

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 54

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Welcome to Newsletter No. 54

It's hard to believe that it is four and a half years ago since Wally Cronshaw persuaded, - nay! - pestered me - to launch the N. West Newsletter. Anyway, it's all 'turned out nice again' and I'm pleased that he did. The Newsletter has played a tremendous part in bonding together the GFS members of the N. West Branches and now - as Walter Kirkland says, "It's like one big happy family!"

Well, again it's been a very active month. Crewe, Liverpool, Sale, Blackpool, N. Wales have all had full houses and new-comers Westhoughton, are gathering pace very well with around 20 regulars turning up. Tuition by Gerry Mawdsley each month is a favourite part of the programme and attracting quite a number of newcomers. One new Formby member is Glyn Mitchell who has longed to play the uke for years and never gathered the confidence to do it. However, he is now thrown into the deep-end at Westhoughton where he ably assists Gerry with the organising and stands in as compere if Gerry can't make the meeting. Glyn also plucked up the nerve to be interviewed by Manchester Radio presenter, Alan Beswick - and sang a song - and was pleased with his debut on radio. *Good for you Glyn. Alan Beswick ebbs and flows with newcomers on the scene. He either gushes all over you or tears you to pieces when you don't expect it.*



Gerry Mawdsley

ORGANISERS? Dennis Lee, Stan Watkinson and myself did a charity show last week and it was possibly the worst organised ever. One man did every job: Organiser, Artistes booking secretary, Compere, stage manager, P.A. engineer, stooge for one of the acts, and then appeared on stage in several sketches. Consequently he was dashing round the room like a 'ball with a dozen dogs after it.' Surprisingly, it all went very well, apart from the P.A. System which constantly exploded when I did my spot. Poor Dennis Lee struggled to operate the Mini-disc player, which was sited on the floor behind the stage curtain (no table available) George's mother sat behind the curtains while GF senior performed and he would say, "Ah can see thee feet Eliza!" My line would have been, "Ah can see thee backside sticking out through the curtains Dennis."

ORGANISERS? - AGAIN - Granada TV Studios have gone to pieces! It's a long boring story but the show 'Hotel Get Away' (starring GF members) is now on Saturday December 11th and only 20 seats are available. These have been reserved for our GFS actors but we are trying to fit others in if possible.

The Formby Story

Part 43 by Stan Evans

Beryl was desperately ill and consequently no longer a driving force in George's life. Since their marriage she'd been the ever reliable support who had given George 100% of her energy to push him to the top of the ladder. The Formby family all agree that Beryl was the power behind him and that without her ambitious drive he would never have made it. Their only complaint against Beryl was that 'she took him away from the family.' Apart from that they praised her to the highest, and rightly so. I wonder if perhaps there was slight envy in the family because George had a jewel in Beryl who's devotion was directed solely to one man and his career. It was her mission in life and she shared it with no other. Not even the family.



Beryl handled the money

George couldn't stand the pressure of Beryl being ill and put it all down to drink. This point of the story was featured in Alan Randall's stage show, "Turned Out Nice Again" which toured the country a few years back. They portrayed Beryl as a nasty piece of work being angry with George and shouting, "I made you what you are today." in a most irate manner. Now we are not sure if this is true or not because at around the same time, Gerry Nichols, a member of the GFS, and a press reporter at the time, was featured on The South Bank Show saying, "I rang George and Beryl and heard this very weak voice say," - "George is not here and I don't care where he is." Without doubt she was extremely ill and George was away from home. Was George a thoughtless person or did he simply run away from the situation because he couldn't stand responsibility? I prefer to think the latter but we shall probably never know!

There have been many claims regarding George that are hard for his fans to accept. He was regarded as being mean, wouldn't buy a drink, give a cigarette to anyone, and also reported that his family were 'scroungers' etc. But only when we search deeper into George can we understand him. That meanness certainly didn't apply to the George & Beryl business team because we have evidence that they raised many thousands of pounds for various charities and also bought hundreds of songs that were never used. It was as if they had great sympathy for the writers, most of whom used scraps of paper as contracts because they didn't even have headed note paper.

The meanness was with George and this was because his role in life didn't extend as far as giving as an individual. It was the mother figure of Beryl who's responsibility it was to hand out to others and George was contented with this. More Next Month.

Party Time at Crewe for Walter Kirkland by

Connie Edge. The October meeting at Crewe turned out to be a surprise party celebrating Walter Kirkland's 75th Birthday. Alice secretly arranged to lay on a special buffet for the members and it was a big shock to Walter when it was announced that the party was for him. Thelma and Betty put on the usual splendid spread which was enjoyed by all of the seventy seven members that attended.

As you know Brian was unable to attend due to having Just been discharged from hospital that afternoon and Jonathan Baddeley was sick and although Pamela made an effort to attend she came upon numerous floods on the way which made her decide that it was better for her to return home as the weather was so unpredictable. Ron Whiston although present was not able to take his usual place on stage due to injuries to his shoulders. In addition we received bad news about Fred Stevenson who was also unable to attend through illness. There will be a progress report on Fred elsewhere in this magazine.

It was good to have the legendary Jack Jones with us and we all enjoyed his performances of 'Thanks Mr Roosevelt', 'My Plus Fours', and 'The Other Side of the World' a song which is not often heard at Crewe. Brian tells me this song is unique in that the George Formby Society hold the copyright of this song. Jack was clearly popular with the Crewe audience. Lets hope we will see him again before too long.

Paul Kenny's glittering silver waistcoat put a shine on his good performance. It was nice to see Paul Elaine and Tony who hail from Whittle le Woods.

Alison Nadin made her debut at Crewe as a ventriloquist entertaining the audience who joined in the fun. Colin Wood was certainly impressed as he was heard telling somebody that "the dummy actually spoke to him saying "Right Colin when you are"! This experience was a first for Colin and he was very impressed!

Glenys Huntington was requested to perform the "Titanic" theme which was very well received by the audience.

Stan Evans embarked on a bit of Rogers and Hammerstein with "There is Nothing Like a Dame" and the audience joined in with this too and seemed to all know the words.

Carl Basford our M.C. for the night sang a new song "Delivering the Morning Milk". So far as can be remembered it has not been performed at Crewe before. Walter Kirkland persuaded Dennis Lee to join him on the stage and before Dennis knew what was going on he was performing a bones duet with Walter. What talent we have in our midst we are sure to hear more of the duo in future.

The evening was a great success and special thanks are due to all the hardworking group who helped in setting up and taking down, clearing up and performing all the little jobs that need doing during the concert. For providing transport, taking the money at the door, generously donating raffle prizes, drawing the raffle, working the sound system, organising the concert, playing the drums, brewing the tea and washing up. To all the performers and our wonderful audience who so faithfully support us. It was a great effort all round. Thanks again everybody. See you next month. Connie Edge.

Thanks Connie, - sorry to disappoint everybody regarding George's song, "On The Other Side Of The World" but when I was in the GFS editor's saddle I had a contact in the music industry who claimed that he'd carried out some research on the song and found that it had not been published. It was therefore available to anyone who wished to register it - which we did under the name of the GFS. Well eventually it turned out that the chap didn't know what he was talking about. The song had been registered by Lawrence Wright & Co.

However, to be fair to the chap, the song is not listed in either Campbell Connelly's or EMI's catalogue of GF songs and they own almost all the Lawrence Wright GF material.

Young Walter Kirkland wishes to convey all sincere thanks to all his friends who celebrated with him a Happy Birthday at the Crewe Meeting. From now on he will be knocking the years off.

Walter adds that it is wonderful to know that we are one big happy family in the George Formby Society. *Thank you Walter. I must admit that you are looking younger than ever. We could all do with a bit of whatever Alice is doing for you! You are looking more like a star every time you get up on stage. Keep going lad and the very best of health.*

Brian writes - Stan, you were asking for the oldest member in the North-west, well what about Matthew Kelly? He must be 87 years of age and still going strong. (Cliff Royle claims that Matthew is 86 years of age)

Brian also wishes to thank everyone who sent cards, telephoned, or visited him after his recent short stay in hospital. Everyone was wonderfully supportive - which is typical of the George Formby Society.

S.O.S - Mr Bottomley on 0161 429 9828 is looking for a speaker to talk on George Formby for the Bramhall (Manchester) Probus Club. These Probus talks are usually held during a mid-week afternoon. Expenses are usually paid.

Cliff Royle by Brian Edge

Cliff Royle was born in Flixton in 1922. During the war he performed Fire Watching Duties with the world famous L.S. Lowry the artist famous for his matchstick men. Always a great walker, runner and cyclist he cycled all the way to France a couple of years ago in aid of the Poppy Day Appeal.

He has always liked writing and a few years ago he penned an excellent book covering his young life in Flixton indeed a remarkable document of social history packed with superb contemporary photographs.

He is a long serving member of the North Wales Branch from their early days and is also a regular visitor to the Crewe Society. His long enthusiasm for the ukulele is now paying off as he now performing better than he ever has.

The Best of Cliff's Quotes.

"I might be in my mid seventies but I've still got two ambitions. One is to do the split stroke and the other is to make love to a lady policeman in uniform." My wife says that although a slow starter I can keep going all day.

Not at the same time surely Cliff

Sale's Leading Lady, Alice Cronshaw, writes -

Don't Forget our Christmas Party Dec 17th for GOOD FOOD and guests from the Orient. Dress up in your best Party Dress, Earrings, and Jewelry (and that's just the men! It will be a good night so please be there.

Fred Stevenson - Poor Fred, our popular Yodelling Singer, hasn't been feeling too well over the last 12 months and now we hear that he has been taken to hospital after having a stroke. Latest news from Brian is that he is slowly recovering. More news as it comes in. Hope you are improving Fred.

The Woes of Brian - One of the tribulations of being a Branch Organiser is when the phone rings at 2.30 in the early hours of the morning.

"Hello" - "That you Brian?" - "Who's that?" - "It's Alan" - "What's happened Alan, something wrong?" - "No! I'm ringing to tell you that I've just got the split stroke "You've just what? it's two o'clock in the morning!" - "Yes, I know but I just had to tell somebody."

Cliff's New Book. Review by Brian Edge.

Veteran (recycled) teenager Frodsham's Cliff Royle has again hit the headlines with the publication of his recent book which is entitled **THE FRODSHAM MILLENNIUM WALKS** a heritage trail based on the Ancient—boundaries of Frodsham . Just published by The Frodsham Town Council.



The Beating of the Bounds or Perambulations as they are known are ancient customs which are carried out in many places throughout the country. The boundary of Frodsham in 1762 covered a distance of 32 miles and that year the boundary was perambulated and a fully descriptive documentary record was made of the walk. It is a valuable piece of local history and as a millennium project the Frodsham Town Council and their Footpaths Committee agreed that the boundary perambulation should be again carried out following as near as possible to the walk of 1762 and the results of the perambulation published.

In his book Cliff reproduces a translation of the 1762 document and tells precisely how to get around the boundary which today, due to developments etc. covers a distance of 34 miles.

The walk is divided into four sections, and maps are shown along with very detailed instructions as to how to proceed and pointing out the pitfalls to avoid.

No doubt in the year 2250 someone in Frodsham will be walking the Frodsham Boundaries by carefully studying Cliff's excellent book. Those members of the public who complete the perambulation before the end of the year 2000 will receive from the Frodsham Town Council a Celebration Certificate to commemorate their historic walk. It is a well thought out millennium project and a fine book. My only observation is its lack of an ISBN number which should have been obtained as this would have helped sales and would have ensured that the booklet was deposited in the British Library, the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales and the University Libraries of Oxford, Cambridge and Trinity College Dublin. Perhaps it is not too late to effect such deposits in order to ensure that this valuable booklet will be preserved for ever and be available for those who may, in future, be interested in reading it.

Spotted by Jeffrey Formby Booth - Boots Boots on Channel 5 "Hotel Shoeshine boy GF forms musical act with scullery maid Beryl (George's real life sister). A creaking comedy 1934. (Two stars) Well, as we all know Beryl was his wife and not his sister".

Jim Murphy – Does he wear a tou pee?

Stan — Jim Murphy is annoyed at the suggestion that ukes shouldn't be played during the interval and his criticism seems to be directed at the North Wales Branch with his reference to the pasties. Ha ha Jim lad, you've got it wrong! No such "ban" has ever been imposed at Penyffordd. They try to encourage an exchange of ideas and techniques whenever possible. My opinion is that the society must not become so elitist as to frown on such activities. Jim rightly makes the point that we're a George Formby Society but then again that doesn't mean we can't have variety acts. George himself was a variety act and tried his hand at all sorts of things. If his life hadn't been cut so tragically short who knows what he might have got up to? He'd probably have been in Coronation Street and almost certainly Dad's Army! I think he might have turned down a part in the Royle Family though!

Anyway I'm convinced that Jim's article was just a wind- up to encourage more variety acts. Why do I say that? Think about it. Anybody who dresses up as the Shiek of Araby, Adolf Hitler, a war wounded soldier and a playboy in a straw hat and striped blazer must love music hall. In addition to that I've heard he's recently taken up the drums and is threatening to take them to Penyffordd. You've been rumbled Jim so if you don't relent then at the next meeting they're going to rip off all your buttons and paint a yellow stripe down your back! Ali Ben Fez – Somewhere Out In The Middle East. *Thank you Mr Ali Ben Fez. It is very kind of you to take the trouble to write to us from such a long distance. We hope you are having some good weather out there.*

Back To The Old Days! – Now, it's funny Ali Ben

Fez, should mention BBC TV's "The Royle Family." Personally I had no inclination to watch the show but Eva shouted me in to come and watch a particular scene from the last episode. What a delight it was to watch Rick Tomlinson play his 5 string banjo and sing "Granddad's Flannelette Night-shirt." He sang it very well and it took me back to the old days, before TV, when members of the family would gather round the piano and sing. His song was followed by another person singing the full version of "I'll Take To Home Again Kathleen" which also went down very well. Great!!!

Liverpool member **Paul Corbett** is appearing on BBC2 "The Shopping City" Monday to Friday 4.30pm. The shows will run from the 29th November for 7 weeks (break for Xmas). Paul will talk about being a member.

Best Night ever at Blackpool!!! – About 40

caravans turned up and parked on the cricket field and at night they packed into the clubhouse to be entertained. We were bit thin on the ground for players however 6 of us popped on and off the stage until we'd exhausted the audience.

TRACY DAWSON – Like a breathe of fresh air Tracy, Les Dawson's wife, came in with her daughter, Charlotte, and after a few minutes she was up on stage singing her heart out with "Bananas." She is a delight to have with us and always has a very pleasant smile.



What a surprise when 8 year old Ben picked up the uke for the first time. Within a few seconds he was picking out all the popular chords as if he'd been playing for months. Good for you Ben. Keep on practising.



Steven

Alan Newton - Crewe's ray of sunshine, writes,

Can anyone advise me on strengthening a finger nail because the constant playing of the uke is wearing it down to the state where it is getting difficult to play. Having tried the following suggestions, I am still desperate for a practical solution: Red nail polish, hand dipped in Dennis Lee's uke case, soaking in vinegar, dipping in custard or mustard, lighting match under index finger nail, holding severed nail towards a full moon. And they are supposed to be friends! Ignore them all Alan. My grandson had the same problem when he was 10 years of age (his finger nail was 90). He appeared on TV with strings of New Skin streaming away from his finger end. The answer is to fit Black Strings made by Galli, an Italian company. Alan Harris sells these strings. 5 sets £10. Tel. 01132 688618



Alan

Black strings are slightly softer than the clear ones and don't give out as harsh a sound but they are easier on the finger nail. In the meantime, until the index finger nail recovers, you should practise with the middle finger and don't clout the strings so hard. Your uke is your friend, - not your enemy.

FEATHER THE STRINGS - Quite a number of players suffer from this problem because they don't play like George did. During the vocals you can hardly hear George's uke. He feathered the strings with the side of his thumb until he came to the solo, and then he really belted out the sound. At some meetings the strings are belted so hard you can hardly hear the words. WHY do we do it?

P.S. I've just noticed that the GFS shop sells Black Strings.

Ace Reporter Cliff Royle Replies to Jim Murphy (I'll bet you're sorry you started this aren't you Jim?)

Dear Stan, I should like to *respond* to Jim Murphy's letter in the Newsletter by saying that, while I generally agree with his thoughts, it is essential that we take a balanced view otherwise we are likely to lose some players and visitors. Unfortunately it is not possible to please everyone. There seems to be a couple of aspects of concern.

Firstly. While performers are on some people continue to talk; and a few others sing and play and accompany. I would make a plea that all these aspects be "discouraged" except where the artiste has requested it. Background chatting and playing may put the artiste off, although support when one forgets the words etc. is invaluable and is acceptable, we must support learners.

Secondly. Players, and Learners will lose a lot if playing prior to the meeting and during the interval (but not between turns) is discouraged, However I suggest that such playing be of a tuition nature rather than a free for all. Any playing could of course be encouraged in a separate room if one was available. However there should be no playing in the main room during the announcements or the raffle. The real solution is obviously to be reasonable otherwise the Society will not continue to flourish. We must remember that all those who attend our meeting may not wish to have Ukcs playing all evening. These are my personal views and intended to alienate anyone. Cliff Royle.

Beryl (E Mail) Eissens Replies

– Beryl is now established again as a Radio Presenter in Australia and loves to keep George's flag flying over there.

Looking at the recent issue 53 you are very busy. Thanks for the laughs, they keep the spirits up..

Just a few comments...page 6 Dennis Lee's story about the cat, that didn't sit on the mat!!!

Poor Dennis is sad, Such a shame cos after all he's such a nice lad
But when Moggie - makes his uke case soggy, And Lesley nearly heaved
He was more than just pee -ved, Cos Moggie was relieved.

Page 7. Support Needed. Hope Connie got her Corsets. This story reminded when after a New Years binge, my sister passed out. To enable her to breath, her hubby undressed her to put her to bed but she was wearing one of those all in one corsets, - which were popular in the late 50's. He couldn't undo the laces, so he took to it with a bread knife. My sister woke up during this operation and can you imagine the scene. PS. they are still married after 40 years and still

laugh at it. Mind you, she never wore " stays " again....

Page 16 - SOS You're right there with the poem, it is also known as the Crabbit Old Woman and here is a Nurses Reply which I thought you might like to read. .

...

What do we see, you ask, what do we see?

Yes, we are thinking when looking at thee!

We may seem to be hard when we hurry and fuss,

But there's many of you, and too few of us.

We would like far more time to sit by you and talk,

To bath you and feed you and help you to walk.

To hear of your lives and the things you have done;

Your childhood, your husband, your daughter, your son.

But time is against us, there's too much to do -

Patients too many, and nurses too few.

We grieve when we see you so sad and alone,

With nobody near you, no friends of your own.

We feel all your pain, and know of your fear

That nobody cares now your end is so near.

But nurses are people with feelings as well,

And when we're together you'll often hear tell

Of the dearest old Gran in the very end bed,

And the lovely old Dad, and the things that he said,

We speak with compassion and love, and feel sad

When we think of your lives and the joy that you've had,

When the time has arrived for you to depart,

You leave us behind with an ache in our heart.

When you sleep the long sleep, no more worry or care,

There are other old people, and we must be there.

So please understand if we hurry and fuss -

There are many of you, and too few of us.

GRANADA TV has just phoned they want people who can talk about their favourite female star like Diana Dors, Monroe, Lamour, Bardot etc. If you've got one give me a ring.



**This
beautiful
young lady is
waiting for a night
out with Geoff Shone.
Turn the picture
over to see how she
went on.**

Keep up the good work Stan. Our new radio station is running now so GF is being kept alive here. We hope to be full time on air soon. The test period is nearly over. *Thanks for the E Mail Beryl. Dennis is still wearing that "Why did that damn moggie pick on me" look and before every meeting he is searching on his hands and knees looking for cats. It has become an obsession with him! I tried to console him by telling him that it could have been much worse! "Look on the bright side" I said, "You are very lucky it wasn't an elephant." He wasn't pleased!*

Small World – You'll never believe it but I asked Dennis Lee if he would like to join Stan Watkinson and I to make up a small concert party to put on a charity show at the Burtonwood Catholic Club to raise some money for them. "Well I'm free on the night but I'll see if Lesley has booked anything.

Now, Dennis & Lesley live about 30 miles from Burtonwood so I thought it might be a bit far just for one spot. Anyhow, an hour later Dennis rang and said, "You'll never believe it but Lesley is performing on the same bill, - what a coincidence!" It's a small world.

Arthur Henson (Stage name **Mike Henson**) called in today. He has performed many years as a comedian and now wishes to perfect his uke playing with the aid of a few of George's songs and backing tapes.

Many years ago, Arthur was a policeman in Salford and thoroughly settled in his job, until one night when he was badly beaten up. This caused him to eventually leave the force to become a chauffeur for the Daily Express Newspapers in Manchester. At that time he was writing comedy scripts for other comedians. One night, at a party, he decided to have a go himself at telling the jokes and was surprised when he raised quite a lot of laughs. From there he entered all the talent competitions in the area and eventually became a professional entertainer.



Since then Arthur (now Mike) has appeared on stage in Russia, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey for English and American audiences, until the demise of the clubs. He then decided to go back into the police force until he retired three years ago. He now has a motor home and travels to Spain and Portugal where he tells his jokes and struggles through a uke finish.

His ambition now is to perfect his uke playing and polish up his act. *Mike has just phoned to say that he is completely over the moon with his backing tapes and he's surprised himself with the added quality of his playing. Good for you Mike. We wish you all the very best with your playing.*

Trip to Eastbourne - If interested ring Stan Evans

YOO DIRTY RATS!" *from Dennis 'BabyFace' Lee*

A reminder that the Penyffordd meeting on the first Friday in December (3 /12 /99) will be our Christmas Party Night. As usual we're planning a super buffet and everybody is invited. This year's fancy dress theme is GANGSTERS AND MOLLS and we're hoping everyone will support it. So come on all you budding Jimmy Cagney's and Edward G's, it doesn't take a great deal of imagination or expense to come up with a decent costume (if you need any ideas have a word with "Pretty Boy" Jim Murphy - he's the biggest crook in the business!) We're relying on the women (sorry Cliff, this doesn't include you!) to come up perhaps with bird of paradise hats, strings of beads and other items from the 20's and Charleston eras. The prize for the best entry will be a bottle of bootleg whisky. If you own a video camera please bring it along.

John Guy has sent in a short piece of tuition to help anyone who is learning to play the Melodies on the uke. **HOW TO PLAY THE EIGHT NOTES OF A SCALE:-**

B Flat	F7th	A"	F	F7th	E Flat	F7th	B Flat
1st Fret	1st	5th	6th	8th	10th	10th	10th

Now if you have any problems understanding the above scale you can ring John on 0121 523 3164. *Thanks John.*

Frankie Wood's

songs are being aired at the N. West meetings and Dennis Lee intends using "Roll Up The Curtain" to open all their meetings - (and "Roll Down" to close). Listening to his own songs Frankie was stamping his hands and clapping his feet.

FLATTENED EGO - Alison also sang one of Frankie's songs which explained why a turkey doesn't have a happy Christmas. She sang this with Brian Edge who felt really pleased with his first performance

of the song. However his ego was soon deflated when someone in the audience said, "Alison has performed with some wonderful puppets but that one was a bloody ugly looking thing". *Ignore em Brian - they're only jealous!*



C Robin Brown recalls happy memories. . .

My father Henry Telford Brown was the Manager of the Capitol Cinema in Sheffield. He and my mother Violet organised many Sunday concerts for charity during the war years of 1939-45.

Many of the stars of the day like Tommy Handley, Vic Oliver, Issy Bonn, Cyril Fletcher, and many many others. But there was one big star who came and, unlike the others who charged around £150 - a very large sum in those days for an evenings work, gave his services completely free. My dad had tried to contact George many times until one evening when I, a boy of about 12, was with my Dad in his office at the cinema when the telephone rang and dad answered it. I heard him say " George ? George who ? " It was the man himself phoning up saying he would agree to come to Sheffield from Leeds to do the concert. He said he didn't want a fee - only that his expenses be paid for him and his wife. My dad agreed but later said that he wondered what the "expenses" would be.

This was about 1944 and George Formby was the highest paid British film star, but as promised he arrived at the LMS railway station in Sheffield that Sunday morning. The stationmaster knew where he was on the train and had planned for his carriage to stop directly opposite an exit from the station, which was away from the main entrance where thousands of fans were waiting to see the great guy. The train stopped exactly as planned and out stepped George and Beryl to great cheers but wouldn't be ushered to the exit. He obviously saw the crowds further up the platform and waved to them, we think this was to show them which way he was going.

While all this was going on, his three uke's were given to me to watch over. I promptly took them out of the station to our car and waited there. A few minutes later my dad came running up to the car, obviously very upset, and looked inside the car and said " Thank God they're safe" meaning the three ukuleles. Apparently there was a big panic on as they thought someone had pinched them. George and Beryl came out of the station and into a car to take them to my mother and dad's home just behind the Capitol Cinema, at Sheffield LaneTop. There were crowds all along the way. Nobody really believed he would come so it was a relief - especially to my Dad - that he had finally arrived.

My Mum gave them a lovely traditional "Yorkshire" dinner. George even commented on it from the stage - "I've had a lovely dinner at Violet Browns house - beautiful Yorkshire puddings with smashing onion gravy - it was great". I remember him so well that day. He really enjoyed himself.

There was to be a concert in the afternoon around 3 pm and another in the evening about 7pm. In between the performances it was a habit of my parents to organise a buffet in the upstairs waiting room lounge. It was a large room and

usually divided in two by heavy curtains. The directors and stars on one side, with the rest - non stars, staff and band using the other side. My dad had also arranged that to have a dozen serving soldiers present just to meet the great guy. As soon as George found out - he took the soldiers with him into the "other side" and entertained them with stories and songs. He obviously preferred to be with them than stuffy old directors and wives etc. My dad often said he didn't think Beryl was happy with what he had done but he certainly wanted it that way.

After George gave his second performance, the Directors of the Cinema presented him with a Sheffield penknife for which -as tradition dictates - he must give a penny. He didn't have even a penny and had to ask Beryl for it - all this on stage.

The directors knew he had a pet charity - the Fleetwood (trawlers) Widows and Orphans Fund, so they also gave him a cheque for £100 (a considerable sum 60 years ago) for that fund. (Photo copy included showing my Dad in evening suit) All in all a most memorable day with one of the greats - and the expenses ? he said "give me £15 quid and that's all - I am taxed at 19 shillings and 6



pence in the pound (today, that's 97 and a half pence in the pound !!) so I am happy with £ 15. I think they gave him a bit more than that but he was true to his word though. My Dad always thought that Beryl was 'in charge all the time, but as she put him at the top perhaps she deserved to be.

My Dad and Mum have both gone now but of all the time they spent at the Capitol -from 1939 to 1955- their biggest thrill was the day "our George" came for nowt. I am retired now but hope this is of some interest to your members , please let me have some details of the society if you will, and in closing wish you every good wish. Yours sincerely, C.Robin Brown.

Trip to Eastbourne - 12th to 19th August 2000. Give me a ring if you are interested. We have changed the coach company and they have invited us along to inspect their fleet at Maine Coaches, Battersby Lane, Warrington.

Alison Nadin - I asked her if she would let me have a list of the song wrote by Frankie Woods for the Newsletter. Within a few hours an E Mail arrived on the computer with a page full of Frankie's songs. Altogether, if the list was complete, he has written 113 songs. Well he must have been a very busy lad in his career days! Good for Frankie, we are looking forward to hearing them.

Brian Edge writes - DONALD PEERS - In 1927 Donald was working in Lowestoft where he made his humble beginning in show business. Watching a concert party he noticed a ukulele player doing very well and decided he could do the same. He got an audition and a job at £3 per week and was billed as 'Donald Peers and his Ukulele.'

CHARLIE CHESTER - That irrepressible character Charlie Chester, also as a young man, put on a funny hat and played the ukulele along with a few jokes. He won a South London Talent Final which started him off on a roller coaster circus.

Apparently the ukulele has played a big part in variety show business.

1999 Trip - EASTBOURNE

- After some hold-ups we have finally landed a good offer:- Seven days in sunny Eastbourne, with plenty of Busking, a chance to join in the R.A.F Display Week, and hopes of being able to hire a hall to put on a concert. Sounds Great!!! More news as it comes in. Edmund Kennedy of 4 Anderson Close, Warrington WA2 0PG - Tel 01925 491964 has taken on the job of Treasurer so please either hand deposits to me or send to Edmund. Cheques payable to E Kennedy.

A deposit of £20 must be paid immediately to secure the whole 25 room hotel.



Edmund

Bill Pope - We regret to report that Bill has been taken into hospital with stomach cancer. He is in the Intensive Care Unit, Fazakerley Hospital, Liverpool 9. Bill, a keen member of the Liverpool Branch, travelled with us on our French and Southern Ireland trips and was keen to join us on our next trip to Eastbourne. During the French trip he brought the house down when we entertained the War Veterans in Caen. He sang a couple of songs with his guitar and treated them to a few jokes. They loved him!

Penyfforddd Meeting by Star Reporter Cliff Royle

In spite of Bonfire Night we again had an excellent attendance, with some new visitors and the welcome support from Sale and Crewe. It was a great evening that finished just before midnight. Jim Knight returned having spent time tending to the needs of poorly relations and did his usual excellent job as M.C. Ray Davies re-appeared from hibernation saying he is now doing Disco and Karaoke entertainment, and Brian Harrison put in a short, non playing appearance. We were all delighted to see Brian Edge and Charlie Penman back on form after their hospitalisations. Charlie gave his usual friendly barracking so he must be O.K.

Brian Edge and Alison Nadin did a rendition of Frankie Wood's song, "Why Can't a Turkey Have a Happy Christmas." It is great to see the ladies "perform", for as well as Alison we have Connie Edge and Pam Baddeley also doing their bit on the stage. If I were bold enough to highlight some parts of the evening I would include Dennis Lee and his new cowboy song, Jack Jones's chat about his boyhood days and how he started playing the uke, and Walter Kirkland with his acrobatic playing of the bones. There were also excellent performances by our youngsters Frank and Stephen. Stan Evans did his variety act which included the bad news about the next holiday and even badder news on the trip to Granada Studios.



Frankie Woods

It would seem, as Dennis Lee commented, that some variety in our evenings, makes them even more enjoyable occasions. In the near future we hope to have the services of a key-board player for some good old sing-alongs.

We now have a new song, written by Frankie Woods, titled "Ring Down The Curtain" to both open and close the evening. It was ably initiated by Alison & Dennis. Frankie had great talent in entertaining and writing songs, and what is pleasing is that he passes his talent on to others, particularly to Alison.

Hope no one is offended by being left out; I do try to give everyone a "spot" eventually, taking into account space available.

GUYS & DOLLS - Don't forget our Christmas Party on 3rd December and come in your fancy dress. A buffet is being laid on and any offers of food will be appreciated. Offers to Lesley Lee please. Cliff Royle - with a weak ribbon.

Thanks Cliff. I don't like the title for the Christmas Party! It should be Chaps and Dolls, or Blokes or fellers, anything but the DREADED GUYS which is banned here at The Hollies. We are British!!! "Land Of Hope an. . . and all that! Like young Frank Murphy says, It's Wonderful To Be British!" Good for you Frank. At least I've got one ally in my solo campaign to stay sanely British.

S. O. S. from Kath Hammond. Kath, from over the border in Sheffield, is looking for a song by Stanley Holloway titled "Dark Lady Dressed in Blue." and goes on to report that if you tune in to the local radios on Monday evenings between 7 and 10pm Frank Wappit plays music from the 30s, 40s and 50s. "Last week" she says, "He played a song by ex-boxer Tommy Farr which was introduced by George Formby. I think it was called Remember Me." she added.

You are right Kath. "Remember Me" is the title. Apart from being the heavyweight champion, - who fought Joe Louis for the world championship - Welsh born Tommy also claimed he was a singer and attempted to prove it by performing at many of the various functions. However, you can hear the difference between him and George on this record. Tommy sounded like a raw amateur while George accompanied with his uke like a polished professional. No match for our George.

Martin Bourke E. Mails - On behalf of my son Steven. First to say thanks for a good night in Broadgreen. Steven wants a ukulele for his Christmas present so the usual Newsletter S.O.S. for one suitable for a beginner would be appreciated. Tel No. 0151 280 1512.

Steven doesn't play out in the street like other kids his age due to learning disability affecting his understanding on road safety. He spends a lot of time playing in the house playing the drums (with continental quilts stuffed in them to deaden the sound), playing his electric guitar and trying to sing, piano and organ and also attempting to play the recently acquired long armed banjo.

He has a club called Calder Kids where he takes along lot of his musical equipment. He enjoys setting the equipment up and could watch a group for hours just setting up. We have been amazed at how he has taken to the George Formby fans night in Broadgreen once a month. It has been a great confidence builder for him getting up on stage. Its almost come to a point where you can't get him off the stage.

Tactfully done Stan. Martin Bourke. *Many thanks for your E Mail Martin. We are delighted to help Steven get up on stage and entertain. The first time we invited him up he panicked and shut himself away. However, he now gets up with us and thoroughly enjoys it. SO HAS ANYONE GOT A SPARE UKE FOR STEVEN???* Come on, the young lad is keen to learn!



Young Steven's got tons of rhythm in him. He needs a uke. to play

Harry's Half Page - Here we are again folks all ready with a few more 70 year old jokes for you -

FIRE - Did you hear about the man who had two wooden legs? One day his house caught fire and he called the fire brigade. They saved the house but he was burned down to the ground.

RUSTLERS - Did you hear about the two cowboys who went to a fancy dress ball dressed as packets of crisps. They were both arrested for rustling.

HAIRCUT - This young man was fed up of having his hair cut in the usual way so he asked the barber to put the part from side to side. Which he did. Two weeks later he called in again to ask the barber to put it back as it was originally. "Why?" said the barber, "Don't you like the style?" "Well, it's not that" said the young man, "But I'm fed up of people whispering up my nose."

DOG LICENCE - There was a knock on the door and it was a man from the town hall. "Have you got a licence for your dog" - "No!" - "Why not?" - "Because I can't afford one" - "Well you'd better have one before I call round tomorrow otherwise you are for the high jump."

The following day he knocked on the door again, - "Don't worry, I've bought a dog license." - "Where did you get the money from?" - "I sold the dog!"

Judith Townsend replies to THE GOOD OLD Uns - -
- - Who is the oldest member in the society.

My Father, Maurice Harrison, aged 82 is a family member of the GFS. Although not a uke player he is a regular supporter at the Sheffield Branch meetings.

During the war he served in the R.A.M.C. 29th General Hospital which was formed at Edge Hill Training College, Ormskirk in 1940. They often had entertainers from E.N.S.A. or the theatre at Southport to give concerts for the patients.

One week it was George Formby (Dad thinks it was sometime in 1941 as they were posted abroad later) At the end of the show Dad had to help carry some stretcher patients back to the wards and was able to meet both George and Beryl who had stayed behind to talk to these patients. He asked George if he had enjoyed his recent trip to Iceland. He said, "Yes, " but that he would make a rotten sailor as he had been as sick as a dog on the return trip.

A friend of Dad's, who was a Quartermaster Sergeant, spotted that George's great coat was the wrong size for him so he changed it for a better fitting one from the unit stores. Best Wishes, Judith Townsend. *Many thanks Judith. Always nice to hear from over the border. Keep sending em in.*

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.

Sal - 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

