was to be a four hour documentary on the Tralee Music Festival, that night, on "Tara" Sky TV. After scanning the channels we found nothing on Tara and Sky TV knew nothing either about the station. So, is there anyone out there who managed to find the channel – better still did anyone tape it. If so, let us know.



Grade One Super Coaches supplied by Springfield Coachways of Wigan

ISLE OF MAN

We've just received a load of bumf, including a list of events, from Nick Saunders, in the Isle of Man, who is looking forward to playing host to us next year, - assuming that we decide on a trip over there.

On the list there is very little on offer, unless we join in with the "International Festival for Majorettes and Baton Twirlers" on the 7th – 11th August or maybe on the 29th July to the 3rd August with the Isle of Man International Festival of Music, which includes: King Williams College, Peel Cathedral, 'Ave Sol' the Latvian Choir, Melodians Steel Drums from Trinidad, a Youth brass band from Poland and 'Yodlerklub Langasse Bern' from Switzerland.

Somehow, I get the impression that a touch of the old George Formby's wouldn't go down too well with that lot, - However, Nick does say that we could create our own event over there and the Tourist Office would be pleased to assist us. So I've dropped em, a line, - but heard nothing yet!

If we go to the Isle of Man next year, it has been suggested that we go during the Grand Prix fortnight when it won't be packed with motor bike enthusiasts but there will be quite a lot of older folk over there for the veteran races.

WALTER RALEIGH HOTEL

Don't forget - We have made a provisional booking at the Walter Raleigh Hotel for the same festival next year, so if we can't find anything better we can fall back on that booking. Mary Murphy is holding it open until January for us.

Walter Langshaw

Song Writer of

“Princess Lulu” – “Lancashire Lad And His Uke”

“Robin Hood” – “Fearless Fred the Fireman”

“Don’t Let Them Touch My Ukulele” –

“The Bowler Hat My Granddad Left To Me”

and “I’ve A Video Tape Of That.” And he’s still hoping that he’s got the inspiration to write a few more.



Walter first saw George in the “No Limit” and found that he could imitate his voice quite well. He bought a uke, got lessons, watched George’s expressions and listened to his sayings. He then toured the clubs with a friend named Ernie who was the straight man in their double act. Walter performed the uke playing while Ernie recited Nosmo King monologues. Sadly, Ernie was called up in the R.A.F. and killed in action, which left Walter with no desire to perform any more.

Walter’s brother and sister-in-law went to the Sale Community Centre for folk dancing and met Bob Sheldon who, along with Trevor Styles later went to Walter to learn the various uke strokes. It was then that they formed the Sale Branch of the George Formby Society and he wrote a song called “Princess Lulu” which he sold to Stanley King at the Hulme Hippodrome.

Due to a disagreement with Bob, Walter left the Sale Club and his uke went upstairs in store for several years. Then one day, Rob Davidson rang to ask if he actually wrote a song called “Bowler Hat”. Rob went to visit Walter and they have been friends ever since. Walter was waiting to have an operation at the time but they’ve kept in touch since. Almost every month Rob will pick up Walter to go to the Sale meeting and he is always pleased when he hears his songs being played by the members.

After the death of Stanley King it was published that Stanley had written the song “Princess Lulu”, which surprised Walter. Walter lodged a complaint and received an apology from Alan Harris who is Stanley’s nephew.

Well these are great songs Walter so we hope you are well enough to carry on with your talent and compose many more of them. GREAT SONGS!!!!

You’ve Not Written to the Newsletter Yet!!!!!!

All Aboard Again At Crewe - Brian Edge

Eighty-four attended the Crewe August concert which was excellent considering it was the height of the holiday season. The audience was treated to yet another great night's entertainment, the notable feature being the high quality of everyone's individual performances. There is no luck about giving a good performance, it is down to lots of hard work and it was abundantly clear that all the performers had worked very hard on their numbers. Well done everyone.



Gareth, Sam Bass and Jim Bramwell

The top variety spot of the month went to that couple of tramps Dennis Lee and Alan Newton who had secretly rehearsed their spot and demonstrated just how one should "walk down the avenue." Alan Newton then gave us 'Wunga Bunga Boo' in his inimitable swingy style and was later joined by Glenys Huntington, our superb trumpet player, who surprised us all by doing a duet with Alan on a penny whistle! (Obtained on her recent excursion to the Emerald Isle) Connie certainly enjoyed her stint on stage with a confident 'Hi-Tiddley-Hi-Ti Island' and a new slower version of 'Living in the Middle of Trafalgar Square' especially performed as a result of a suggestion by Stan Evans who apparently didn't notice the difference! But what about Pamela Baddeley's solo debut with her uke? We have all waited a long time for this but it was well worth waiting for as she gave a polished performance of 'Leaning on a Lamp Post'. It is certainly wonderful to add to our lady players who are somewhat outnumbered. It has been a long campaign to get Pamela to perform solo but I am sure it will be all plain sailing from here from here.

But where does the campaign go from here? We certainly need more lady performers. Well, the obvious next target has just got to be that lovely lady - Lesley Lee. On the quiet she plays the uke very well and she certainly can sing as well as being a great dancer. In addition she happens to be the wife of the Chairman of the George Formby Society, that cheeky chappie Dennis Lee, himself a master entertainer. There is certainly no dearth of ukuleles in the Lee household so that cant be a problem. So perhaps Lesley thinks that with having a husband and son bashing away at home that enough is enough? Well that is certainly understandable but after saying all that what about a special debut number for one of our forthcoming parties at Crewe Lesley Just as a special favour? You will? Great! As husband Dennis would say "Isn't it exciting!" Mind you Lesley as Pamela will tell you it will just be the thin end of the wedge! *Another wonderful night Brian.*

Sam Bass - Well I'm really dead chuffed for Sam! He was down in the dumps after losing his voice box in an operation and didn't know which way to turn. He looked lost!! However, we are pleased that with the aid of his portable writing board he is mixing with the members and displaying that broad infectious smile that carried him through his professional years. You are a lesson to us all Sam. Keep on smiling.

Complaint from Bob Drinkwater - He's moaning again Beryl - how on earth do you put up with him?

"Stan!" He bellowed over the phone, "You never put any adverts in with ukes for sale, - what about it?" And the conversation went like this:

Stan: - Well there are none for sale Bob

Bob: - Of course there are. There's plenty of ukes knocking about!

Stan; - Well, where are they?

Bob: - I don't know but there's plenty about somewhere.

UKES FOR SALE

Anyway you may be lucky here, Bob. If you ring Charlie (a genuine Formby fan for nearly 60 years) on 0374 507238, he's just told me that he is clearing his entire stock of ukes out and looking for reasonable offers. Charlie has got 2 Ludwigs, - a Dallas "E", - a Dallas "D", - a Keech, 2 Gibsons, and several others - plus some wooden ukes and he wants to sell them all to the highest bidders. They are all originals (no copies) which he has been collecting since the 1940s so they could be quite valuable. Don't forget: 0374 507238.

DEAF

Now Charlie is a little deaf so you'll have to shout up. If you don't he may put the phone down on you. Please mention you've read it in the Newsletter.

Little Old Wine Drinker - At the N. Wales Meeting

Jim Bramwell won a bottle of wine in the raffle, which he left in our car for Eva and I. We took it to the Liverpool meeting and guess who won it? Jim! - who took it to the Crewe meeting and almost won it back again.

Beryl Eissen from Australia, E Mailed to say that she has received mail from Jeanette Jordon who's father - R P Weston - wrote a lot of very popular songs with his partner, Bert Lee. They wrote Stanley Holloway's "Brown Boots" - "Goodbye . . ee" - "I'm Henry the Eighth" - "Knees Up Mother Brown" (which he wrote for amusement only) - and that good old favourite: "When Father Papered the Parlour." Which Dennis Lee was learning recently. It's amazing what comes up on the Internet.

Al Jolson superfan bought all his records

But had nothing to play them on

ON first hearing Al Jolson sing, Tony Farnfield became such a fan that he began buying the star's records, although he didn't even own a record-player.

"It all began when I was 11 or 12 and went to the pictures to see *The Jolson Story*," said Tony who is now 63 and has just been appointed by the International Al Jolson Society as their official representative for England, Wales and Ireland.

"I was so taken by Jolson's singing and by the film that when it was finished, I hid in the loo so that I could sneak back and see it again.

"That must have been in about 1946 or 47 when I worked on a paper round. Every now and again I would use my wages to go into town and buy a 78 record of Al Jolson at about sixpence each.

"It was two or three years before I could play them as I didn't have a record player.

Conventions

"In 1950, I began full-time work as a Post Office Telegraph boy on a bike and immediately put down a deposit on a wind-up gramophone so that I could finally hear my collection of Jolson records."

Tony remained a loyal fan, though it wasn't until the early 1970s that he



Al Jolson

found out about the International Al Jolson Society when he read a book on the great man.

Tony never looked back, becoming an active member, visiting the annual meetings in Britain and conventions here and in America.

"My wife Margaret and I have attended the conventions in New Jersey, Hollywood and Philadelphia and hope to go to next year's in Milwaukee," added Tony, from County Durham.

"Al Jolson has taken us places we would never have gone and helped us make a lot of friends all over."



You look in perfect shape to me, Mr Bramwell

Blackpool Gazette - An

article on Sea Cadets included a report from Jack Williams who claimed that when he 16 years of age he was a Blackpool Sea Cadet and remembers that about 80 of them went to Singleton Holiday Camp where lots of drill and exercises were carried out.

He recalls that the parade salute was taken by George Formby. George told them to, "Keep up with your training and you'll be fit like men, not like me, only fit enough to make people laugh." Thank to Charles Stewart for the article.

George's Suitcase

– Looking through George's suitcase there must be at least 200 song contracts which belonged to George senior and George junior. During 1942/43 George & Beryl bought . . .

“Home Guard Blues” for £20 with all rights -

Extra couplets - £5

“Get Cracking” for £7 – All rights – Eddie Latta

Extra couplets - £5

“Under The Blasted Oak” for £20 – 50% rights

“When The Waterworks Caught Fire” for £8 – All rights

“Bunty's Such A Big Girl Now” for £8 – All rights

“Mr Wu's An Air Raid Warden” for £10, - All rights which included a couple of letters from Eddie Latta of 10 Druids Cross Rd, Calderstones, Liverpool 18 and addressed to Mr & Mrs George Formby, Flat 152 Dorset House, Gloucester Place, London. Dated June 10th 1942.



Dear George & Beryl, To say “Thank you very much” for your letter and the cheque enclosed by you does not really convey all I would like to express. But I feel sure you know me well enough to realise how I appreciate both the kind thought and the generous deed. May “Mr Wu's An Air Raid Warden Now”

be worthy of the confidence you suggest. Have worked on other numbers but so far cannot see any improvement. Will keep in touch if anything worth while comes out of the grey matter. Very best wishes,
Sincerely, Eddie.

Also a similar letter from Eddie for “Spotting On The Top Of Blackpool Tower” dated 16th April 1941. Proceeds went to George's Blitz Fund.

It's Goodbye from Him and Goodbye from Me.

Did anyone see The Two Ronnies on TV when they performed with ukes? If so, did you tape it? Or do you know if they were impersonating George's style or maybe singing one of his songs. Ring in if you can add some light to it.



Bret's Book - Pat Kirkwood is annoyed!

On Friday the 27th August, John McEntee's page in the Express newspaper wrote "BY GEORGE, IT'S UKULELES AT DAWN."

Pat Kirkwood, the veteran musical comedy star, is threatening legal action over new claims that she hated George Formby, the gormless ukulele playing Lancashire comedian and film star.

Kirkwood is incandescent over allegations in the new biography of Formby by David Bret that she and her co-star in the 1939 film, "Come On George" loathed each other. She is equally distressed at the claim that she hated the whole experience of working on a Formby film, and that she denounced him as "cretinous, and lacking in intelligence."



Pat Kirkwood

PACK OF LIES – What this man has written is a pack of lies claims Pat, 77. George was a great star and I had nothing but respect and admiration for him I have never met this man Bret or even spoken to him.

Pat is additionally outraged that her name is listed in the acknowledgements. "I gave him no help, so his use of my name is utterly dishonest" she adds. Kirkwood's solicitor husband, Peter Knight, former president of the Bradford and Bingley building society has threatened publisher Jeremy Robson with legal proceeding unless the offending passages are removed.

Bret, 48, whose book depicts Formby as a womanising suicidal drug addict, is standing by the claims: "I defend what I wrote as accurate. I took information from my own research from another Formby book in which Pat was quoted as saying he was cretinous. Formby hated most of his leading ladies."

BRET IS INSULTING – "Bret is also furious with the George Formby Society for describing his book as "abhorrent" and refusing to sell it. I put Pat Kirkwood in the acknowledgement because she wrote me a letter but I will remove it if she wishes, I feel sorry for her . . . She is a has been."

John Guy's Remedy for keeping fit.

1 tablespoon of cider apple – Tablespoon of honey – mix with hot water – add 2 garlic capsules – allow to cool down and take every morning before food. *You should have been a doctor, John!*

Burtonwood Carnival – We had very little response from the members so Anthony Mason & I kept the flag flying for Warrington, and we are pleased that we did. It was a great little show.

We arrived on the scene to find that they'd erected a Music Hall Marquee for us, with seats, electrics, amplifier, mikes, mini disc player etc. and someone to operate the system for us. And it was all first class equipment and up to that point everything went very well.

Act 1. We opened the show at 2pm with a 25 minute spot, - dead on time.

Act 2. The Irish Dancing Team – who didn't turn up – (perhaps they went to some other carnival)

Act 3. Donna Jay & Band (The band didn't turn up either so she played a guitar)

Act 4. George Formby again, - still on time.

Act 5. The Burtonwood Amateur Dramatic Society who should have started at 3.30pm, but at 4pm were still carting their equipment into the marquee

Act 6. George Formby again but due to the B.A.D.S. running over time, - and the fact that the crowd had gone home, we cancelled our spot.

Anyway, it was good experience and we kept George's flag flying in Warrington. In summing up: The Music Hall idea at the carnival was great but it was badly in need of a stage manager to keep the acts flowing.

John Guy, as usual, is well in advance of everybody else. This is Newsletter No. 52 but according to his letter he has got all the issues up to No. 58. How have you done it John? He said in his letter that he has just bought a new electric typewriter but it goes too fast for him. Keep practising John. You'll catch up with it! Thanks for the jokes:-

A WIGAN man was arrested for squirting cavity foam up a policeman's trousers. He will be charged with insulating behaviour.

AFTER three year's hard work the Irish Intelligence have finally cracked Britain's Highway Code.

GOOD news for the unemployed! You can go places as a Prune Taster. About every five minutes.

ALWAYS remember - Crazy paving is not all what it's cracked up to be.

IF you are brave enough to crawl under a cow you'll get a pat on the back.

WHAT'S white, yellow, green, yellow and white? - A frog booty.

YOUR dog's been digging a hole in my garden! - Well take his spade off him.

DOCTOR, give me something for my liver, - What about a pound of onions?

ALWAYS live each day as if it was your last, - and someday you'll be right!

Cliff Royle – Our Ace Reporter! - You may recall in the last issue it was reported that Cliff was desperately in need of a new ribbon for his typewriter. Well we are all pleased that he has now purchased one and he has assured us that he will not send in any more blank sheets. Also he has invested in some white paper which in future will be used instead of the light brown stuff that was probably nicked from some government department. Please Read On

N. Wales Branch Sept. Meeting.

Visitors; where do they all come from? Yes *we* were again blessed with a good turn out with friends from Northwich, Saltney, Penyffordd, and from places as far away as Sweden and even Warrington. It was great to see so many people enjoying what turned out to be a terrific evening with our M.C. Dennis Lee in full flow. Again there was good support from the South Cheshire Branch, although we missed Brian Edge who was away elsewhere; rather strange because it happened to be his 44th Wedding Anniversary. Apparently he told Connie that he was away practising. They were married on the same date (but not year) that the Second World War started; 3rd. September, 1939. A vivid memory to many.

A number of other Wedding Anniversaries were also celebrated. Geoff and Dolwyn Shone, Jonathan and Pan Baddeley, also David and Margaret from Penyffordd. Sorry to hear Jonathan's back problem is still with him.

We were of course saddened to hear of the hospitalisation of Sheila Beech, Peter Harper (our occasional visitor from Felixstowe), and Charlie Penman without whom it was noted that the meeting was a bit quieter. Anyway joking apart we wish them all a speedy recovery, and a return to our meetings.

We had some excellent and unusual turns. Sorry I cannot mention everyone otherwise I would be writing pages, but perhaps I can mention the rather new or unusual ones. Aber Smith from Warrington gave a good rendition of some Jolson songs; Alison Nadin from Rhyl once again staggered us with her talent as an all round entertainer by putting on a ventriloquist performance; Dennis Lee and Alan Newton gave a super song and dance act (We're a couple of swells) dressed in rags to riches clothing; Pam Baddeley played her first Uke Solo at Penyffordd and got a great ovation; Gerald Jones accompanied by wife Julie and Son Daniel (a family team with three ukes) gave an unusual rendition of "There's a hole in my bucket"; our young players Stephen Ensall, Frank Murphy, and Gareth Sumner all got great applause; Cliff Royle sang? "I'll forget you in time" as a tribute to Aunt Mary (no one knew he had such a good voice); and there was a lot of flag waving during the "War Medley" Thrash and when Connie Edge sang "Bless em al". Then the house seemed to be brought down when Stan Evans sang his party piece "The Soldiers Dream" and the war-wounded came on. What a bunch of decrepit stragglers they were.

What a night. Some said it was one of the best yet. See you all again next time.

P.S. Carl Basford has again pointed out that he lives in the posh place Newcastle-under-Lyme and not S--0--T. (Stoke on Trent)

I have just received a call from Elizabeth Whittaker (Wife of our recently deceased member Alan). Pleased to say she is in good health and recovering from her sad loss. She was asking about everyone, and hopes to pay a visit to Penyffordd when she can arrange transport. Son Richard who is also learning the Uke has now started playing again. He is due to get married next May.

A few general snippets you may care to use if you wish.

1. Picked up an old copy of "Yours" in the dentists recently. There was a short letter in it about some happy days spent with the GFS. What is this I thought? Reading on I found it related to the Girl's Friendly Society. Perhaps we should be associated

2. I recently met a gentleman (Jim Crook from Delamere) who told me that in his younger days he worked at Topps Garage in Old Trafford, Manchester, where the Formby's sometimes came in to get work done on their car. He recalls that they always seemed to be very "tight" with their money. Cliff Royle.

Thanks Cliff. Some years back a few of the members wore GFS badges which apparently were issued by the Girls Friendly Society to their members. Thanks for mentioning Aber (Eddie) Smith in your report. 75 year old Aber has entertained in Warrington since the age of nine when he sang to the courting couples under the canal bridges. He has performed at all the various clubs around our area and emceed at most of them. In his earlier years he was known as Warrington's Al Jolson and the joke still goes round that he imitated Jolson better than Jolson did.. He has to be admired for having given so much joy to many thousands over 66 years.

Express Newspaper Again - on Bing Crosby

"CROON AND PUNISHMENT" Songs by Crooner Bing Crosby are being used in the fight against crime. Supermarket managers have discovered that louts cannot stand recordings by the late American singer. The irritating lilt of Zing Goes a Little Zong or Little Drummer Boy is guaranteed to drive them away from the shopping malls and public places. One song, the 1938 hit, My Heart Is Taking Lessons, is so unpopular with young people raised on pounding guitars that some store managers play it repeatedly.

In Sydney they discovered Bing's negative effect on the young when they started playing his songs at the store entrance. Now police in Sydney are talking with local authorities about playing the music in public squares and railway stations. *My grandchildren claim that George's records would have the same effect - cheeky monkeys!*

George's Statue -

by Lawrence Jones - Just returned from a holiday in the Isle of Man and whilst there thought I would ask the whereabouts of George's statue, which is no longer standing in the Douglas town centre.

I was assured it is being safely kept by Douglas Corporation (as is the one of Norman Wisdom) and whilst no final decision has yet been made as to where it will next be placed, (it will not be returned back to Strand Street) the odds are strongly in favour of a placement in the yet to be constructed new Villiers Hotel on the Loch Prom. *Thanks Lawrence. We've been wondering why the statue has been removed. Some say it was due to vandalism while others say it was due to reconstruction. We are looking at the possibilities of the I.O. Man next year but waiting to see if there are any activities there we can join in with, - or as we say in the trade, "a peg to hang it on."*



Happy Anniversary - It was

Connie & Brian Edge's Wedding Anniversary on the day we were at the Penyffordd meeting, September 3rd, and Connie got upon stage to tell them all that they married on the day war broke out. What she actually meant was that they married on the anniversary of the day war broke out, because one man, as he was passing, said, "60th Anniversary hey? She looks marvellous for an 80 year old!

CONNIE also gave a tribute to dear Auntie Mary and told the story of having met an old friend of Mary who used to live next door to her. Every Monday morning Mary would hang her little knick knacks on the line and shout over the fence, "I've got eight draws up again." which was typical of Mary's type of humour. What they call, "Scouse humour!"

Quote of the Day - As a teenager, and before she became

famous, Vera Lynn went to the BBC Studios to have an audition. She received a reply stating that her voice was unsuitable for broadcasting so therefore they had no use for her.

JUST HEARD that Frankie Vaughan has died. Alan Randall will be upset. They did a couple of Summer Seasons together at Blackpool.

Chris Hopkins from Widnes popped in with a tape - taken off a radio John Peel programme which was reporting on David Bret's new book which claimed that George was accused of collaborating with the enemy during the war, apparently the Home Office Dance Music Policy Committee thought that the lyrics of "Swim Little Fish" were making fun of our efforts to sink U-Boats, that "Bell Bottom George" was a slur on the Royal Navy and the term, "Turned Out Nice Again" referred to the Germans invading Poland.

Uke player (Mervyn Stocker - I think) sang a very poor 'send up' song in GF style - with uke, which went something like

"Now I'm George Formby I'm not a German spy
I'm just a boy scout with just a funny arm band
My songs are sung from Blackpool's Golden Mile
To the S.S. and the Panzers in the Reinland
I love to go a wandering with Hilda from Lytham St Annes
She squeezes her squeeze box every single night
With my little ukulele in my hand
Now O love Goring, I love Hitler, that fat b . . . r Heinrak Himmler
And I've met a b . . . r called El Duce
Yes I've had tea with Mussolini, his ukulele's only weeny
But you should see him dance the hoochi coochi."

Sounds like more RUBBISH to me.

Whitbread's Search For Talent - In a previous issue we reported the Grand Senior Citizen Talent Finals which were held at Southport recently. Well I've just heard from one of the Directors, Bob Brierly, who is currently planning the dates and venues for this year's area events, and we are welcome to enter the competition if we wish. The Northwest Area Finals will be in Morecambe on June 7th 2000, 1.30pm, and the National Finals will be held in Southport on the 26th July.

The information for entering the local events, and contest forms, will be ready for distribution before Oct 1st and we will have copies to hand out. If you think you are good enough to join in then let me know.

The heats are organised by your local council and the winners of the heats are put forward for the area finals. Perhaps your local council is already running events so give them a ring. But remember: You must be 60 or over to compete.

LATE NEWS - Andy Eastwood played his CD at the Sale meeting and it came over very well. Ring him on 01425 275830 to purchase a copy.

Red Dwarf Insult to George – In the Red Dwarf (Penguin) book, “Last Human” written by Douglas Naylor, it refers to this creature, “Snug Giraffe” which Dave Lister claims “he has not seen a site as hideous since he last cleared out a salad tray of his fridge.” OK, it was revolting. it was probably the most vile thing that he has never seen the likes of before. It was revolting, graceless, distorted, asymmetrical, eye watering, unsightly organism that he has ever had the good fortune to breathe oxygen, – well with the possible exception George Formby. *Sounds like jealousy! They envy George because, after 39 years, he’s still remembered and they’ll be forgotten as soon as the funeral is over.*

On the Committee

from Charles Stewart.

Oh give us some pity cos we’re on the committee

Which means that from morning to night
We attend and amend and contend and defend
Without a conclusion in sight

We confer and concur, we defer and demur
And reiterate all our thoughts
We revise the agenda with frequent addenda
And consider a load of reports

We compose and propose, we suppose and oppose
And the points of procedure are fun
But though various notions are brought up as motions
There’s terribly little gets done

We resolve and absolve, but we never dissolve
Since it’s out of the question for us
What a shattering pity to end our committee
Where else could we make such a fuss



UKES WANTED
We’ve had quite a number of calls from members looking for ukes. If you have any for sale you can advertise it free in the NEWSLETTER

Quote of the Day – As a teenager, and before she became famous, Vera Lynn went to the BBC Studios to have an audition. She received a reply stating that her voice was unsuitable for broadcasting so therefore they had no use for her.

WARRINGTON OCTOBER CONCERT HAS BEEN CANCELLED

Harry's Page-Thanks to Cyril Palmer.

Hello again folks. Stan has had a couple of enquiries for the words to my song called, "Please Let Me Sleep On Your Doorstep Tonight" so without further ado we've put the words down for you. Some of the members will know the tune - well they should do I sang it often enough for them. Here goes



Twass Christmas Eve at midnight, and a tramp with a haggard face, was knocking on the door of a rich millionaire's palace.

The rich man in pyjamas trimmed with gold and costly fur, said, "what are you wanting of?" the man replied - "Dear sir" - - -

Chorus - Please let me sleep on your doorstep tonight, I'm homeless and cold and the snow's falling white. The fire through your keyhole looks cosy and bright, so please let me sleep on your doorstep tonight.

The rich man said, "how dare you?" in a manner cold and chill, and from his freezing nose he proudly picked an icicle (icicil)

That night while the rich man slept on silk sheets trimmed with lace

The poor man slept and then the snowdrops fell on his car-case

Chorus -

The rich called a constab-ule and said, "Remove this man." He shone his lamp and the rich man said, "Why, it's my brother, Dan

You want to sleep on my doorstep, you, my brother, Fred.

You shall sleep on my doorstep, I didn't know you when you said . . .

Chorus -

The rich man caught pneumonia through standing in the cold, and soon at heaven's pearly gate, he claimed his wings of gold.

The angel to the rich man said, "You can't come in, oh no." The rich man said, "Well, as it's late and they're full up below

Chorus - Please let me sleep

JOKE (Sent in by Cliff Royle) - A GFS member was ill and concerned about being able to play the uke when he went to Heaven. So he went to see the local vicar and asked him to check if there was a GFS Society up there. A week later the vicar replied that he had some good news and some bad news. The good news was that there was a branch of the GFS in Heaven and the bad news was that he was booked to play in the concert next week.

CAN YOU REMEMBER ANY OF HARRY'S JOKES?

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 Thur in the month. 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.

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

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

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

To receive N. West Newsletters by post please send a cheque for 50p plus 25p postage (or £2.25 for 3 months) - (£9 for the year) 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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DON'T FORGET TO WRITE IN

