

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 60

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Welcome to Newsletter No.60

Over the past couple of years big and important changes have taken place in the N. West. Way back in 1991, after the Warrington Exhibition, I received several phone calls from Bernard Crabtree who was a director of the Grand Theatre at Blackpool. He wanted us to organise a George Formby variety show at his theatre and followed on by sending contracts to be signed. Thank goodness we didn't sign them otherwise it would have been a total disaster and this is simply because we were not ready for it. Far from it.

Well we have progressed so much over the past years that we are now ready to take the plunge at some of these grand old awesome theatres. And we could be successful!

Over the last 3 months alone members in the N. West have performed no less than 27 shows to a total of over 3,000 people, and in every case the audience has been highly satisfied (apart from the odd disaster). Only a few weeks back three of the Penyffordd lads brightened up the streets in Llandudno drawing crowds that reached from one side of the high street to the other. And Crewe have had great success with their Jazz Weekend shows and at the Lyceum Theatre.

THE FUTURE - Plans are going ahead to contact these old established theatres and already some have expressed an interest in us. In fact some have asked for details of what we can do on stage. More news as it comes in.

Jeff (Formby) Booth who is Frank Formby's son

and George's nephew is still keeping the flag flying in Milton Keynes. A newspaper cutting arrived showing him meeting the stars of the show, "For Me And My Gal" which features George's song, "Leaning On A Lamp Post" currently being staged at the Stantonbury Campus Theatre. Jeff went behind stage to meet the stars of the show and played them a tune on his uke. Keep sending those articles in Jeff.

Jeff and Christine will be coming to the June 2nd Penyffordd meeting to meet Beryl Eissens who is paying another visit from Australia.



George Formby's nephew Jeff Formby with Michelle Harper and Jason Lazard from Me And My Girl.

Have You Any Two-Liners to Fill This Gap?

The Formby Story - Part 49 By Stan Evans

After George's funeral, John Crowther, George's solicitor invited the Formby family into a local pub to announce the shock news that George had left his estate, worth £135,000, to Pat Howson with £5,000 to his valet Harry Scotham.



George's mother, Eliza, along with Ethel, Louie and Mary went to see her lawyer to give him instructions to contest the will. The newspapers condemned George for snubbing the woman who brought him into the world. But they didn't publish the fact that from the age of seven George had been thrown out of the family nest and therefore, in his opinion, he didn't have a family. Also that George could never imagine his mother living to the age of 102. At 80 she looked frail. On Saturday the 11th March, the day after George's funeral, a remembrance service was arranged at Preston's St Wilfred's Church. Pat invited the family to the service but none of them turned up.

The Formby family was extremely angry and referred to Pat Howson as "that woman." Ella, George's sister, appeared to be the only member of the family that was calm about the situation. Ted however was still boiling some 30 years later when I rang him to tell him that Warrington based Louie was ill. I'd never spoken to Ted before and was pleased to be given the opportunity to speak to George's blood brother.

SHOCK! - My brain system was rattled for a couple of minutes as I received a tirade of vicious and abusive anger aimed at myself for causing Louie's illness: "It's your fault, you shouldn't have taken her to Blackpool - You didn't invite me to the exhibition and how can I come when I haven't got a suit to wear - George wouldn't give me any of his suits - He didn't leave me any money - When Louie is dead I am coming to Warrington to take the furniture and you are not going to stop me - I hate the Formby name!"

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Surely this wasn't George's brother. George was an intelligent man. It is little wonder that he left nothing in his will for him and it was all making sense to me now! He'd been holding on to this anger for all these years. The truth was that we did invite Ted to the exhibition. We didn't know his address so Molly Cohan, Ted's friend, offered to send it to him. She failed to do this and seething Ted thought he'd been snubbed. When the exhibition was on in Warrington, Louie attended under her own steam by taxi and thoroughly enjoyed mixing with the visitors. For many years she'd been trapped in four walls with very few visitors and only a clapped out TV set for company. The situation had driven her to slight insanity as she was believing that she was pregnant to a TV news announcer and keeping her TV on all night meant that the father of her child would receive more commission. But now she was a star and the TV cameras enjoyed interviewing her. What we didn't know was that the fame was triggering off something in her brain which convinced her that Harry Secombe had arranged for her to appear at the London Palladium. Poor Louie, God bless her, was in a state and had to be moved to the local mental home. She now lives in Brinsworth House, a home set up for stage artists.

Sale Had Another Great Night. Due to

being Good Friday we didn't have as many as the previous month but still we had enough to make a racket. Margaret Moran kicked off with "Land Of Hope and Glory" and, during the St George's Day emotional height, and Union Jack flag waiving, Ken Smith, from Leeds, took the oath that in future he will remain a true Brit and never once again utter the word "Guy" when referring to his fellow man. Proud of you Ken! At least I've got one supporter and you are now an Honorary Member of the "Let's Stay British" fan club which boasts a membership of two! - but we are getting the message over! Don't let um grind you down Ken.



Ken, along with his sparring partner, Tony Marshall, - also from Leeds, put on a grand show to set the standard for the rest of the night.

Cyril Palmer sang a love ballad to his dear wife Sheila but spoiled it when he claimed that he . . . "remembered his wedding day as if it was yesterday, - if it was tomorrow he might not bother turning up." Shame on you Cyril! All the romance went down the pan!

Anyway Cyril, you and your gang are doing a great job at Sale! Good stage decor, sound system keeps improving, a different theme almost every month - which encourages more members to turn up and consequently more volunteers getting up on stage. Sounds very healthy! Keep up the good work.



Two Yorkshire chaps Ken & Tony

Favourite of Sale, Walter Kirkland is doing very well with his clappers (Bones). When he gets in full flight he performs all sorts of stunts:- underarm, under-leg, under-two-legs, behind his back, up his jumper, down his shirt, up his shirt, one eye shut, both eyes shut, stood on one leg etc. and his hands and arms are flying round the room like flash lightning, - but all with very good timing. He is giant at clapper playing and should be on TV! Take it easy Walter or you'll get Clapped Out!



Once again the young dolly birds, - Hilda & Vera, put on a dancing display to the accompaniment and singing of Alan Southworth. Only an idea girls but it would be very appropriate if you both took up Clog Dancing - well Beryl was a clog dancer wasn't she?



Dennis Lee continues with More on Sound Systems

I'm sure you'll agree that the quality of our branch meetings has improved leaps and bounds over the past few years. Nevertheless there are still things that individuals can do to make them even better.

It occurs to me that whenever there is a hiccup at a branch meeting it is often because a backing tape is being used. Most branches now record their backing tapes onto mini discs instead of audio tapes. The reason for this innovation is that there are problems associated with cassettes which do not apply to mini discs. I've listed the obvious ones:

1. Tapes are bulky to carry around but you can transfer as many as 50 songs onto one mini disc.
1. Over a period of time the audio tapes become noisy due to wear.
1. They often need to be wound on or rewound which causes confusion.
1. Because the volume levels at which they are recorded are different, the operator is forever being asked to 'turn it up' or turn it down.'

All the above problems can be solved by having your tracks recorded on disc as per the manufacturers instructions. A blank disc is usually less than £3 and quite often your branch organiser will help you to arrange having your tracks recorded. Just imagine, no more of the above problems ever again!!! With a little co-operation along these lines our concerts could run much smoother.

Thank you Dennis. We've quite a number of SLOPPY artistes performing at our meetings. Often I am handed a tape with the instructions, "Ignore the label, I've recorded over it." or "It's somewhere between 'Lamp Post' and 'Mr Wu.' One in particular, (who's name I will not mention because he got a lot of stick in the last issue and micky taking at the meetings) will hand in a tape with the label on the wrong side. Some have no labels at all.



No problems for Liverpool's Stan Watkinson. He doesn't use backing.

Now they are not much tidier with discs because some will hand in a disc covered in scribble and say, "I think it's number 10 but just flick through (35 songs) and you'll find it," - no titles! It's true!!!

We searched for 15 minutes for a song at the Blackpool meeting only to find that the song wasn't on the tape at all. So come you messy lot. Tidy up your tapes and discs. Be Professional!!!

Blackpool - Penryffordd and Crewe are all entertaining in the BBC Music Live, which is on from the 25th to the 29th May. Give them a ring for more details.

Another GF Success at Llandudno!!!

"Just keep walking down the main high street and you'll hear our ukes" said Dennis Lee, who was booked - along with Kevin Blanchfield and Ray Davies - to entertain at the Llandudno Extravaganza, which is now an annual event.

Eva and I strolled the busy street - wading through the huge crowds - until we heard the banjo ukes belting out "Mr Wu's a Window Cleaner Now" and we knew we were heading for the right spot. It was a dreadful dull day with rain threatening any minute, but that didn't deter the vast crowd that was gathered round the stand - or, as we said in Southern Ireland, "Gig Rig!" There must have been at least 200 to 300 gathered round and all enjoying the great sound.

Two young ladies volunteered to Sand Dance to "Out In The Middle East" and the crowd loved em. But what was also delightful to watch was the three young boys who pushed to the front of the crowd and danced and swayed - with broad smiles, and enjoying every minute - throughout the whole concert.

DRAB - Dennis and the lads did an excellent job in dressing for the grand occasion, with smart shirts, bow ties, fancy waistcoats etc. but the Gig Rig - which we assume was supplied by the council - didn't match their attire one bit. It was very drab in comparison with the lads. They did us proud.

DISAPPOINTMENT - What happened to the George Formby Banner that we display each year. We didn't have anything to advertise who we were and I heard people mumbling in the crowd, "I think they are George Formby players!" The hand written programme that was pinned to the front didn't help either because they billed the lads as, "Banjolees!" Which even confused us at first.



Where's the George Formby Banner?

GOOD PUBLICITY - Eva and I walked through the entire display of show stands, tombola stalls, coconut shys, brass bands, fair ground events etc. and none of them were drawing crowds anything like the lads were. In fact ours was the only stand that gathered a crowd. All the others were attempting to entertain passing pedestrians! The sound system was perfect and the lads did a first class job. I am sure that some of the crowd will be turning up at the next Penyffordd meeting so we should be holding more of these concerts!

* In the past 3 months, at various shows, the N. West Branches have entertained appr 3090 people - plus meetings. Crewe 1200 - N. Wales 1120 and Sale/Liverpool 770. Keep the flag flying.

Alan Richardson

our London genius (Now living in Gloucester has invited us to think up a caption to go with his photo. The winner will receive a six month holiday in the Bahamas all paid for by Alan. That is very generous of you Alan so I have started the ball rolling with my own caption. Let me know if I've won.



That's very good Alan, "cer - at - er -- cat"

Shellard Uke for Sale.

- Clive Hughes on 01299 266067 is selling a Super Supreme Shellard uke banjo with inlays in the shape of dolphins along the fingerboard. Top tension tone ring and 16 tension hooks helping to produce a most excellent sound. Price £800.

Due to the number of tension hooks the Shellard is a great uke for a loud clear sound but the weight is little too heavy for the average lady or for young children.

George on TV

Geoff Shone reports: On Easter Sunday night I was watching David Jason in a programme about Hawaii and as he was walking along the beach he heard the strains of a ukulele being played in the background. David said, "I wish George Formby would find somewhere else to play the ukulele."

Geoff also reports: On Monday night at 8pm Carol Vordaman presented a TV show called "Stars In Their Lives" and the theme was on the life of Dame Thora Hurd. Carol opened the show asking Thora how she first got her foot on the first step of the ladder and she replied with, "As a teenager I lived next door to the theatre and often I would be called on to do bit parts. George Formby caught my little act and sent for me."

Thanks Geoff. So you've now got TV in North Wales!

Blackpool Night

went down very well with a nice crowd attending. We were expecting to arrive there to find the cricket field full of Easter week-end caravanners but they'd all gone home by the time we arrived.

Charles Stewart has certainly put in a lot of effort with the sound system. Instead of trailing the wires on the floor for everybody to trip over he has threaded the cables over the ceiling tiles to drop down into the audience area where the PA System is set up. This is a vast improvement.

Charles Stewart reports: Anyone 60 or over can enter the Blackpool events of The National Senior Citizens Talent Competition, which is being organised by Whitbread, by contacting Mike Chadwick -Media Officer of the Blackpool Council - on 01253 478206 and entering your name.

They are particularly looking for George Formby entertainers, magicians, singers, comedians, harmonica players with bones, yodellers etc. and to compete you will have to turn up at any of the working men's clubs, karaoke bars, or the Music Hall Tavern which is a few doors away from the Wintergardens.

Prizes for winning the Blackpool event are £65 for the first, £20 for the second and £10 for the third. The finalists will go through to N. West competition and winners of that will go through to the All England Final which will be held at Southport later in the year.

Gibson Uke for Sale - Quite a number of members have enquired about purchasing a top quality uke, so here's an opportunity to own one of the best. - Ray Bernard is selling a Gibson UB2 - Excellent tone - Sunburst finish - Purfling on finger board and resonator plate - 16 tension hooks - Tone ring - Original condition - With case - Originally owned by Bobby Locke the South African golf player. Price £600. If interested please ring Ray on 01270 874157.

Sunday Post April 2nd, cutting sent in by Arthur Sinnott.

George's Daredevil Stunt Took Everyone by Surprise!

A friend says George Formby didn't do his own motorcycle stunts in his films and that couldn't even ride a motorcycle, I say he did.

SUNDAY POST REPLY:- According to the George Formby Fan Club, he did do some of his own motorcycle stunts although he was restricted by the film company's insurance. He once fooled a director by performing one hair-raising stunt during filming. It was only when the film was in the can and George took his helmet and goggles off that the director realised it was him.

Incidentally, during the filming of "No Limit" some of the stunt men went on strike when the TT bikers got more money than they did. *Thanks Arthur. The taxi driver also went on strike because the donkey was on better pay than he was. If you slow run the video, or pause it, you will see that the chap (not guy) who runs through the fence at the beginning of "No Limit" is not George. Neither is the motorcycle rider who transports the officer in "It's In The Air."*

Now's The Time To Sit Down and Write That Article



Talent show with a more mature feel

Jim Knight (on the left) has enjoyed George all his life and has been a member of the GFS for around 20 years. He is also a member of the Penyffordd branch. Apart from getting up to entertain Jim also assists with the M/Cs job.

In his working days Jim was a Sub Postmaster and had his own grocery shop. He enjoys a game of snooker, bowls and tennis but at 71 feels that he should be easing off from the tennis activities.

Jim is also Vice Chairman and an active member of the Bradley Over 60s Club and plays the uke, the keyboard and mouth organ. But, as Jim said, "Not at the same time!" Best of luck to you Jim.

EIGHT finalists from Wrexham and Flintshire battled it out in the *Evening Leader* sponsored local heat of the national Senior Citizens Talent Competition.

The panel of judges, which included Wrexham Mayor Cllr Ron Davies, had a tough time picking a winner from the talented contestants, but eventually gave their vote to retired aircraft fitter Arnold Evans, 69, of Caergwrle.

Mr Evans sang *Love is a Many Splendoured Thing* and the classic Frank Sinatra song *My Way*, taking first place and the prize of a Traveltime Theatre Break for two in London.

He will now go on to represent the area in the North West regional final in Morecombe on Wednesday, June 7 and a coach will be travelling from Wrexham with people to support Arnold in his quest for fame.

Mr Evans was said to be delighted with his win and is looking forward to carrying the flag for Wrexham in the regional finals.

Anyone interested in supporting Mr Evans can book a place on the coach by contacting the Arts and Entertainment section of Wrexham Council on 01978 292683.

■ LEFT: Talent show finalists Jim Knight, of Wrexham, Maureen Jones, of Plas Madoc, William Duff, of Wrexham and Emlyn Shaw, of Bagillt.

Hotel Get Away - Last September, 20 members of the N. West Branches of the GFS were featured in one of the episodes of a Granada TV show called "Hotel Get Away." Well, they are due to screen it and the producers are comparing it with the famous "Fawlty Towers" - though personally, being a "Fawlty Towers" fan, I can't see how they can compare the two. The three episodes we viewed were dull and drab and the only ray of sunshine was when we moved in singing "Mr Wu." Anyway, let's hope it is a great success.

Email via Jeffrey Formby Booth from 13 year old Joanne Moore aged 13 who is a keen George Formby fan, while all the other kids in the class were studying science Joanne was busy writing this George Formby poem.

The finest songs around the world
Plus the funniest films too
Generations of adoring fans
George, we owe a lot to you

When he's cleaning windows
And leaning on a lamp
He is absolutely brilliant
and surely is the champ

Mr Wu and his Chinese girl
have certainly done a lot
He used to own a laundry
But now he's shut the shop

He's now a window cleaner
and as happy as can be
Our George sat in a corner
Ukulele on his knee

He took his yearly holiday
on a distant isle
called Hi tiddley-hi-ti-island
Where everyone wears a smile

Why don't women like me
was obviously not true
Firstly there was Beryl
And then the teacher too

He went swimmin with the wimmin
Whilst sitting on the sands all night
bumped into Madam Moscovitch
and certainly got a fright

In George's snapshot album
are many women and men
But it really doesn't matter
cos it's turned out nice again

Auntie Maggie's remedy
For everyone short and tall
George and his well wishing ways
To everyone "Bless em All."

With his little stick of Blackpool Rock
Women got stuck to his side
Hey up the sergeant's coming
It's probably best to hide

But George and God are together and his
legend lives on in our hearts forever



COMEDY CLASSIC: Basil, Polly and Manuel in BBC's *Fawlty Towers*

BY JAMES O'BRIEN
SHOWBUSINESS EDITOR

A TV show is to create a hotel that will make *Fawlty Towers* look like the Ritz - with unwitting members of the public as guests.

Couples on ITV's *Hotel Getaway* will think they are enjoying a normal weekend break in Cheshire won as a competition prize. But staff have been replaced by actors who have instructions to be as strange and rude as possible.

The innocent victims will be seen struggling to come to terms with fights between staff in the middle of the night, shifty porters trying to sell contraband, 5am hoovering and all-night parties.

There will be compulsory 7am fitness classes on the lawn and a bar which serves only carrot and prune juice.

At the end of their stay the spoof will be revealed and the couples will be forced to relive their experiences with show host Matthew Kelly.

Those who put up with it the longest will win a proper holiday. "The idea is to freak

Fawlty Towers comes to life for victims of new TV show

the guests out as much as possible and see how long before they crack," says a programme insider.

"Bad hotel experiences are something very close to our hearts in this country and we just wanted to get some fun out of it."

The series could make a household name out of James Doherty, who plays the Basil Fawlty-style hotel manager nicknamed "Mr Vile" by his staff.

In another nod to *Fawlty Towers*, the programme will feature a hot-headed waitress who has problems with her English, like

Manuel in the BBC comedy.

Kelly said: "I actually hate hidden camera shows but decided to get involved with this as it's about observing people, not embarrassing them. It's genuinely funny. The people aren't playing up to the camera because they don't know they're being filmed."

"So what you get is exactly how real people react to the worst possible service".

Jackie Gibson, of the Association of British Travel Agents, said the show could teach people the value of speaking up if they are unhappy with service.

Holy Moses! Just had a letter (via Charles Stewart) from L Lautenberg of Jerusalem. He was looking for a tape of George Formby Senior singing: "I Was Standing On The Corner of the Street." - I'll bet that surprised you! You would never imagine someone in Jerusalem wanting to hear GF Senior would you? I wonder if they have any lamp posts over there?

Anyway, the job of producing a tape from the "Chip Of The Old Block" LP would be no problem - or so I thought! I have three record players with built in tape recorders so it would be an easy task just pressing a few buttons. But would you believe it? Due to the length of time since I last used any of these players, not one of them was in working, condition - not one out of three. Have you ever had one of those days?

Fortunately, Alan Richardson sent me a copy of GF Senior broadcasting on radio so it was no problem producing tape to tape.

Incidentally, if you ever come across "Chip Of The Old Block" in a car boot sale get it bought. It is an excellent record with GF Senior on one side and GF on the other.

Bob Drinkwater has gone quiet since we've been offering "Ukes For Sale" in the Newsletter. But he still hasn't sent his article in which, according to Beryl, is still sitting in his typewriter. Come on Bob, shake a leg - Get Cracking - if you don't finish that article your typewriter will be seizing up like my record players.

George's Car? Just received an Email from Phil@pwherrett22.freemove.co.uk who is asking if we can supply any information regarding a white Chrysler Drop Head Sports Car that was owned by George. He claims that only six were imported into the country and George had one of them.

The only photo I have of George with a white sports car is this one but unfortunately I wouldn't recognise a Chrysler, or any other car for that matter, if it ran over me. So are there any car enthusiasts



out there who can help? If so, give me a ring or send Phil an Email if you have access to the internet. Incidentally the internet is getting more popular each day. More members are logging on so we need a members Net Directory. Anyone fancy the job of compiling one?

Tons of Ukes for sale (hope Bob Drinkwater is reading this) If you've got access to the internet you can log on to www.ebay.co.uk and after signing in you will be able to bid for lots on the Ebay Auction pages.

It is quite a simple job finding the ukes - click on "Browse" then "Musical Instruments" then "Ukulele" and you will find tons of stuff all relating to the ukulele. There are ukuleles of every make, uke banjos, uke books, uke parts, Hawaiian uke tee shirts, ukulele ornaments, in fact anything relating to the uke. The only snag is that 99.9% of the lots are American so you have to bid in dollars and pay for shipping if successful. But it's well worth taking a trip through the pages.

George's Nephew Jeffrey Formby Booth is still up to his neck in promoting George in the Southern area. Every now and again he pops on BBC Radio to talk about his younger days with his uncle and how friendly Beryl was with the kids.

Only last month he did a couple of programmes with John Pilgrim of BBC 3 Counties Luton and then paved the way for Alan Randall to do a show for them. *Good on yer Jeff. Keep the Formby flag flying.*

Vic Allen of 39 Mountfield Rd, Finchley N3 3NR - or Tel 0181 346 9851 has written a song based on the uke tuning "My Dog's Got Fleas" and wonders if anyone in the society has any ideas for it. The song is quite bouncy and could catch on. Drop him a line and he'll be pleased to hear from you.

Blackpool Gazette reports: 50 YEARS AGO (on March 14th 1950) George Formby, who was living in St Anne's, was in hospital with appendicitis. He had been given a pain killing morphine injection in Leeds so he could go on stage in a pantomime. *I wonder if they've got the date wrong because pantos are usually held over the Christmas period?*

Trip 2001 (next year) - Alan Chenery and Colin Wood are proposing a coach trip to either "The Flanders Fields" or "The Battlefields of Atrois." It will be a 4 day trip: Fri/Sat/Sun/Mon and, unlike the Caen Trip, we won't be kipping down in deck chairs. If interested ring Alan on 01270 257085 or Colin on 01270 663558 who will obtain further details if anyone is interested.

Sounds great lads. We need an activity to go to so perhaps the British Legion would be interested in us entertaining them.

Spring Romance at Crewe - by BRIAN EDGE. Eighty attended the Crewe April Concert - six of them for the first time as a result of seeing our performance at the Jazz and Blues Festival in Nantwich. They all enjoyed their evening and let's hope we will meet them again at future concerts.

The engagement of Trevor Colley and Ann Dando was announced during the evening and the couple were dressed as Butler and Maid. They both performed, Trevor singing Blackpool Rock and Ann sang that Patsy Cline hit "Crazy." We wish them both well for the future.



Young Connie Edge

Trevor Hughes made his stage debut performing without the aid of sheet music and gave a commendable performance which can be put down to loads of enthusiasm, lots of practise and a nice ukulele - a Christmas present from his wife Flora. Alison Nadin showed her talents in the field of magic with two excellent tricks, the latter being a double whammy where she led all the audience to believe that they knew how the trick was done, and then stunned them all by revealing that they didn't how it was done after all. Alison concluded her performance with a ukulele number Granddad's Four Poster Bed."

Margaret Moran serenaded "yours truly" with one of his favourites, "I Don't Want To Walk Without You" concluding her spot with, "New York, New York." There is always lots of sparkle when Margaret is on stage. Les James our comic from Bacup was on excellent form on the night - easily his best performance at Crewe. He had the audience rocking with laughter and ended with "Matchstalk Men" which had been performed previously by Cliff Royle to commemorate the opening of the Lowry Centre. Cliff actually knew Lowry during the war years.

We had about 24 performers on the night, which ended with the usual thrash. Thanks to all who donated raffle prizes and those who performed or helped in any way and not forgetting my friends Peter Healey and Chris Metcalfe who do such sterling work on the door. *Thanks Brian.*

Warrington Mayor - Had a call from the Mayor's office. They wanted a Lancashire GF singer for their Lancs Night on Fri 12th May. It was Liverpool for us that night. Dennis Lee (Wigan born) is booked and Anthony Mason (Wigan) is in London - HELP!!! Not to worry, Phil Forris (Wigan) stepped in. After the show Phil rang. "Best night I've ever had! No mike, no music, just me and me uke and all me old jokes. GREAT!!!!"



Another Success at Crewe!!! The Crewe

Concert Party had yet another success at the Nantwich Jazz and Blues Festival last month. It was the fourth Annual Festival and for third time we performed in the ballroom of the Nantwich Crown Hotel. This is the ideal venue for our type of show and again we were able to use the professional equipment multi mikes, monitors, banks of speakers and lighting together with the services of a professional sound engineer all provided by the Crown Hotel.

About 200 turned up to see our show among which are a growing fan club who turn up each year especially to hear the sound of the banjo and to be amused by our cheeky Formby numbers. It is surprising how the 20s - 30s age group are fascinated by the words and lyrics. Formby numbers are without doubt still magic wherever they are performed. Jonathan Baddeley our accomplished Master of Ceremonies praised the audience for their enthusiasm particularly when they applauded in anticipation of what they were about to hear.

Another concert held last month was for member Don Chalkley. Don has a special interest in Bradfield Road Methodist Chapel in Crewe. Nine months ago we gave them a concert and it was such a big success that Don arranged another in aid of badly needed funds. He advertised the show well, and sold almost 100 tickets. In spite of it being a very wet night the audience turned out in force and were given a good show which was enjoyed by the audience and performers alike. We were grateful to the Chairman of the George Formby Society, Dennis Lee for standing in for our resident M.C. Jonathan Baddeley who was away on holiday. Brian Edge. *Thanks again Brian.*

Just Had a Phone Call

from Anthony Mason who is currently working in a number of acting roles in London. On Thursday the 11th May he will be performing in the Empress Ballroom, Blackpool and then doing a trial run as a Presenter for Radio Wythenshaw. The frequency is 87.7 FM and he will be performing on the 25th, 26th, 28th and 29th May. Anthony will also be performing with the jazz band of North Pier, Blackpool from mid June to September. He has also just completed a video in Warrington for the Millennium Year, to be shown at the dome.

Sad News for Ken Smith

- Ken, I've just had my second committee meeting since being dragged on to the committee and have to report that the atmosphere there was festooned - yes festooned! with the dreaded, banned word, "GUY." They were all at it - all except Dennis Lee, that is, who has been trained to watch his language. I was bombarded from every angle! So what are we going to do about it Ken? It's a very serious problem that's out of hand!

North Wales - Another Wonderful Night!!!!

We had many new visitors and 24 different turns. It was 11.30pm before the show finished and we literally had to throw people out. Value for money; you just can't beat it! As one first time visitor said, "This has been a fantastic evening. There must be hundreds out there who do not know what they are missing." Can I first apologise to Alan Chenery for misquoting the title of a cheerful little song he performed. It should have been, "The Little (not old) Back Room Upstairs." However I disclaim responsibility for any spelling mistakes in the report; must be a fault of modern publishing.

Dennis Lee presented the accounts for last year, which were duly accepted. They showed a balance of £1,200 in club funds even after spending some £500 on equipment and about £350 on pasties which are provided free of charge at meetings. If anyone has any proposals on what the surplus should be spent on your ideas will be welcome, however you will have to be quick before the Lees have the chance to take off on a long cruise.

Dennis informed us that he is still waiting for final details from Chester on the BBC "Music Live" event on May 29th. We will be fielding some 20 players, including our friends from Crewe, for our two twenty minute spots.

The MC for the night was Ray Davies. After welcoming the visitors, including first timers, he announced that Dennis Lee, Kevin Blanchfield and himself had recently played at the Llandudno Extravaganza and from this event £100 would be going to the club funds.

Carl Basford performed a couple of songs with a Lancashire flavour. Thanks Carl for supporting us Lancashire lads. We are proud of our image. The group playing the War Medley went down very well, as did Stan Evans bobbing up and down with his Banana song and his miracle of the red rose. (note again the Lancashire emblem) Brian Wright with his usual bass voice and playing his home made uke gave an unusual performance of a couple of songs including "My Old Man's a Dustman." Gerald Jones, after twiddling away unaccompanied on his uke, then played a couple of lovely solos on what had been his father's mouth organ.

The Bones players, Walter Kirkland and Ron Whiston, were in great demand, appearing six times in all. Ron passed me twelve times without either going to the bar or the stage. Did anyone see where he went? Perhaps he was entertaining the three beautiful, well dressed, mature ladies whom Tom Meredith had brought along.

There were some unusual and comical songs presented by Crewe members, Brian & Connie Edge, Alan Chenery, Alan Newton and Jonathan Baddeley. Sorry to hear that Jonathan is still not too well but it was nice to have Pam Baddeley singing to us

that Jonathan is still not too well but it was nice to have Pam Baddeley singing to us again. Ken Han from Stockport came on as a solo singer and Bernard Jones played a couple of tunes on a Banjo in two slightly different styles. Also it was nice to see Dolwen Shone's little niece in the thrash with a small wooden uke.

Pleased to report that Dennis Lee, Geoff Shone and yodelling Fred Stevenson are all recovering from their different maladies. We have many unsung heroes who help at our evenings and I will try to mention them all as time goes by. This time it is the ladies on the Admissions" desk. It is not like a hospital; you can get in there without waiting 18 months. There is Margaret Royle, Dorothy Davidson and Sheila Beech (unfortunately not too well) and when they understaffed there is always someone else brought in to fill the spot. Tonight we had Margaret's sister Nancy from Glasgow helping out. Thanks ladies for your smiling and friendly faces.

And thank you to our ace reporter, Cliff Royle, who does a wonderful job in digging out all this information. Our young 75 year old is off on a 200 mile walking (carrying a full pack) trip shortly, so we wish him all the very best.

Liverpool - Well we've had some stick this last 12 months about the sound system at Liverpool but I can assure you that those days are over. The amp that we had has given some good service in the past at various charity occasions but since taking it to Liverpool it has produced the most awful sound - "like singing down a tube" Or so Des Redfern keeps telling us.

Anyway we've now installed a great little Marshall (top of the range) powered amp which produces a wonderful sound. Also we had some spare cash in the Stan Watkinson, Jim Bramwell and Stan Evans charity fund so we've purchased a mixer that will receive 2 mikes, a mini player and a tape player. Sounds great.

Our thanks to all who support Liverpool, Tom Bailey does a great job in keeping the meeting going every month and we appreciate members bringing along gifts for the raffle.

UP DATE - Just back from the Liverpool meeting and the sound system was a disaster. This is the third amp that has caused problems. Just as we were ready to throw it through the window one of the venue committee said, "Oh we always have problems like that with our CD player. It is something to do with power surges in the electric mains". Apparently we need a Power Surge Board which costs only about £15. After nine years we have finally solved the problem. We hope. It'll be perfect next month!!!!!!

YOUNG MEMBERS SERIES - I'm waiting for articles from [REDACTED] and Andy Eastwood which I hope to include in the next issue.

again.

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And thank you to our ace reporter, Cliff Royle, who does a wonderful job in digging out all this information. Our young 75 year old is off on a 200 mile walking (carrying a full pack) trip shortly, so we wish him all the very best. It was nice to see Margaret back on the door again and looking so well.

John Guy has just been whipped back into hospital with his worse bout of asthma ever. As John said when I spoke to him on the phone, "I thought my number was up" Well, he's back at home again and planning to sell all his GF possessions and use the cash for a cruise. Good for you John.

UKE FOR SALE - Some 50 years ago John bought a Rolyford uke banjo and has collected a number of autographs on the skin: George, Pat Howson, Tessie OShea and George's sisters, Mary and Louie. This uke is now for sale for the best offer over £500.

GONE FISHING - John is also selling two sets of fishing tackle in brand new condition. Originally the sets cost over £300 each but John is selling at £150 for the lot. If interested you can ring John on 0121 523 3164.

Alan Richardson Again - This lad is on the ball. He's attacking me from every angle with phone calls, Emails and post - he's worse than the tax man! Alan, who is a very keen collector of GF memorabilia, is looking for a whole pile of GF Senior songs *on tape* (too many to publish without doubling the size of the book) so if you can help him with any GF Senior songs (on tape) please ring him on 01452 547572.

Just had a call from Mike Turner of Liverpool to record his tapes onto disc

Just Received a couple of photos from James Knott.

His father was Charles Knott, a sporting businessman who had his horses trained by Monty Smythe who is featured (giving George leg up on the front cover of this Newsletter and centre rider on the right. James claims that the photos were taken post



war and possibly when George was appearing around the Cambridge area.

Now isn't it surprising that George had this obsession in always wanting to be the winner but he never came first in any of his races. In the "Friday Show" George told the audience that his luck changed when he met Beryl so is this another bit of evidence that Beryl was his driving force because from then on he succeeded in everything he did. Good old Beryl!

Do You Remember Sonny Anderson

who was a famous swimmer some 40/50 years ago. She was very popular when she swam the English Channel. Well we've just received a phone call from her daughter who lives in America. She is coming over in January next year to celebrate her mother's 90th Birthday, on Saturday the 20th Jan, and she's asked us to do the entertaining. No problem I told her. It will be a pleasure.

Jim Bramwell & I

have just come back from entertaining at an Old Folks Home where they possibly live their last days out. These people need entertainment to break the boredom but it is such a difficult task trying to raise a smile. Almost every patient was living in their own little world and maybe waiting for the end. Every one of Jims super jokes went down like lead balloons but he carried on like a professional. He was just about to give his punch line to one joke when suddenly one of the dear old ladies gave a scream of pain and killed it completely. Jim didn't bother to deliver his punch line and no-one was any wiser.

If ever you are invited to entertain under similar conditions be prepared for little re-action but just hope that you are helping to ease the waiting time.

N. West Meetings

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

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

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

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

Crewe Branch - Wistaston Memorial Hall - Every 4th Friday in the month - apart from Dec 19 (Tues) - 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

