

THE NORTH - WEST

# GEORGE FORMBY

## Newsletter 53

Vol. 5, No. 5  
November 1999



**Specially Produced for George Formby Fans  
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# Welcome to Newsletter No. 53 well

it has certainly been a busy month in the N. West. We have news of one of George's motor cycles, a 1926 Ner-A-Car motor cycle which has been stored in a cramped basement in Preston for many years.

News of Dennis Lee and his group entertaining in Broughton, near Chester. Ashley Caldicott enjoys his birthday party at Crewe and Wistaston's local cat leaves his trade mark in Dennis Lee's uke case. Perhaps he was trying to tell him something. Now please read on. . . .

## There was a Nice Surprise at Sale when we arrived.

We didn't expect many to be there as it was the Blackpool meeting over the following two days but we were pleased at the crowd that turned up and especially Andy Eastwood, and his family, and also Jonas Svennson and Stefan Engstrom of Sweden. They are certainly keen Formby fans to have travelled so far.



Andy Eastwood



Jonas Svennson



Stefan Engstrom

With young men like these it is very assuring to know that George's songs will be carried well into the 21st Century. All three lads performed well and Andy gave a demonstration of his new CD which he has just released. Good for you Andy we hope you do well with it.

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## Josef Locke - Just heard that George's dear

old friend Josef Locke has died at the age of 81. Apparently he'd been ill for some time. He was born in Londonderry on March 23rd 1918 and got his first step up the ladder when George & Beryl introduced him to Victor Carne of the Columbia Record Company. He was invited to the recording studios and within a short space of a couple of years they had sold over one million of his records in this country alone. After this followed contracts with principal music halls, London Palladium, Royal Albert Hall and with various operetta companies singing songs like "Hear My Song Violetta" - "Your Tiny Hand Is Frozen".





# The George Formby Story

By Stan Evans

George & Beryl had very few close friends and possibly Fred & Jessie Bailey were the only ones they confided in. They were very close and there were many stories around Warrington of when George & Beryl stayed with the Baileys.



Fred & George - busom pals

One story goes that when George was appearing in *Zip Goes A Million* they called on the Baileys on their way from Blackpool to London. Beryl was carrying quite a lot of jewellery with her because they had nowhere safe in the Lytham St Annes house to keep it. They thought that maybe the Baileys could store it for them but discovered on arrival that the Baileys also had nowhere to keep it safe. Now George was in a bit of a hurry so without further ado he opened up the top of the piano and poured the jewels into it.

Fred was a very thorough type of businessman who kept everything immaculate. He loved the colour of blue and consequently all his fruiterers wholesale wagons and canvas curtains around his market stalls were in blue. Even his bedroom was painted blue and gold.

Fred was a fanatic with his cars, especially his Mercedes, and would never venture out on the roads if rain was forecasted. He kept his car safely tucked away in his large central heated garage and if it was damp outside he would demonstrate the car to his friends by driving up and down in the garage. The same Mercedes car was in George's funeral procession many years later.

David Bret claims in his book, "George Formby A Troubled Genius" that George had an affair with Pat Howson from 1955 but there is no evidence of this. But some years back I received a phone call from John Clarke a well known Warrington businessman who claimed that George rented a house from his friend (I assumed he meant Fred Bailey) in Walton Road, Walton, Warrington, but again there was no evidence. He promised to bring me more information but after ringing him to remind him of his offer it never materialised.

Even so, Beryl was a long time friend of Fred Bailey so I can't imagine him approving of any association with Pat Howson. Having said that there was a rumour around Warrington, some years later, that Fred dropped dead whilst in a delicate situation behind his canvas curtains with one of his staff. So, where do we go from here? Did they cheat on their wives? There was certainly no solid evidence of it! More Next Month.

# George Formby Senile Society

As you get older you can recall events from 50 or 60 years ago but you can't remember what you were doing five minutes previous. Remembering dates of engagements becomes an almost impossible task so we have to jot them all on the calendar. Jim & Joan Bramwell, and Eva & I have a good system this way and never forget an event! Or do we?

Tuesday the 28th of September and the phone rings. It was Stan Watkinson wanting to know why we hadn't turned up at the previous night's meeting. "Meeting! - What Meeting?" "Blackpool" says Stan, Well you could have knocked us down with a wet lettuce. We'd completely forgotten Charles & Eve's meeting at the Blackpool Cricket Club. I rang Jim and you could hear a couple of quick gulps when I told him that we'd forgotten Blackpool. "Joan, er, er, we've forgotten the Blackpool meeting!" - "Oh no!" I heard Joan cry out, - "Not Blackpool. We'll have to ring Charles"

I rang Charles with a thousand apologies but he was over the moon about it all. "Don't worry, we had an excellent night. Paul Mountain turned up from Yorkshire and we had a really great evening." "You sound happy about us forgetting to turn up," - "Well I am" he replied, "I'm pleased because I now realise that I'm not the only one who is going senile!" Thank you very much Charles, - who needs enemies?



Paul Mountain

I can only assume that Paul Mountain is psychic because he always turns up whenever we don't make it to Blackpool. Thanks a lot Paul. Once again you stepped in at the right time.  
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## Ashley Caldicott's Birthday - What a great night

we had at Crewe. Ashley thoroughly enjoyed every minute with all the fuss around him. Angela, his mum, was so delighted that we'd remembered his birthday and asked that her appreciation be mentioned in the Newsletter.



Our dear friend and member, Ashley

Angela & Philip wish to thank all the many friends who came along to make an excellent evening for Ashley. She was extremely thankful to Hazel for the beautiful birthday cake. To Alison, Jean and Frankie Wood for the puppet show, to the hosts Connie & Brian, all the ladies who prepared the buffet and all those who took part in making it a great occasion for Ashley. Thanks to all from the Caldicott family.



**Bulging Pockets** – Once again the “Bulging Pockets” spies were out and about at Crewe and this month the award goes to Jonathan Baddeley who certainly sported a couple of huge bulges in his pants.

Now Jon had no excuse for this as the bulges were not part of his act, - well he couldn't stuff a uke in his pocket, or a clarinet, could he? No! it was just a clear case of slack-pantedness, so our snoops very quickly nipped in with the cameras.



Now the Bulging Pockets Committee are appealing to all members to keep an eye open for these baggy artists so that it can be eliminated completely by the year 2000. If you see any bulgers bouncing up and down on the stage please take a quick snap and send it in to the Newsletter.

**AUNTIE MAGGIE'S REMEDY - CONKERS** – Now, at our meetings we have a couple of ladies who genuinely believe in bulging pockets, and who can blame em? Joan Bramwell and Eva Evans have been given a good tip on how to relieve pain and it is a very simple remedy. In each pocket they carry a hand full of conkers and after a few days any leg pains should drain away.

At the N. Wales meeting Alan Chenery was due to go on stage to perform but before going on I noticed him emptying his trouser pockets. Nobody's catching Alan out with that one – Good for you Alan.

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**Judith Townsend** is looking for anything on **TESSIE O'SHEA** so if you've any tapes, videos etc. to spare for her please give her a call on 0114 2346937. She will be pleased.

Just as I was typing this request the phone rang and who should it be but Judith herself. She has heard on a radio programme a show called “Time To Remember” (1940 – 50s) which mentioned a CD with a song on called, “I Fell In Love With An Airman.” Does anyone know anything about the CD or the song? *Thanks Judith.*

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**Dennis Lee** apologies for the inconvenience of having to switch venue for the October Meeting. All future meetings will be held at the British Legion

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**DON'T FORGET TO WRITE TO THE NEWSLETTER**

## Phantom Feline on the Loose – Dennis Lee

Well would you believe it?! There we all were, having a smashing time at the Crewe Branch meeting blithely unaware of what was to come later. Stan had just performed one of his miracles and had conned me into joining him. Holding up a tenner he made a hole in it with a pen and asked me to do likewise. Luckily I only had a fiver but I did as he asked – stabbed a hole through the five pound note.

He then proceeded to pull the pen around the edge of his tenner but it didn't tear the note. Fantastic! He truly is a magician, nay a wizard even. When he invited me to do likewise I jibbed saying it would ruin my fiver which would then be worthless. As it was I only got £4.50 for it! My trouble is that I'm too trusting.

On returning to my seat, still smarting from being conned, I decided to put one of my ukes away. The case had been open all evening next to my seat as usual. However when I touched the inside, it was wet through.

"Who's spilled a drink over my case?" I accused. Nobody would own up. "Somebody must have," I growled. During the following enquiry somebody said they'd seen a cat mooching around. An incontinent kitty? Could it be? Never! Lesley smelled at my fingers and nearly retched. It was the moggie alright. We then realised that the cat had crept into the case, xxxxxxxx and crept out again. What a catastrophe! Where will it aim next? We demand satisfaction. I've got it, the purrfect solution. I'm going to start a new movement - The Prevention of Urinating Kittens Establishment or P.U.K.E. for short. Dennis Lee



P.S. Anybody want to buy a uke case .....? *But you've missed out the end of the tail (cat's tail – get it?, - oh don't bother). I had a stack of birthday cards on my stall and the top one had a picture of a courting couple and a black cat. It read, "GOOD LUCK, and remember, if a black cat crosses your path, make sure he hasn't left anything behind!" Very appropriate!!*

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## Sheila Palmer – We regret to report that dear Sheila suffered a

fall as she was entering the hospital resulting in a broken hip. Sheila wasn't well at the last Sale meeting. She had a severe coughing bout as she was leaving to go home and the following morning Cyril took her to the hospital for a check up and she slipped at the hospital door as Cyril was parking the car. This caused a broken hip which was operated on immediately.

We are not sure if the operation has been a success or not as there might be a danger that the break has not knitted and she may require further treatment. So keep your fingers crossed for Sheila who sends her thanks for the many cards.



## From Gerry O'Neill of Fulwood, to the Daily Mail

Members of the George Formby Fan Club have been incensed by the allegation, in a recent biography of him, that he was a Nazi sympathiser. I hasten to say that this is nonsense. George Formby was one of the first stars to volunteer to entertain the Forces abroad and went into many forward areas, at great risk to himself.

During the War, there was a 15 minute radio programme, early in the morning, called, if my memory serves me right, "Into Battle", with introductory music of "Lillibolero" and it consisted of short interviews of soldiers, sailors and airmen, and others, who had been in recent action. I remember, vividly, hearing George Formby, on one of these, describing an incident, in North Africa. He was in a forward area, to entertain the troops and was in a small party, advancing along a narrow path, which, they had been warned, by an officer, had not been fully cleared of mines. They were proceeding, with great caution, when they came to a point, which was only wide enough for one person. A young soldier, approaching, from the opposite direction, stepped aside, to make way, for George, and stepped straight onto a mine. He was, of course, killed and George was almost overwhelmed with emotion, when he told this story. He said it would remain with him, for the rest of his life. George Formby, a Nazi sympathiser?, what absolute rubbish!! Yours sincerely, Gerry O'Neill. *Regrettably, the Daily Mail refused to publish Gerry's letter even though there has been quite a reaction from members and the public in general regarding the accusations that George was a nazi sympathiser.*

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## You Can't Beat the Newsletter for selling UKES! Alan

Newton rang with news of two ukes for sale and even before the Newsletter had gone to press the Newsletter Advisory Service had sold one of them. Another Miracle!! Bah Gum!!! So if you've anything for sale let the Newsletter know about it and you'll have someone knocking on the door before you've put the phone down. Isn't that right Alan? Yes! And what's more, it won't cost you a bean. Where else can you get anything for nothing?

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## Support Wanted Urgently - I think Connie Edge

has gone into the Meat Packing Business because she is desperately looking for a Very Large pair of Brassieres and some Large Stays - or Bone Corsets as we used to call em.

Brian is looking for any George Formby sheet music, old picture postcards, old coins and medals and you can ring them on 01270 569836. He is also looking for a PRINTER for an AMSTRAD 9512 Computer.

## N. Wales Meeting by Cliff Royle



"IT'S TURNED OUT NICE AGAIN" was not the right terminology for the weather on the day and evening of our meeting. Torrential rain, yes, but that did not seem to put many people off from coming to our alternative venue. A turn out of about sixty on such an evening was a real bonus. There were eighteen up for the THRASH, and a good variety of turns.

A great welcome was given to Jack Jones who gave his usual jovial and entertaining performance ending with "I promised to be home by 9 o'clock" apparently played on one of our "Auntie Mary's" Ukes. It was great Jack; so happy to have had you with us.

Frankie Woods was honored. Brian edge playing Frankie's own song "Ragtime Gal of Mine", and Margaret Moran serenading him with a Christmas song.

We had Jim Bramwell's jokes, Walter Kir'lands Bones (did he get them from Alison's puppet), and Stan Evans's elastic trick which only seems to work at Penyffordd. Then Stan did his £10 note trick and finished with one of his new songs, how does he find the time to sleep?

Following a recent trip to America Glenys lluntington put on an excellent performance of a Blues number on the trumpet, and by very popular request came back with Jonathan Baddeley on the clarinet to do another Jazz number. This brought a tremendous applause.

Pam Baddeley was "Ukeless", if you know what that is, but sang a couple of lovely songs, one of which, "Banjo Boy", was accompanied by husband Jonathan on his Uke. There were many other excellent individual and other performances, too numerous to mention in detail.

However for a change let us not forget those unsung heroes who do not perform; Geoff and Dolwyn Shone the refreshment buddies, the Ladies on the ticket table, and of course Dennis and Lesley Lee and their helpers who spend many hours setting up for the show. Lesley of course also acts as our "musical director" and makes an excellent job of it.

Last but by no means least we have to thank those who come along just to listen. Without them where would we be? I think the spirit of our meetings can be summed by the comments of my visitors, Charlie, Brian and Norman at the concert. They were overwhelmed by such a large attendance, by the friendliness and helpfulness of everyone, and the quality of the show and the performances. They will I am sure be with us again, perhaps with their Wives. Maybe we will gain some new Uke players as well, and it seems that with a little



encouragement I am sure Charlie will be entertaining us on the keyboard.

I am pleased to say that Sheila Beech is making a steady improvement after her operation, and is looking forward to being back at our meetings before long. She has been overwhelmed by the cards and other messages received from her friends in the GFS. Again a real mark of the spirit of the Society.

### CHRISTMAS PARTY MEETING

P.S. Please note the December Meeting will be Fancy Dress for those wishing to take part. Title "Gangsters and Molls". *Thanks Cliff. I hope you didn't pay much for that new typewriter ribbon. My scanner struggled with some of the faint type. 'Overwhelmed' came out "ovenwhinci" - 'elastic' (elcystic) - 'weather' (we at her) - 'Sheila Beech is making' (Sheila Beech is aaching) - 'a real mark' (a real nark). But to top it all, your report that Pam Baddeley went on stage 'Ukeless' actually read, "Pain Baddeley was Useless." So you are treading on thin ice Cliff. - But doing a great job.*

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## Two Georges - Hackenschmit & Formby

Re. my alleged argument with Stan Evans (see last issue page 5) Stan says: "Take a look at the photo and you'll see he looks nothing like Hackenschmit" Well I'm sure that you'll all agree with Stan as they are all unaware of Hackenschmit's likeness as after all he was in his prime a century ago! The picture as reproduced from the George Formby Complete shows our George at about 3 years of age so that would date the picture about 1907. The real Hack was 30 at the time which agrees with the estimated age of the man in the picture.



I enclose a picture of him taken in 1900 and members must judge for themselves whether they are one and the same person. Whilst there is no doubt that someone called in at the Warrington Exhibition claiming that the man holding the towel was his Granddad, one can never be sure without proof that it is not a "Porky."



George Hackenschmit was a great wrestler who held many weightlifting records. In 1898 he was the World Amateur Champion - Greco Roman Style, and in 1900 turned professional and was undefeated until 1908 when he lost

his title. So what do the readers think. Are these two the same person?

*No Brian! It's no contest! Granddad looks like a Wigan pit worker and Hack looks like a wrestling champ. If you still insist I will get our editor friend Geoff Shryhane to make an appeal to the grandson. Loser to do the full monty.*



With Thanks to the Lancashire Evening Post

# Formby fun 'bike'

# is found in cellar



A TWO-WHEELED treasure once owned by comedy legend George Formby has been found in the cramped basement of a new Preston gallery.

The 1926 Ner-A-Car machine, which is still registered to the ukelele-playing comic, was hidden beneath dust sheets in the dingy cellar.

Brian Beck, who took over the town centre building to convert it into a specialist gallery and antiques shop, is delighted at his find.

## Great

Unfortunately, the vintage vehicle is riddled with rust and many parts are missing or damaged, but Brian is still chuffed to bits with it.

He said: "It's still got its engine and wheels and the exhaust is still in there. I'm not sure what to do with it but it'd be great to see it back on the

By KEVIN HEGARTY

road."

Brian, 54, was told of the hidden treasure by the man from whom he bought the three-storey building in Cannon Street late last year.

Retiring optician Neville Tudor-Thomas, a vintage vehicle fan, bought the motor decades ago but never got round to renovating it.

When he sold up shop and signed over the deeds to Brian, he also told him he could keep the Formby machine.

Wigan-born Formby had a renowned passion for fast cars and motorbikes. It is not known how long he had owned the Ner-A-Car.

The machine now rests in the basement of European Fine Arts and Antiques, which is due to be officially opened next month.

The venture is thought to be a first of its kind for Preston, with dozens of expensive paintings from famous artists for sale.

## From George's Suitcase

Up to the year ended April 5th 1949 George & Beryl performed at the following towns and received £600 for each contract: Swindon, Oxford, Birmingham, Southport, Peterborough, Morecambe, Dudley, Shrewsbury, Nottingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle, Glasgow, and a pantomime at Liverpool. For the panto George received £6,916.13. 4d and Beryl got £520. Also they received . . . .

Film profits £5,951. 16.11d  
Misc Income 375. 8. 5d

Total £21,763. 18. 8d  
Less Expenses £11,362. 1. 0d

Profit £10,401. 17. 8d  
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In 1950 they earned: Manchester £600, Blackpool (4 weeks) £500, Southport £800, Leeds Pantomime (10 weeks) £9,166. 13. 4d. Beryl earned £595. 16. 8d for the pantomime. Plus miscellaneous income £582. 06d.

Making a total of £19,051. 10. 4d

Canadian Tour 48,711 dollars  
Less Expenses 22,373 "  
Difference changed to sterling £8,551. 2. 3d

Total Income 27,602. 12. 7d  
Less Expenses 8,661. 8. 5d  
Profit for the year £18,941. 4. 2d

The above figures do not include other incomes such as royalties, recordings etc.

These figures are for 1949/50 when George had passed his best. It's little wonder he said, "Turned Out Nice Again!" Hope you find George's Suitcase interesting. Let me know if you do.

MOTOR MEMORIES: Brian Beck in the cellar of his new gallery in Cannon Street, Preston, with the George Formby motorcycle



## They've All Gone Bananas! by Stan Evans -

Some years back I jumped up on stage at the Wintergardens and sang George's, "I Like Bananas" and ever since then it has been well and truly recognised as my own personal signature tune. What an honour!! Today, many years later, at the N. West meetings, It can be guaranteed that at least one of the members will make reference to bananas or, better still, bring me a little (or large) banana memento. Only last week at the N. Wales meeting, Margaret Royle brought me a Bag of Banana Sweets and Geoff Shone gave me a Banana Key Ring. Alan Newton presented me with a Banana Tie at one of the meetings and I was presented with a huge three foot high stuffed Banana at the Wainwright, Blackpool.



For my 70th, last year, I received a Banana Birthday Card in the post and was given two huge plastic Bananas that now dominate the office. Harry and Lottie went on holiday and brought back a Monkey with a Banana. I've had umpteen little Banana Models given to me and loads of newspaper cuttings on Bananas. Plus baskets full of real Bananas. But it doesn't end at the meetings. My daughter in law bought me a pair of Banana Socks and my grandson bought me a magic trick called Multiplying Bananas. The reason for writing this article is to thank all the thoughtful people for contributing such wonderful items. It really is kind of you all to be so generous.

I am very lucky to be championing the poor little curled up Banana who has never had the chance to live a straight life. Thank you one and all.

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## You Can't Beat Our N. West Meetings!

Our N. West meetings are run democratically and with respect to the members. Every activity we take part in is carried out fairly and we get very few complaints. George's songs make us happy people and it is a pleasure to be a member of such a pleasant society. Let's hope that we remain this way forever.

**DISASTER CLUBS** - I was a member of a typical Fawltly Towers type of social club that was run by a cock-eyed committee. They only had 17 members and 7 of those were on the committee - President, Chairman, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary etc. and quite often we had more committee members turning up than ordinary members.

**COMPETITION** - Every year they held a competition and whoever won it was presented with a large shield at the Annual Dinner later in the year. All the other entrants would receive a small shield with their names on.

The 1999 Annual Dinner was held 2 months ago but they discovered that every one of the committee members had forgotten to take the large shield. The committee apologised and said that it would have been no use taking the trophy because the engraver had put the wrong name on the shield! They thought that last year's winner had won it again this year so his name was on twice. They remembered the small shields but unfortunately they all had the same name engraved on them. The same name that was on the large shield.

And that's not all!!! - The Treasurer gave a committee member £200 to buy some raffle prizes. He turned up on the night with a van load of his own unwanted furniture. First prize was a wardrobe, second was a garden table - no chairs, third was a free show to be put on by one of the committee members etc. On the night the winners refused to accept the prizes and left them at the posh hotel. The following morning the phone rang asking them to come and shift all the old furniture.

**DICTATOR** - Also I was associated with a Pensioners Club where they had club outings, played bingo, dominoes, darts etc. and all under the control of one man who had absolutely no respect whatsoever for his members, his language could be cut with a knife. At the Christmas Party he held a "Guess the weight of the cake competition" when everybody would pay 20p per guess. Whoever was the nearest would take home the cake. After all the tickets were sold, - about 5 minutes before the winner's name was given, he would take the cake to his office for a couple of minutes, return it, write out a slip and then announce himself as the winner of the cake. It is perfectly true!!! Everybody was dumbfounded but afraid to speak up.

**RAFFLES** - He boasted to the members that he was lucky with raffles. How did he do it? Quite easy! He always bought his tickets just before the draw to make sure that his ticket stubs went on top. Then he would hold the top of the bag tight and shout, "lets give em a good shaking up." But in fact, the tickets couldn't move because the bag was held too tight. He won almost every time.

On the coach outings to Blackpool he and his wife would go all dressed up for a grand evening. On arrival they would disappear to some swell dinner while his members were left to walk the streets of Blackpool. They got a free coach ride.

We are lucky in the GFS to be able to enjoy ourselves without the aid of booze and should be thankful that we belong to a most friendly and pleasant society. Let's hope that we can take it into the year 2000. Stan Evans



## Broughton Trading Estate - Dennis & Lesley Lee

and the gang went to a lot of trouble to put a show on for this new trading estate. About 12 of the Penyffordd members turned up to entertain (all looking dead smart) which is more than they had in the crowd (seen more people in a bus queue) however they performed very well and the little crowd that stayed to listen thoroughly enjoyed it. One lady came to book the concert party for a senior citizens do, next July, and a radio presenter turned up to arrange a broadcast. So it turned out nice again after all. The position where we entertained was the problem. We



were sited at the far side of the estate where very few people wandered. It was almost deserted while at the entrance to the estate, and in the Tesco Supermarket, there were thousands of people.

**GEORGE TOOK A DIVE** - During the interval I called at M. C. V. (Music, CDs & Videos) to see if they anything on George. It is an expensive store! They offered Nat King Cole CDs at £11, Bing Crosby £10, Dean Martin £14, Frank Sinatra £10, Barbara Streisand £16, and - wait for it! Barbara Windsor - who can't sing for peanuts - came in at £15. Poor George didn't even come in the first three. They had two of his CDs at £3. 99 each. Cheapest in the shop. Anyway, we think he's great and that's all that matters.

**CHARLIE PENMAN** - It was a pleasure to see Charlie back in the saddle after his traumatic experience in hospital. In fact, after his operation he looks a different man than he was before. In his new jazzed up waistcoat he looked younger and brighter and ready to take on all comers. Good for you Charlie. It's nice to see you back. As soon as he turned up at the Broughton Trading Estate someone said - I think it was Lesley - "Clap Hands Here Comes Charlie." which was very appropriate.



Charlie Penman

## **UKES FOR SALE** – Dallas “E” – Old but in very good condition –

No Case - £425. 00 or near offer.

**FESTIVAL UKE BANJO** – in good condition with case, Believed to have been made by Dallas – Maplewood - £295. 00 o.n.o. **RING DENNIS LEE 01244 544799.**

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## **Another Uke For Sale** – Bah Gum they are coming thick and fast now. I hope Bob Drinkwater is reading these ads! - **ABBOTT COPY £290** also with case. Please ring Alan Newton on 01270 (Crewe) 664538. If unsold this uke will be on show at the next Crewe and Penyffordd meetings.

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## **Did You Ring Charlie?** In last month's Newsletter we gave Charlie's (**UKES FOR SALE**) phone number for you to ring. Now I did warn you that he is a difficult chap to deal with so drop a line if you had problems getting through to him and let us know how you went on.

Bob Drinkwater said, “I wouldn't buy a uke off that chap, he's an idiot!” Alan Newton reported, “He wouldn't let me get a word in and he kept shouting at me. I rang him several times!”

Now if you think you could handle Charlie give him a ring on 0374 507238 and maybe you might finish up with a good bargain.

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## **Young Frank Bennett – 81** wants to know if he is the oldest member in the N.West. Well in the N.West he might be but not in the GFS because Bob Allen can give him a few years. Bob is about 84.

Harry Stanford and Mary Atkinson reached 86 before they passed on so who is the oldest now? If you know any good old-uns drop a line to the Newsletter.

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## **Granada TV Studios - Are You Interested?**

- In the last issue of the Newsletter we reported on the TV Show we made for Granada Studios. Well there is to be a preview on Sunday the 21st November for which we are trying to obtain about 40 to 50 tickets. Please let us know if you are interested in coming to the Manchester Studios. We are also hoping to do a “Warm-up” spot for the audience of 250. There is no charge. Ring me for more details - Stan Evans

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**HAVE YOU ANY NEWS ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER?**



**S.O.S.** Margaret ? is looking for a piece of poetry about an old lady in hospital. *I think Margaret is looking for "Look Closer" Hope it's the right one.*

## Look Closer – Through the eyes of an old lady.

What do you see, nurse, what do you see?  
Are you thinking when you are looking at me?  
A crabbit old woman, not very wise  
Uncertain of habit, with far away eyes  
Who dribbles her food and makes no reply  
When you say in a loud voice, "I do wish you'd try"  
Who seems not to notice the things that you do  
And forever is losing a stocking or two  
Who, quite unresisting, lets you do as you will  
With bathing and feeding the long day to fill  
Is that what you're thinking, is that what you see  
Then open your eyes, you're not looking at me  
I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still  
As I move at your bidding, as I eat at your will  
I'm a small child of ten with a father and mother  
Brothers and sisters who love one another  
A young girl of sixteen with wings on her feet  
Dreaming that soon a true lover she'll meet  
A bride now of twenty – my heart gives a leap  
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep  
At twenty-five I have young of my own  
Who need me to build a secure happy home  
A woman of thirty my young now grow fast  
Bound to each other with ties that should last  
At forty my young sons will soon be all gone  
But my man stays beside me to see I don't mourn  
At fifty once more babies play round my knee  
Again we know children my loved one and me  
Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead  
I look at the future and shudder with dread  
For my young are all busy with young of their own  
And I think of the years and the love that I've known  
I'm an old woman now and nature is cruel  
'Tis her jest to make old age look like a fool  
The body it crumbles, grace and vigour depart  
There now is a stone where once was a heart  
But inside this old carcase a young girl still dwells  
And now and again my battered heart swells  
I remember the joys and remember the pain  
And I'm loving and living life over again  
I think of the years all too few – gone too fast  
And accept the stark fact that nothing can last  
So open your eyes nurse, open and see  
Not a crabbit old woman, look closer – see ME.

## Broughton House Sale's Success

by Alice Cronshaw

The Sale members were invited to put on a show at the Disabled Soldier's Home, Broughton House, Salford and it went down extremely well. Stars of the show were: Walter Kirkland, Phil Jones, Cyril Palmer, Des Redfern, Margaret Moran, Les James, Jean, Alison and Frankie Woods. Alison performed her Granddad Puppet show and we gave them a rendition of war songs to get their feet tapping. The soldiers thoroughly enjoyed the songs and laughed at Les James's impersonation of Rob Wilton.

We would like to thank all who took part: Des brought along his P.A. Equipment and Ken, Ann and Ivy prepared a buffet. It was all very much appreciated by the Broughton House organisers. Marion Daintree, Welfare Officer, sent a letter to thank us all and look forward to the next show.

Sheila Palmer has been in hospital having a operation and we are pleased that she is progressing well. She wishes to thank all who wrote to her and sent cards. Thank you all, Alice Cronshaw. *And thank you Alice for the report.*



## A Reply from Jim Murphy -

Dear Stan, We think your Newsletter is great but I was a bit annoyed recently when I read that you'd received complaints from people who didn't like ukes being played at the meetings, in the interval. What do these people expect? This is the George Formby Society! The place where fans come to swap ideas, test out new techniques and learn new songs and chords. Beginners can practise all month but they can learn more in 10 minutes watching someone play for them, that's called one to one tuition and the only tuition a new player is likely to get.

Have you ever asked yourself, why are these people complaining? Is it perhaps because of the variety policy that we have adopted? Have they come to take part in Karaoke singing or have they come because they enjoy George Formby music?

Personally I think that true George Formby fans don't want all this extra variety but put up with it and yes, sometimes enjoy it, but when it comes between us and George Formby, it's not on. Anyone who doesn't like uke playing in the interval should go to a variety show instead.

From now on I will be making the effort to help new players tune and play their uke's in the interval, and a wonderful sound it will be for true George Formby fans, so stick your pasties in your ears if you don't like it. Remember: it's wonderful to be a George Formby fan!

*Thanks Jim - straight from the shoulder. So come on readers. Let's have your reply to Jim's article, And remember that George enjoyed variety so much that he had his own variety troupe touring the country. He also appeared in pantomimes, stage plays, TV panel games etc.*

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**Beware of Jim Murphy** - If you need to send a FAX to the Murphy clan wait until Jim is out of the house. He is hopeless on a FAX machine! He sent me three faxes within 2 minutes and they were all the same message, but when I tried to reply I couldn't get through because he didn't recognise the fax signal and kept saying, "Hello, Hello, Hello" and then put the phone down on me every time. If he answers the phone ask for the lady of the house, Caryl. She knows her job! Jim is a genius with a lump of wood, hammer and nails but hopeless on the switchboard. He is to Secretarial Work what Cyril Smith is to Hang Gliding! Keep him off that phone Caryl.

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**Every Thursday** afternoon I read the Bingo numbers out for the old folk and one lady in her 80s told me that her father moved the Formbys from Liverpool back to Warrington. He was given a pair of twisted boots which she assumed had been worn by George Formby senior in his act.



## Great Night Again at Crewe - The September

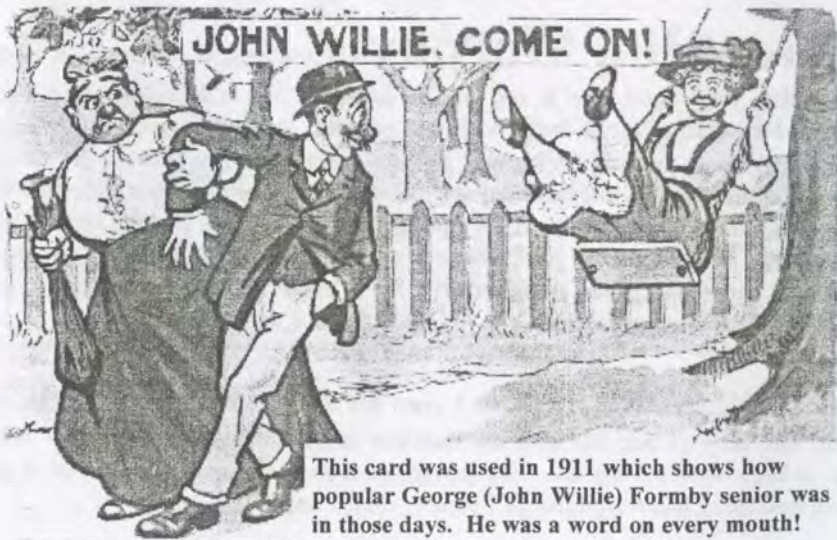
ber Concert of the South Cheshire Branch celebrated Ashley Caldicott's Twenty-first birthday and in order that Ashley could have a special party many ladies brought along lashings of food which, when put together, produced a superb buffet. Hazel Stamps crowned the event with one of her beautifully decorated cakes. Ashley received gifts and cards during the evening and Angela and Philip gratefully thank everyone for their kindness.



Walter Kirkland the lad with the infectious smile

Frankie Woods, Jean and Alison went to a great deal of trouble to bring along Frankie's wonderful puppets as a treat for Ashley. Alison and Jean put on a splendid show. Alan Chenery was Master of Ceremonies and Colin Wood took his usual place as Sound Engineer. Colin was on good form with his uke giving us the ever popular Blackpool Belle to which we all joined in.

Ron Whiston & Walter Kirkland were excellent with their new duet on the Bones. The highlight of the evening was a trumpet solo by Glenys Huntington who was freshly back from the States where she obtained a backing disk for her performance of Basin Street Blues which was superb. A special thanks to all who helped to make Ashley's party so memorable and thanks to everyone who donated prizes for the raffle. Brian Edge. *Thanks Brian. It was possibly one of the best nights ever at Crewe.*



This card was used in 1911 which shows how popular George (John Willie) Formby senior was in those days. He was a word on every mouth!



## Harry's Page

- As George used to say, "You can't keep a growing lad down," so here I am again with some old 70 year old jokes for you.



**HUNTER** - Did you hear about the white hunter who shot a lion in his pyjamas? Well you must admit it was a funny place to keep a lion!

**DOG LICENCE** - I went to the post office the other day to buy a licence for my dog. The lady behind the counter said, "What name is it" and as quick as a flash I told her, "Rover!"

**IRISH WAKE** - Poor Murphy died so for the Irish wake the lads removed the living room door and rested it on a pair of trestles. Murphy looked wonderful - better than he'd looked all his life. His wife said, "Be jaybers, if I'd known he was going to look like that I'd have had it done years ago."

The lads were talking to Murphy as he lay there, and sobbing and crying over him, when suddenly Paddy thought he saw Murphy twitch. "Come over here" to said to Murphy's wife, "I'm sure he's still alive." - "Alive or not" she said, "He going through that front door at nine in the morning."

Suddenly the trestles collapsed and poor Murphy was on the floor. "What are we going to do now" says Riley, "The trestles are not strong enough to take Murphy's weight!" "No problem," shouts Paddy, "We'll put a chair at each end and a chair in the middle!" - "Good idea," says Riley and shouts, "Three chairs for Murphy," and everybody shouts back, "Hip hip hurray."

**CINEMA** - I went to the pictures last week and the man behind said, "Sit down in front." I said, "I can't, I don't bend that way!"

**SLIMMING** - Lottie had a craze a few years back. She tried slimming on bananas and coconut fruit. She didn't lose any weight but she couldn't half climb trees.

**DOCTOR** - This woman went to the doctor. "What can I do for you." he said. "I've got a small embarrassing little wart," said the woman!" - "Well why don't you divorce him" replied the doctor.

**TRAFFIC** - We were on our way here tonight and Jim went down a One Way Street. "Didn't you see the arrows," shouted the copper, "I didn't even see the indians" replied Jim. Thanks for reading my page and I'll be with you again 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.

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

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

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

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**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.

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

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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.

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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**

