

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 58

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Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
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Welcome to Newsletter No.58

and once again we are pleased to report that all the meetings are prospering very well. The sale of Newsletters is rising each month which is a good sign and more calls have been coming in for ukes, tapes and songsheets. Great!

War Front - Charles & Eve Stewart sent in a couple of post cards from the war front from "The Boys" of the George Formby Company, C/o O.C. E.F.I. Entertainments, GHQ B.E.F. on the 17th March 1940. They were sent by Harry Wheeler who was the pianist in the band and addressed to his friend Harold. (Harold's daughter, Christine kindly sent them in)

Dear Harold, Just a P.C. to let you know that we are doing fine and everything has gone well up to now. We are very sorry you are not with us because you would have enjoyed it. By the way if you receive this before Wednesday you will be interested to know that we will be on the air. You will recognise our speciality "Solitude". We hope you are OK and we are looking forward to being together again as we really have missed you over here.

SECOND CARD - 25th March 1940 - Still going strong in France. The weather is mixed. We are getting a good reception here and "The George Formby Boys" are a treat to play with. We wish you were here with us - we could have knocked em cold! Still we can't grumble - we will be dragging you along next time if the chance comes again. Yours, Harry Wheeler.

Our thanks to Mrs Christine Lancaster, of York, for giving us the opportunity to publish the cards.

Llandudno - The Annual Llandudno Extravaganza is to be held during Sat and Sun the 29th and 30th of April and Monday 1st of May and as usual Dennis Lee will be performing with Kevin Blanchfield and Ray Davies in the street where a stage is set up for them.

Stan & Les Watkinson will be parked a few hundred yards away on a caravan park at the Transport Rally and we have been invited to perform there in the large marquee.

Mind you I don't suppose that Ray will have time to play at the Extravaganza because he is having an extravaganza of his own. After waiting umpteen years to have their first child the Davies family are now expecting their second.



Happy father
Ray Davies

The Formby Story

Part 47 by Stan Evans

What a strange world it was for George. Throughout his 37 years of marriage he'd left all the business and financial arrangements to Beryl to the extent that I doubt if he knew what a cheque book was. He'd never had the need to sign a cheque and as evidence of this I looked through George's Suitcase to find that every cheque book stub was in Beryl's handwriting. But now, after the loss of Beryl, his safe and secure business world had fallen apart.



Having had dealings with members of George's family I found that there was certainly a lack of trust in outsiders who entered their family orbit. Even the Good Samaritan would be treated with great suspicion. It may have stemmed from GF senior who knew what hunger was and had to protect himself from anyone stealing his possessions from him. From tales I have heard however, George's mother, Eliza, was of a more generous nature.

With this trend running through the Formby family, George would naturally be suspicious of outsiders looking after his affairs. He wouldn't entertain the idea of hiring a financial manager because of his lack of trust, plus the fact that he would pick up on the amount of cash stored in the house. So the answer was to bring in a new wife who could be trusted and Pat Howson fitted the bill perfectly.

A few weeks after Beryl's death George announced that he was to marry Pat and they were to live at White Lodge, a Georgian mansion at Lea, nr Preston. George gave Pat a diamond engagement ring.

According to the female members of the family, George was making mistakes. He bought a new smoke green Bentley car, GF 1, without Beryl's guidance, and they told him that green was not a Formby colour and therefore he would have no luck with it. Although, with Pat at his side, he appeared to be a very happy man, he was certainly a very lonely soul within. He was a very good actor and could raise a smile at the drop of a hat. But the strain was telling on him and he found difficulty in walking without taking pills to calm him down.

At a dinner at Pat's home in Preston he complained of stomach pains. A doctor was called and he was immediately taken into St Joseph's Hospital. After the news broke 100 letters a day poured in and all but the immediate family and Pat were allowed to visit him. Two 10 year old boys arrived with fruit and were disappointed to find that they were not allowed to see him. More Next Month.

Michael Daly writes . . . My late grandfather, who was a Beat Bobby in Birkenhead from 1901 to 1925 used to relate a story to me about George Formby Senior, who was George Formby's father.

My Grandfather's beat covered Hamilton Street, Birkenhead, upon which was sited The Argyle Theatre. One night when the crowds had gone, and Grandfather was standing outside the theatre, who should come out of the stage door but George Formby Senior.

Apparently they had a chat and a smoke, and Formby Senior's comment to my Grandfather as he departed - walking - off down the street was, "And tomorrow sees another day and another town."

Funnily enough my Grandfather had a similar conversation with Harry Lauder, who said, "We've a long way ahead of us yet constable!" Lord knows how many cigarettes my old Granddad smoked with celebrities of the variety stage. I wish I'd spent more time listening to him but it's a sad fact of life that when you are ready to listen they've gone. Michael Daly.

Spare a Thought for Margaret Royle

Ever pleasant Margaret, who sits on the door to greet all the Penyffordd members with a cheery smile, has been feeling down in the dumps lately and things have gone worse since she had a fall at home.



Although Margaret is moving about a bit she doesn't seem to be able to shake the blues off. So, in your quiet moments give our Margaret a few happy thoughts in the hope that she is soon back to her usual self. Thank You. We wish you all the very best Margaret and look forward to seeing you back at the meetings.

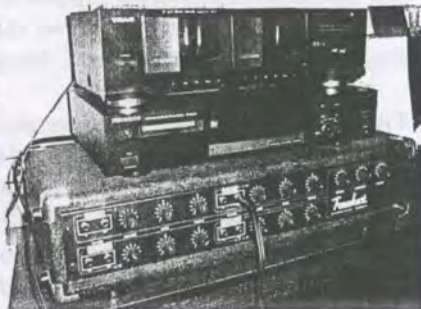
P.S. I hope Cliff is keeping you entertained with his jokes.



George & Gracie at a charity function Des Redfern accompanied Warrington's own Gracie Fields look and singalike, Ethel Guest who, nearing her 80s, can still reach the high notes and burst a few ear drums. Ethel will be with us at the Blind Society on Thursday 30th March. Any others interested in coming can give me a ring.

Setting Up P.A. Equipment by Dennis Lee Some Tips on Amplification Systems.

When the North Wales Branch was inaugurated nearly 7 years ago I knew absolutely nothing about sound systems. After a great deal of trial and error and many hours of picking the brains of experts I thought it might be useful to pass on some of what I have learned. Much of what follows will be self-evident and I hope I will be forgiven for stating the obvious.



INITIAL SETTING UP Throughout your concert most performers will need to approach your system operator with their backing tapes. It makes sense therefore to place your operating system to one side of the room away from the stage. This avoids any interference with a performer on stage at the time.

It is preferable to have one dedicated person operating the equipment. Over a period of time this person will become expert in recognising each players individual requirements.

Feedback (whistle sound) is caused by the speaker sound being picked up by the microphone, so to avoid feedback the microphones should be on a level or behind the speakers, never in front.

Speakers should be sited well off the floor or on stands if necessary.

Each speaker will be connected to its own output at the rear of the amp. I find the best configuration of equipment to be: Tape deck output to minidisc input. Minidisc output to amplifier input. If you do it this way remember when playing tape you must remove disc and press the red record button on the minidisc prior to pressing the play button on the tape deck. All wires should be routed to take account of safety considerations.

Ensure the next performer gives his tape/disc to the operator in plenty of time and is sat next to the operator ready to go on. This leads to smooth running of the concert. Any tape should be wound on to the appropriate starting point.

Manufacturers recommend that the Master Volume on amplifiers should be set at a level (try 12 o'clock or higher) which enables individual channel volumes to be kept low. MORE ON AMPLIFIERS NEXT MONTH.

Packed House at Blackpool - Charles and Eve Stewart are pleased with the crowds turning up at the South Shore Cricket Club. Every month we see a batch of new faces and they all enjoy the show.

JIM BRAMWELL - Jim topped the bill, as usual, with his jokes and you could hear a pin drop when he's up on stage. "Hello Folks" you'll hear him shout, and then goes on with his patter. They love him!

PAUL KENNY first made his debut at Blackpool some 3 years ago so this is classed as his home ground. Paul took the stage and soon had them all laughing with his ad lib nonsense and they all joined in. He is progressing very well with his playing and someday there will be nobody to touch him if he keeps progressing at the same rate. Once Paul masters the art of singing he will be a very good entertainer. He's got tons of nerve! We are all very pleased for you Paul.

ALAN MIDDLETON, with his old Lancashire comedy songs was a treat to listen to and he delivers the accent perfectly. "Snotty Annie" serving chips in her fish & chip shop came over great. Carol, Alan's wife, as usual, put on a good performance digging raffle tickets out of the bucket and making sure that nobody slips through the net.

JOHN TAYLOR travels all the way from Morecambe to be with us on the night. There's one thing going for John! He is very dedicated and his uke playing has improved consistently month by month over the past years! He works very hard perfecting the strokes. The ladies always put on a great display of butties, cakes etc. and Charles and Steve hump all the equipment. It's a grand night at Blackpool.

IMPORTANT NIGHT - Don't forget the **BLACKPOOL SPECIAL** on **MAY 29th** (Music Live) when we hope to have the BBC covering our concert. We don't want any hiccups on that night!

S.O.S. Does anyone know the words and music to "One potato, two potato, three potato, four?" I believe it goes something like: "If you come into my garden, promise you won't laugh. You won't see any flowers, only grass" - or something like that. My granddaughter is busy writing a children's book and requires the words & music. Please let me know if you can help.

If you've got anything for sale let me know and we will advertise it free in the Newsletter. Perhaps you are looking for a particular song or something and can't find it. Drop a line and we'll try to find it for you.

Young Ben is Hitting the Press!

Eight year old Ben Hallewell of the Blackpool Branch is every minute singing George's songs and learning to play the uke. Ben turns up with his grandfather every month and looks forward to getting up on stage.



His mum, Sarah, said, "Ben first became interested in George Formby when his grandfather Frank was listening to one of his George Formby tapes. As soon as Ben heard it he said that he would like to play like George and it has gone on from there. He started to learn to play the ukulele and it came so natural to him. He is going from strength to strength. *Keep practising Ben.*

Good News for the Roly Pollies.

JAPAN - Thanks to modern technology, a Tokyo karaoke company is offering a brand new system that lets singers calculate how much energy they are burning off as they sing.

Top of the weight-loss pops is Whitney Houston's "Greatest Love Of All" which burns off 15.5 calories. Mind you, you'd still have to sing it around 200 times to lose one pound of surplus fat.

George's 78s For Sale - Mrs S Moore of 45 Stirling Crescent, Marshall's Cross, St Helens WA9 3TY has got three of George's 78s for sale in good condition. They are: "Blue Eyed Blonde" & "Dan The Dairy Man" - "Lamp Post" & Hi Tiddley Hi Ti Island" - and "Granddad's Night-shirt" & "Mr Wu's a Window Cleaner" Mrs Moore will probably have no idea of value and will be looking for guidance.

Wigan Pier - Dennis Lee and I have just visited the pier to check up setting up arrangements for the "Lancashire ('Laura') charity Night' and found that the pier shop had little to offer on George. We found a couple of tapes at around £10 each and an Old Wigan Book with a GF photo in. The two Georges was the best thing that ever happened to Wigan so why aren't they shouting it from the rooftops? They should have little GF statuettes, mini lamp posts, GF photos, a GF film playing for the kids and loads of other stuff. - But Nothing

Tommy Cooper & George

Les Pearson has sent in a Manchester Evening News newspaper cutting which reports that plans are afoot to unveil plaques dedicated to

Tommy and George in August. Tommy's will be displayed at the front of the Manchester Palace Theatre while George's is planned for the outside of the Opera House.



THEATRE - Also a report on a discovery at the Padgate College, Warrington. In the Derek Newton Theatre, which is used by college students, they have unearthed an orchestra pit and after a few enquiries found that the theatre was used for entertaining the American forces during the war years. They are claiming that some of the big stars performed there like: George Formby, Bob Hope, Vera Lynn, Glen Miller, Bing Crosby and many more.

Canada Hall (see above) I REMEMBER IT WELL!

The above theatre was called Canada Hall and the American forces, based at the local Burtonwood camp, went there to see the shows. During the war years Warrington was flooded with G.I.s and they had no problem bringing in all the top stars. They also commandeered the local Palace cinema every Sunday

afternoon and used it for a theatre. 12 year old Petula Clark performed there quite often. Money and food rationing was no problem with the Americans and anyone who made friends of them didn't go short



of food. At Burtonwood they had all the best gymnasium equipment and would invite the locals to make use of it.

Fred & Jessie Bailey (G & Bs Warrington friends) entertained the Yanks often and invited them to special parties. The photo shows three Americans who were taken by Fred & Jessie to Beryldene to meet George & Beryl. Jessie & Beryl can be seen in the centre background.

S. O. S. - Jim Murphy is looking for the old single play George Formby records which, if I remember correctly was played at 45rpm. Well I think you'll find some difficulty in locating any of these Jim because, according to Brendan Ryan's GF Catalogue only 8 different records were produced:- GF & His Uke 1,2 and 3 - The Ukulele Man 1 & 2 - Stepping Out With George, - Stepping Out With George Again, - Compilation Of Comedy Numbers - Plus a one sided record with "Happy Go Lucky" and "Banjo Boy." So if anyone has got any single play records to spare please give Jim a ring on 01948 830700.

More George's 78s - Is there anyone out there collecting George's 78s? I keep getting letters in the post offering them so if you are interested I will pass them on to you. Give me a ring if you want any.

Geoff Shone was hoping to organise a coach trip to the First World War Battlefields of the Somme and Flanders but he rather fears that due to lack of response from the players he will have to call it off.

Nick Saunders has written to the GFS Committee to report that he is organising a coach trip to the Isle of Man this summer and details of this will be reported in the Vellum.

Dramascope (See Page 2 in the last issue) have just replied. Thank you for your Fax. The photos were bought when I was clearing out the scenic workshops of Brunskill & Kingsman and believed to be used as references for a Delfont production of Formby that was never done. There are several shots of his house, interior, exterior, from the air, some with George & Beryl on. Also there a few of him in the Pantomime Dick Whittington, some taken of him in a world war two uniform and four taken at the Tivoli Theatre, Melbourne. There is also one of the poster from Zip Goes A Million.

I have often wondered what these might be worth to a collector, - any ideas? I hope this has been useful to you and I would be quite happy to show them to you at some point, perhaps a meeting in London. Look forward to hearing from you. Terry. *Perhaps we can organise one of the London members visiting Terry.*

Uke Banjo For Sale - Long Lost Liverpool Lad Paul Corbett has got a Melody Uke Banjo for sale. In good condition and complete with case. You can ring him on 01928 718253. Price £80.

Rough Ride - Stan Watkinson,

Jim Bramwell and myself have just had a hair-raising experience entertaining the Arts & Crafts members in Warrington. The place was packed out with silver topped ladies who were all ready for a rousing sing-along. We'd played there before and have always found them to be a great crowd to play to.

DISASTER - All the equipment set up - Mini Disc, Tape Player, Amp, Mikes, - perfect and we are all ready for the "Off" We pushed the button for the backing disc and all sounded perfect for exactly 10 seconds and then, - **DISASTER!!!** - The amp cut out and the backing music and mikes were cut off. At the same time a light came on the hall telling the crowd that there was no sound. I didn't quite see the logic in that because the audience already knew that the sound has been cut off.



Two fine figures of men marching to "The Soldiers Dream" or was it "Th - Sol - i - rs Dr - am?"

After a few seconds it came on again but lasted for one line of words only and then we were off the air again. Jim's jokes went down very well but you could only hear every other line, which sounded like Norman Collier doing his professional spot with a faulty mike. The crowds were laughing before they'd heard the punch line. Jim's patter went like this "Did you - about - - - who - - - to the - - - ? The doc - - 'Do - a - - -' and I - - - 'No."

Only those on the front row heard the jokes in full so they laughed at the punch line while all the others were laughing all the way through the joke. Like a true professional Jim carried on and they all loved him!

Stan Watkinson gave them a few sing-along medleys like "If you - - tulip - nice yellow - " and " Heart - - heart" and the silver tops filled in all the gaps. He also gave a few Elvis Pre- numbers whic- we- - down ve- well.

The lovely ladies had a good laugh and said that they'd probably enjoyed the show better than if the sound was working. The Secretary went round with the begging bowl and we raised £73 for the Wigan Pier "Laura Appeal" Show. Our thanks to the Penketh St Joseph's Arts & Crafts ladies for being good sports.

The secretary later explained that they often had problems with the sound system mains sockets because they need adjusting.

Cliff Royle - our Super Star reports on the N. Wales

March Meeting - Since the Blackpool Convention was to take place on the following two days a large attendance was not expected. However things turned out better than expected with about 50 in attendance, although we were somewhat down on the number of performers. However this did give everyone the chance to do a couple of spots, and our "Up & Comers" to perform.

Deg accompanied me on a slowed down version of "With My Little Ukulele" and then he joined in with Sheila, Alison, Steve, Dennis, Geoff, Charlie and Jim with "Lamp Post." Young Frank didn't join in because, sadly he was a bit poorly on the night.

Charlie Morrison is gradually getting into the swing of accompanying players on his keyboard (which can't be easy at first if you are not used to Formby style) and he ably accompanied the thrashes and a few others .

We were pleased to welcome a new lady member, Eve Gerrard from Chester who, although stating that she has not played for forty years, had the guts to get up on stage with the thrashes, as did our recent enthusiast Ron Houston, from Dyserth, who also claimed that he had not played for the same length of time. They must be keen as they've both bought ukes.

Crewe was represented by Steve Hassall; thanks for coming along Steve. Lesley Lee sang "I Want A Boy" (strange there were no takers) and Dennis, in disguise, performed a fun song about his namesake "Dennis the Menace."

Stan Evans came along with his invaluable shop, and rendered a few tear jerking songs. What would we do without his wit, shop, and his Newsletter? Alison Nadin of course continues to try to out-do Stan with her own "miracles" and other excellent performances. She is a credit to us.

The Ensall contingent came out in force this time. What hidden talent they have; surely Penyffordd's answer to the Spice Girls. There are Brian and brother Stephen (sang two songs each) their sister's boyfriend, Ian Mac (one song), and young Stephen who performed three Formby songs. His mother claims that he is too busy with school work to practise; just managed half an hour before the meeting. CONTINUED PAGE 12



Dennis the menace

CONTINUED - Oh to be young and modest. Some of our members recently did a spot at the Peniffordd British Legion for their St David's Day Celebrations. They performed between sessions of the Abergele Male Voice Choir and the Buckley Silver Band. It may have been a culture shock to the audience, but did they enjoy it? not arf!

Thanks Cliff. I received Cliff's letter on the Monday morning only three days after the meeting. You are a credit to the GFS young Cliff and keep up the good work. - - - Have you no more jokes?



Alison's "gockle of geer" act

Anyway Cliff, what's all this about magicians stealing my act. I hope you realise that Alison, like Paul Daniels, is only performing magic tricks while mine are God given miracles. Let me know if she starts with the "Ee Bah Gums" and "Yakky Dahs" will you?

I told you that Cliff would be putting pen to paper. Is he about to explain his Solicitors joke?

Dear Stan, Sorry that neither the Editor or some of the society members were able to understand my joke. I did, but then perhaps I have a warped sense of humour. Was the investigation carried out in a fair manner, or was it so framed and slanted as to ensure the required response as politicians do?

Anyway I am not a Solicitor, nor was I an Accountant as some have surmised in the past. Had I been one of these I would have probably been more wealthy, but perhaps never had the inclination to join and enjoy the friendship and jovial ribbing of the GFS.

Actually jobs were not easy to come by when I left school, and I landed up in the engineering industry in which I spent all my working life. I have however always been interested in writing, and figures; both kinds. Please do not report the latter as another Cliff Royle joke. Perhaps the members will not understand.

Thanks for the explanation Cliff. I hate these politicians who distort the questions and never come up with any answers. Never let it be said that I was manipulating at your expense, - NEVER! - on my grandmother's life.

I've watched you Cliff, rise up through the ranks of success ever since you visited my house and asked me what an A7 was. I will never forget that momentous occasion and I said to Eva at the time, "That man is going far." Now I don't think she understood because she replied with, "But I thought you said he lived at Frodsham."

No! Cliff. Every move I make is to enhance the qualities of my Ace Reporter and nothing would please me better than to see and hear you tell jokes better than Jim Bramwell. Alas it may only be a dream.

John Taylor

wishes to nominate

Tony & Elaine Kenny as members of our HAPPY FOLKS CLUB. John was on a course at the Hutton Police Station, Preston, where he had to stay overnight. He dropped his bags off there at around 4pm and then travelled to Blackpool for the meeting. He left at around 11pm and on his way to Preston became hopelessly lost and not a soul in sight to ask the way. It was midnight and the only alternative was to ring the Kenny's for directions from his mobile phone.



Elaine and Tony are Happy Folk!

"No problem" says Tony, and then spent the next 25 minutes directing him through every roundabout, traffic light and back alley in Preston right to his destination. "It is wonderful" says John, "that we have a society of friendly members who you can call on in time of need."

Thank you John. We are pleased to accept Tony & Elaine as members of our Happy Folks Club. If you wish to nominate someone for our Happy Folks Club let me know and send a photo. Or I may already have one. Whoever it is should be an example to us all with a cheery, happy, always smiling, outgoing nature who can pick us up when we are flat on the floor.

A Worthy Cause

- It is heartbreaking watching a young sick child who is gradually dying and has no hope of cure. It's really devastating and the memories linger with you many years after the poor child has passed on. We experienced this with young Ashley Lynch and others since, and felt so helpless at the time. The only help we could give was to raise funds to give him a few wishes before the dreaded time came.

Well, a new organisation has been set up by Linda Dozoretz who lost a 14 year old daughter. It is called "Children's Wish Foundation International" and their aim is to provide wishes for terminally ill children with trips to swim with the dolphins, meeting a celebrity pro or a visit to see Mickey Mouse. No wish, large or small, is turned down.

If you can help by entertaining to raise funds or perhaps sending a donation, please write to Linda at Acre House, 11 - 15 William Road, London NW1 3ER. It is a genuine registered charity No. 2491986.

Personally I feel that the GFS should become saviours of sick and unfortunate children. George loved kids and it would be his wish. George's Society should become known as a charity organisation instead of relying on charity from the Blackpool Council. He & Beryl had a huge image that we should follow.

All Aboard at Crewe by Brian Edge - A stranger who attended the Crewe February meeting was greeted with three cheers for it was no other than the one and only Stan Evans who has been conspicuous by his absence for the last couple of meetings. The place has never seemed the same with nobody sitting at Stan's table so it was a nice surprise for us to have him with us again. On the other hand it was a disappointment to us all the Jeff Booth (George's nephew) and Christine could not be with us as hoped. Jeff it seems had been laid low with the flu. Still there will other opportunities and they will always be welcome at Crewe.

We however had a nice surprise to make up for our disappointment and that came with the arrival of Derrick Pearce from far away Leicester. Derrick is a popular entertainer at the Blackpool Conventions and he always comes up with a speciality act of some kind. Our surprise was contained in a couple of bags the Derrick brought with him onto the stage. As he unpacked the bags he revealed several genuine souvenirs purchased by Derrick's father at the sale of George & Beryl's effects forty years ago. There was Beryl's Check Blanket, revealing George's one-piece Bathing Costume as he wore in the film, "Trouble Brewing" and his famous Kimono that he wore in the film "South American George." Fortunately George's vest and underpants were not removed from its transparent plastic bag! Derrick also proudly displayed his father's comic suit (he was also a stage entertainer) and this was complete with the Leicester "Hunters Speedway Scarf."

It was a rare opportunity for us to see these items and we thank Derrick for bringing them along. Derrick sang some nice songs for us notably the Formby number "She Can't Say No." He was impressed with his evening at Crewe and vowed to return with a car full of his friends. We look forward to that day.

Allan Newton opened the show with a Broadway Medley and his performance to my mind was exceptional. Allan is really dedicated to his uke and works continually on improving his performances. Such can also be said for a likeable Arthur Newton who is also performing very well.

Another performer who has worked really hard and is now making the grade on stage is Peter Cain. Not only is Peter's act improving but he makes his own ukuleles and backing tapes.

Charming Alison Nadin showed us another of her multi talents with a tremendous display of paper folding. During her continuous seven minutes spot she revealed so many wonderful shapes. How she remembered the dialogue and the complicated folding techniques all set to music I can't imagine but we were

certainly treated to a superb piece of theatre. Alison later said "it's a pity I can only do it once." Well for my money it is an act which can be often repeated as it full of variety and skill. Besides it is as if that is the only item in her repertoire, she is such a versatile lady, with all of her colourful puppets, her convincing ventriloquism and have you noticed that she plays the uke too?. Alison is always welcome on our stage.

Colin Wood sang a new medley and made a commendable performance and youngsters Frank and Gareth Sumner also performed well. Margaret Moran who has been attending Formby concerts for as long as I can remember is quickly re-establishing herself as the star performer that I remember. Her performances in my heart and memories - The way we were, delighted the audience. I have to report that Bacup Failed to get a mention on the night although I am not sure why that was but I am sure we will hear more from Les in the future. In all it was one of the best concerts we have produced and the sound system was excellent.

I offer special thanks to Alan Chenery, Connie, Alan Newton and to Ramon Lewis who were messed about in the afternoon of the show but bounced back in spite of considerable inconvenience to see that the hall was set up in time for your show and not forgetting Walter and Alice who also came early to see if they could help. *Thank you Brian. If you look through my old Vellums you will find a number of letters from Derrick's father, George Pearce. He was a grand chap and always full of humour. Towards the end he started losing his memory and would drop a line to ask if I'd got his Kimono which he'd misplaced. A wonderful man was George.*

He sent in photographs, which I thought were of himself, and for years I thought that he was a Claude Dampier lookalike - (do you remember Claude?). Well in the end I discovered that the photos were of Claude and George used to work with him.in panto. George also worked for ENSA during the war so he was quite a professional. He claimed also that he had the look of GF and on one occasion George Robey pointed to him in Row C, at the Bristol Hippodrome and said, "Well I declare, who have we here but the great George Formby" and the spotlight picked him out.

Anthony Mason -Backing Tapes - After the report in the last Newsletter that Anthony is free at the moment to produce Backing Tapes, he has received quite a number of phone calls. "No Problem" he said, "Give me a ring on either 01925 44877 or leave a message on my pager phone 07654 639147. If you leave your phone number and I will ring back."

Alternatively I am playing with the Jazz Band every Sunday from 11am to 4pm at Botany Bay (off the M61) Bolton, so come along to hear us and bring details of the tapes you require. Try to work out the key you require, the speed and some idea of style and I'll do you a good tape. Turned Out Nice Again!!!!

Geoff Shone rang re. Hotel Get Away. He has recognised the Sales Rep (Robert Wheelan), who's just popped into Mike Baldwin's office, in Coronation St, as the hotel owner in Hotel Get Away.

Another S. O. S. George Formby 78s -

Reg Thacker has sent in a list of Formby 78rpm records he is looking for to complete his collection. The GF Senior list is too long to publish but here is the list of GF Junior records he is looking for. If you have any GF old 78s please ring Reg on 01201 243 0441.

DOMINION

C. 347 (Re issue) Red Label. "All Going Back" - "In The Congo."

DECCA

F. 3615 (Withdrawn) "With My Little Ukulele In My Hand"
"As The Hours and the Days and the Years"

COLUMBIA

DD. 444 (Export issue) Canada "Our Sergeant Major"
"They Can't Fool Me."

REGAL ZONOPHONE

IRT. 52 "Trailer to the feature film; Keep Fit.

AUSTRALIAN Issue

G. 23443 "Mother What'll I Do Now" - "Noughts & Crosses."

G. 23742 "Hitting The High Spots Now - I Can Tell It By My Horoscope."

Jim Bramwell's got

some cheek! - On page 10 Jim is showing his knees marching to "The Soldier's Dream" with Stan Watkinson. But I assure you that in his younger days - as a Gordon Highlander - he used to show more than his knees. Jim really loved to parade up and down the square on very windy days so that he could do his speciality act of "about turn" and "the swishing of the kilt. Here we have a rare, rear shot of him.



Jim is on the left of the picture.

He received great applause from the many thousands who came to watch him perform and some of them treated him like a national hero. In fact, if ever we have a "Scottish Day Meeting" he has offered to bring his kilt along and demonstrate for us. That should bring the crowds in! Look forward to it Jim.



The News of the World reported that Cherie Blair is "Leaning On A Lamp Post at the corner of the street in case a certain little Chauffer comes by. Apparently she was having problems getting a taxi so she leaned on the lamp post while she used her mobile phone.

It's amazing how George is still remembered almost 40 years after his death. *Cutting sent in by the Kenny family.*

Who Needs Cannes?

Fireman turned Film Maker, John McCormack has revealed his burning ambition to make Manchester the place where Holywood moguls do their film deals. John is the driving force behind the Manchester International Film Festival - an event aimed at attracting, stars, movie makers and executives to stop off on their way to the more established Cannes. He said, "People don't go to Cannes to do deals, they go to party. Manchester has the fun and the business element.

IS IT AN ERROR?

The Manchester Evening News goes on to report that at the older fans will also be catered for with the screening of the George Formby films "Boots Boots" and "A Grand Life". Now I wonder if they are getting confused the song, "It's A Grand and Healthy Life"? because as far as we are aware there was no GF film called "A Grand Life." Maybe they know something we don't. *Our thanks to Les Pearson for the news cutting.*



What a Grand Cartoon.

When he was on holiday Stan Watkinson was approached by a cartoonist who wanted to do a drawing of him playing his uke. "No problem" says the lad and here is the result. What a great drawing.



And here we have the real Stan Watkinson (far left) who, along with his brother, Les, dressed up for the N. Wales Gangsters & Molls Night. How did Paul get in there? He's no gangster!

Olde Tyme Entertainment

Once again the Whitbread Area Senior Citizens Talent Competition Finals are being held at various theatres throughout the country and these shows are really well worth seeing. They have some excellent performers and it is all the old fashioned stuff. No pop music!

- On the 31st of May - Leeds, Palace of Varieties 0113 242 5045.
- 23rd May - Palace Theatre, Kilmarnock 01563 537710
- 13th June - Watersmeet, Rickmansworth 01923 896484
- 14th June - Royal Spa Leamington Spa 01926 334418
- 21st June - Grand Theatre Swansea 01792 635427



This is not an "Oscar" but an "Eric"

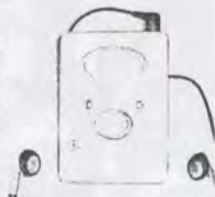
The North West Area Final is being held at the Dome Theatre Morecambe on Wednesday the 7th June at 2pm and the ticket cost is only £2.50, which is a bargain. Tel 01524 582803 for tickets. The winners of the area finals will receive not a "OSCAR" but an "ERIC" which is a small statuette of Morecambe's own Eric Morecambe. The act will then go on to the all England finals to be held at the Southport Apollo Theatre 26th July, Tel 01704 500036 for tickets.

Anyone wishing to enter these competitions should contact their local council and enquire if they are holding Whitbread Talent Competitions. You've got to be 60 years of age or over to enter.

MP3 - "never heard of it" did I hear you say? Well neither had I until my grandson conned me into buying one! "You'll be able to tap into a million songs on computer and all for the price of a phone call." Well it turned out to be the quickest £100 I've ever spent without knowing what I'm buying.

This little gadget is a small box about the size of a packet of 10 cigarettes with a pair of half inch earphones that constantly fall out of your ears. It is very much like a small tape player but far more powerful. You programme it into your computer and you have access to almost every CD or Tape on the market. "Good" I said, "Bring up George Formby" None! "Jim Reeves" - None! "Bing Crosby" - None! "Al Jolson" - None! "Josef Locke" - None! "Gracie Fields" - None! "Oasis" - half a million! So I was well and truly CONNED!!! The gadget will store up to 2 hours of music.

Apparently the young computerists are forming a kind of a music bank by depositing all their favourite tracks for anyone to tap into. One of them will buy a popular CD and then feed it into the bank for anyone with a MP3 to tap into. The music industry is very worried because it will eventually cripple them financially.



What On Earth are these N. West members up to? Well times have changed considerably here at the N. West meetings over the past few years. The meetings are still controlled by George Formby's image but other acts are invited to do their stuff as well.

As long as it is George Formby orientated and the type of act that G & B would select for their variety show then nobody is bothered and the audience welcome the change.



On the right, under the banner of the GFS, we have Dennis Lee and Alan Newton singing "Sisters" and after a quick change they appear in Scottish outfits to sing "Donald Where's Ye Troosers?" All in good fun, it adds imagination to the act and gives the more experienced players the opportunity to break away from the routine of singing "Lamp Post" and "Windows," which is ideal for beginners but after a time wears a bit thin with the experts.

Liverpool's best ever meeting. It was a grand session with a full house and plenty of players and everybody settled down to play on through the night. For the first time in about 4 years Anthony Mason came along and performed two brilliant spots with John Shreeve.



Steven Bourke

But the highlight of the night was when young Steven Bourke got up on stage and performed solo. Usually Steven is brave enough to face the crowd if he has a couple of players with him. However, on this night he stood alone and sang the Doh Ray Me song from "The Sound Of Music." He got the best applause of the night and it was very well earned. Good for you Steven, we are very pleased.

The crowd were also delighted to hear Sale's Margaret Moran who, I think, came for the first time to the Liverpool meeting.

S. O. S. Volunteers Wanted - The GFS is looking for a gang of thirsty workers to sit round a table supping coffee, swapping ideas, telling jokes, listening to George, and at the same time packing Vellum Magazines into envelopes. The rate of pay is nothing but if you keep the job up for the next 40 years they might make you an Honorary Member. If you are lucky. Any interested parties please ring Dennis Lee on 01244 544799. And make it snappy.

N. West Meetings

AS104/ASSO

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.

ASS2/ASSO LIVER

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 19 (Tues) - Brian Edge on 01270 569836.

NATIONAL

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

