

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

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Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
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Welcome to Newsletter No.68 and

we report the sad loss of a dedicated GFS member who sadly passed away in hospital on Sunday 10th December.



John had raised his glass to cover up his embarrassment of being unable to smile for a photo.

FOUNDER MEMBER - John, who joined the GFS in 1961, was one of the few remaining founder members in the society and he will be sadly missed. He was a loyal fan of George's and for many years he collected GF memorabilia: even stone pavement sets from the site where George lived as a child in Westminster Street, Wigan. He had many talents including making uke banjos, painting portraits etc. in fact anything practical and John would have a go at making it. He was also experienced at car repairs which came in very handy for John as he was never blessed with sufficient cash to purchase a trouble free vehicle.

For 17 years John was Editor of the GFS Vellum magazine which was produced on a very tight budget due to lack of funds. However, he struggled through with an old fashioned hand-driven duplicator which he constantly had to repair himself. He was a man who would "Have A Go" and even though he hadn't the education required to produce the magazine, he made sure that it was out on time and to the best of his ability.

The last time I saw John was at the Wintergardens and when I attempted to take a photo of him he apologised for being unable to smile. The reason for this is because, like Jeffrey (Formby) Booth, life hadn't dealt out many blessings on him and consequently poor John had very little to smile about. His boyhood upbringing, as an orphan, was just as pathetic as Jeffrey's and far less rewarding during the later years.

FUNERAL - John's funeral was held at Lodge Hill Crematorium, Birmingham, with only 13 people present and just a few flowers with the hearse. Only Kevin Bridgewater attended from the GFS. The coffin was wheeled into the church to the tune of "Leaning On A Lamp Post" and it was a simple service with no hymns. John's adopted family had made a beautiful flower arrangement with John's Silver Uke as the centre piece. The uke was the last thing to go out of sight. As Kevin reported: Really it was a very sad end to, what was at times, a sad life. John lived alone and had no close family.

Our thanks to Kevin Bridgewater for keeping us up to date with news on John.

YEAR 2000 WAS DREADFUL FOR LOSSES - HOPE FOR A BETTER 2001

Formby Letter - Just digging through my Formby memorabilia and I came across a letter from George's sister, Ella, who was living in America at the time: 14th November, 1990. Alas Ella passed on about two years ago.



George's sister, Ella

Dear Stan, Thank you for the magazine. It sounds like you have a lot of fun. Imagine a GFS in Holland and Chicago, Wonderful! And young boys who have never seen George. When I think of George I realise that he was the artist. He was not a bit funny off stage, he was not meek as portayed and h always had to be the top dog. On Sunday nights we would all play cards for half pennies, but he would get mad if he lost. We always thought that was funny. He could be funny at times. He never knew poverty (We all did - the war you know!)

It was an American who taught George to play the uke, Ukulele Ike! He was on the same theatre bill as George. George was fascinated by his playing so in the dressing room he showed George how to play. George bought a uke and when he felt ready he put it in his act. I believe the songs he sang were, "Rose Of Washington Square" and "All By Myself." I always thought they were pretty songs.

I do hope you are able to get an exhibition in the Warrington Museum. It would put the town on the map and whenever you have a parade the GFS could march with white Tee Shirts with George's face on and all carrying ukuleles. Doesn't that sound great?

So much for George. He had a way with him. Brother Frank was always the funny one off stage, and he was a fine artist. I always thought he was a bit like Jack Buchanon. Frank was also a great dancer and uke player.

Here's a few one-liners for your magazine: Customer to bank official, "I'd like to apply for a credit card as I'm fed up of my cheques bouncing all over the place."

Woman to travel agent: "We've travelled the world so where else have you got?"

Never hire a plumber who wears wellingtons, or an electrician with scorched eyebrows.

From a perplexed father: "I've got TV, Cable, 2 phones in my car, a Fax machine and my kids tell me I'm out of touch.

Our thanks again for all those who contributed to this issue. It is gratefully appreciated. Keep smiling and keep sending them in.

Christmas Party at Crewe The Christmas Concert

was everything that we hoped it would be. The big problem was setting up the hall in such a way that party goers would have a table near to them to put their buffet suppers and cups of tea on. It took a lot of thought and shuffling around of tables and chairs to accommodate the expected 108 members but we did manage it and the 98 that did arrive all thoroughly enjoyed the evening and went home with smiles on their faces.



Brian Edge

There were a number of surprise items in store, Alan Chenery and yours truly performed "In our Pantomime" as a tribute to the songsmith and our faithful supporter Frankie Wood. This was followed by a rousing comedy sketch "Tie my Kangaroo Down Sport" featuring Alan Newton, Alice Cronshaw, Trevor Hughes, Walter Kirkland, Peter Cain, Don Chalkley and Ramon Lewis. The gang were dressed in shorts and Aussie hats (complete with dangling corks) one with a didgeridoo and another with a full size inflatable kangaroo. Which reminds me I must ask if that animal paid to come in!

Alice Cronshaw, Joan Cain, Angela Caldicott, Connie, Vera Jones and Mary Allen then performed a comic song *The Thing*. This was very special as three of the ladies have never been on the Crewe stage before. It was something of an ordeal for some of them but they did a splendid job and afterwards felt a great sense of achievement at having done so. They also enjoyed the banter in the unisex changing room – something which the audience was unaware of.

Jonathan Baddeley our wisecracking clarinet playing M.C. was joined by Glenys (trumpet) Alan (trombone) and Brian (ukulele) to play Jonathan's own arrangement of *Hello Dolly* which was fun to play. Individual artistes Arthur Newton, Bill Turner, Carl Basford, Cliff Royle, Don Chalkley and Vera Jones all performed before the Skiffle Group made up of Colin Wood, Carl Basford, Alan Newton, Alan Chenery, Peter Cain, Walter Kirkland and Arthur Newton performed Lonnie Donnigan's version of *Does Your Chewing Gum Loose Its*

Flavour on the Bedpost Overnight. We then had a very special visitor who dropped in to deliver his Christmas Cheer it was non other than Father Christmas himself. Santa delivered Christmas Cards to everyone and twenty-one prizes to lucky guests. Santa (our Charming Asst MC Pamela Baddeley) then had to leave, as there were many more calls for her to make. An excellent buffet supper was laid on and everyone was well satisfied.



Alison Nadin

Bob Hodgkinson, who made a rocking dog in order to raise funds for the Society, drew the lucky winner who was Miss Rebecca Webb. The effort raised £97 for Society funds and we thank Bob very sincerely for his generosity.

The second half of the show continued with Alan Chenery, Colin Wood and Peter Cain performing *Putting on the Style* which soon got the show back on the track. Walter, Ron and his friend from Canada performed a trio bones medley which centered on Walter who really projects himself so well when he is playing his bones. Gareth Sumner, Peter Cain Steve Hassall, performed individual numbers and Glenys Huntington gave another impressive performance with the Eddie Calvert favourite *Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White*. Alan Newton showed what a super trombonist really is with a requested number *the Acrobat*. He was accompanied on the piano by someone who was described by our MC, as a Les Dawson impersonator. Cheeky monkey! I will ask Connie to get him at playtime!

Bill and Ivy Turner then performed a great sketch which ended with them rocking and rolling about the stage. I must ask Bill and Ivy for the formula as to how they manage to do it. Connie then performed the Formby Number Keep Fit, with Angela, Joan Cain and Vera Jones doing all the physical jerks with punch bags dumbbells and barbells. Described as the Vestal Virgins they all wore Richard Branson caps and P.T. kit which brought back memories of our trip to The Republic Ireland a couple of years back. A great effort by the girls.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE - Alice Cronshaw led the Wartime Thrash and the Chairman of the George Formby Society, Dennis Lee, finished off the Show! Dennis performed Chinese Laundry Blues backed by music from the new Professional CD, which was launched on the night.

It was really a super end to a successful year. Thanks were given to all who helped in any way to make the Christmas Show such a success and the audience was also thanked for their tremendous support throughout the year without which we could not go on.

Thanks Brian, sounds like you had a great night.

Spare a Thought

for John and Doris Myerscough who attended the N. West meetings quite regularly some time back. Unfortunately Doris has been going through a rough time with mental health so John has had no alternative but to have her admitted into their local nursing home to be cared for.



John & Doris Myerscough

A couple of months back John invited Eva and I to his 80th Birthday Party and poor Doris looked completely lost as she sat motionless in her chair. This is most unusual for Doris as she has always been a very active and lively person. In her younger days she organised many functions and during the day she managed the family school which was specially for mentally retarded children.

If anyone would like to drop a card to Doris her address is Rose Villa Nursing Home, Collins Green, Near Warrington.

Let us hope that George's light is shining for poor Doris. She doesn't deserve to be in a wilderness.



Email from Bob Muirhead

- Hi Stan, I am looking for a Backing Tape to "Blackpool Belle" in "C" and wondered if you are able to oblige. Have just got back from a seven week spell in the USA, came back laden with Songbooks, and Martin Strings for various people, and also a very good Harmony Uke for myself.

I also noticed that Martin are again selling new Ukes, have you heard any reports on them? I am going back at the end of March so might well treat myself if they are any good. Best wishes to you and Eva for the coming year. Bob Muirhead.

Dave Hawkins received an Email which you'll find interesting. A new version of "Windows".

I bought a new computer, it cost two thousand quid
But every time I'd switched it on, I wish I'd never did
I used to think it was my friend, now it drives me round the bend,
You'd be surprised the time I spend, - Reinstalling Windows.

I switched it on, but what is this? Something wrong with CONFIG.
SYS?
This isn't my idea of bliss, - Reinstalling Windows.

I switched on my computer, and loaded up the file
But then it's printing up side down, it's driving me so wild
Load disc four, oh what fun! It says it helps you Get Things Done,
Every day now everyone's, - Reinstalling Windows.

Load disc ten, it will say, " All you do is Plug and Play"
"Plug and Pray" - every day - Reinstalling Windows.

It can't locate my printer and it can't locate my mouse,
The other day it told me that it can't locate my house.
Still unplugged, still unplayed, e-mailed God in search of aid,
He's far too busy I'm afraid, - Reinstalling Windows.

Up at dawn for one more try, Does it work? Can pigs fly?
It's enough to make me cry, - Reinstalling Windows.

It doesn't like my modem and detests all CD-ROMs,
Let's see if Setup Wizard, recognises bombs.
I used to like a drink or three, no time now, don't call for me,
I'm going to spend eternity, - Reinstalling Windows.

Thanks Dave. For the benefit of those who don't use a computer, "Windows" is a computer programme which, now and again, has to be re-installed. Regards, Dave

And On The Right

we have the first glimpse of Anthony Mason's baby boy, 5 day old Elliott, who looks as if he might turn out be a cello player, - or a long scale uke. Or is he just waving to the crowd? Anyway, Anthony and Hannah are over the moon with him and it is



Who is this cheerful chappie?
Answer back cover



Rules on Busking

—FROM THE WEEKLY NEWS. Busking is not against the law, as such, but it is covered by other offences such as trespass, obstruction and noise nuisance. Some local authorities have passed by-laws to control or licence busking, while other city centres positively encourage street entertainment. It therefore mainly depends on the opinion of the local authority for each area, so you would be best advised to contact them for their position on this.

In order to sell anything on the street, tapes for example, you should have a peddlers licence. The local authority will also advise you on this.

You should also not block the public's view of a retail display, in a window for example, or you will be moved on. It is against the law to actively seek donations, so you must not approach people and ask for money. The answer is to place your hat or uke case on the ground for voluntary donations. **SO NOW YOU KNOW.**

Just Throwing Out a few items the

other day and I came across an old note pad which was used about 10 years ago when George's sister, Louie rang for a chat. Actually it wasn't a chat as such because Louie did all the talking and I listened. Louie had a wonderful memories going back to childhood days. Here are a few of her comments. . . .

On Jan 20th 1961, after Beryl's death, Eliza and Louie went to see George at his home in Lytham. Afterwards George asked Harry Scott to run them home but Harry dropped them off at the station to find their own way home. They were upset.

Whenever mother and father went to the Variety Artists Ball, father, who didn't dance, would pick out a partner for Eliza to dance with.

George & Beryl were first married at the Wigan Registrar Office but later they had a church wedding at a Manchester Catholic Church.

Mother was an active person. She could still do high kicks in her later days. She never believed in having a sleep during the day.

George played his uke (unlike many GFS members) very quietly to save his fingers for the solo bashing.

George was a very old fashioned person. He never wanted to play uke his uke to love songs and he always practised to be 'word perfect' before performing the song. As a child he played the mouth organ. He was unhappy living at the stables and being away from his family, so mother bought him out of the contract.

Beryl was of German origin. Their name was Blankenburgh. Before burial, Father, Mother and George were all embalmed.



Louie with brother Frank

Liverpool Evening Express 10th Oct 1940

Geo Formby Visits N.W. to entertain Women War Workers.

George Formby, the stage and screen star, accompanied by his wife, Beryl, made a tour of N. West industrial factories today when he entertained hundreds of women war workers. George & Beryl were cheered by hundreds of girls who rushed their lunch to be able to listen to the British star accompanied by his ukulele. One of these was "Down The Old Coal Hole," a Lancashire dialect song, which had only twice previously been played in public.



Today's tour is part of Formby's intensive work in entertaining troops and war workers in Britain. "During last week I have entertained more than 30,000 war workers," George told an Evening Express representative. Next week I may go to Scotland entertaining the services.

MUGS FOR LUCK????? - Soon afterwards I begin on my new film, which I propose calling, "Mugs For Luck."

HOME GUARD - The Formbys have a full life in their war effort. Although George has not made a film since August he has put in some stage shows and at least once a week goes on duty in the Home Guard.

"Unfortunately whenever I stop people, when on duty as a section leader, they just laugh at me" said George, and added, that he had several narrow escapes in air-raids. George feels strongly about Britons who have left the country and taken safer refuge abroad. "Someone had a plan to try to get abroad under the guise of getting me to make a musical tour of Canada but I would have none of it. A Briton's place today is in his country. Some time ago I offered my services in another sphere, but the only answer I got was 'You go and play your ukulele' "

George, who is in the 35 years class, is keen on joining the RAF. Regarding his entertaining, he said, "I delight in doing it and I'm always glad to meet our workers and fighting services. If I can make their lives brighter, and any money raised helps towards providing more armaments, I am satisfied.

The film, "Mugs For Luck" is a bit of a mystery. Perhaps George never made it. The nearest film to the date would have been "Spare A Copper" which had a trade show December 5th 1940. Or maybe it was Turned Out Nice Again" which was completed by May 27th 1941. Can anyone throw any light on this?

After the snow it was a pleasure to get back to normal weather again, - Rain.

NIGHT LIFE

Lancashire and show business go hand in hand. In the field of humour, Ulverston gave us Stan Laurel, probably one

of the greatest clowns that ever lived. His association with Oliver Hardy created the sort of comedy that bridges any so-called generation gap, and lives on after the demise of the two stars.

Liverpool and Manchester provided Arthur Askey, Ted Ray, Ken Dodd and Johnny Hackett. The clubs still rock with laughter when Jackie Hamilton walks on the stage. Jimmy Tarbuck, the celebrated golf bandit, hails from Liverpool, and he's going from strength to strength in his career.

Radio churned out Jimmy Clitheroe and Ted Lune, nor must we forget staunch old campaigners such as Ken Platt and Tony Melody who still give pleasure in abundance. Can we ever forget the immortal Robb Wilton? Yes, he was a Lancashire lad too. Norman Evans, for my money the best panto dame in the business, was a son of the Red Rose.

Al Read, one of the finest of all radio comedians, came from Lancashire; so did

George Formby, and he didn't do so badly for himself.

Young Stan Boardman, Mick Miller and Al Robbins - they are the new breed of laughter-makers who are striving for a place in the sun. God help us, even Bernard Manning is a Manchester lad, alongside Colin Crompton. Did anyone mention Les Dawson?



Thanks to Martin Thomas for the above article. If anyone wants a copy for a Letter Heading etc. please pop an S.A.E. in the post. It's a great cartoon drawing of our George. The uke looks well used.



Cliff Royle – Reporter Extraordinaire reports on the N. Wales January meeting

It was a great start to the New Year: a good attendance, new faces, a change to the sound system (British Legion equip) which appears to have further improved the quality of the backing music. Although my reports generally refer to performances on the stage we should never forget those who work in the background to make our evenings a success; the ladies on reception; those who operate the sound system; our M/Cs; the British Legion and their staff; our supporters from Crewe and other branches; our pasty organisers; those who set out the room and sound system; and last but not least Dennis & Lesley Lee who put in a tremendous amount of work on our behalf not only in relation to our meetings but to many other aspects of the Society's life. Sadly they will not be with us at the February and March meetings, but I am assured everything has been left in good hands, so don't worry. Our thanks also to our supporters.

Under the watchful eye of M.C. Jim Knight there was a full programme of excellent performances, including sing-alongs led by Des Redfern, Stan Watkinson, and Dennis Lee. Young Stephen Ensall showed his usual versatility in spite of not having been too well during the day; then our new recruit, Gregory Revell (aged 9) really showed what could be achieved in a short space of time when he went on stage for the first time as a soloist to play "Lamp Post." He was so full of confidence. He only started playing a few weeks ago but comes from a musical family for all of them apparently play in a band. Maybe we can get the family to play as a group for us.



Stephen Ensall

Alison Nadin put on a very polished magic show, followed by one of Frankie Wood's songs, "That's The Kind Of Music For Me" played on the uke, all to a cheery smile. Stan Evans temporarily gave up his miracles and uke playing in favour of singing some rousing, tear jerking songs, ably assisted by Stan Watkinson.

There was a very pleasant surprise when Derek Herbert turned up and played, "You Don't Need A Licence," in a very jovial manner. How nice to see a new face. Apparently Dennis Lee met him at a social function on the Wirral some eighteen months ago and invited him to one of our meetings. Happy Birthday Greeting were sung for Lesley Lee who had celebrated her birthday the day previous. Does she not look younger than ever? Regrettably Connie Edge was unable to sing since she was suffering with a bad throat. *Thanks Cliff. I understand you are holding a competition and inviting readers to compete for a six month holiday in the sun. Sponsored by yourself of course. All we have to do is guess the line you were singing when the above photo was taken. And here's a clue: It is a George Formby song.*

Ray Bernard writes - I note Stan that you have compiled a list of George's films and the ukes that he played in each of the films.



Now I notice that in the first two films: "Boots, Boots" and "Off The Dole" you have listed a uke called a "Bentone" but I must say that after 50 years of research I have never heard of a "Bentone." wooden uke.

Actually the wooden uke that George played in the two films was a 525 model Jose Fernandez and there is a very good photo where George is shown resting his chin between the upper and lower bouts of the instrument. It is easily recognisable as the Triple Purfling is clearly shown.

Also, the wooden uke that George played in the film, "South American George" when he sang, "I'd Do It With A Smile" was made by George La Foley, who was a very well known maker in London and a close friend of John & Jack Abbott.

Thanks for the correction Ray. I remember some 11 years back, as Vellum Editor, I was gathering information on "which uke - which film" and one of the members either phoned or wrote in stating that the name of the uke was a Bentone. For the life of me I can't remember who it was. Can anyone throw any light on it? Where did the name "Bentone" come from?

Wigan Pier Exhibition - We are still trying to borrow the display panels from the Warrington Council but as yet they are not budging. This is due to a complaint from one of the GFS members who thought that, as he had loaned photos to the original Warrington Exhibition, he should receive payment. Warrington then withdrew their offer to loan the items.

A representative from Wigan Pier has now approached Warrington and offered to sort out any complications that may arise. Will keep you up to date.

Happy New Year - While the rest of the world were celebrating the New Year, Guiseppe Petenazzi was tucked up in bed. Last New Years Eve he slipped in a night club and broke his arm. Soon after the plaster was taken off he went horse riding and when the horse tripped over he landed underneath and finished up with a broken leg, and also the other arm. He went to Switzerland to recover but was mugged. In June, his flat caught fire, and in August a bus smashed into the side of his car. His insurance cover had just expired. To escape from all this he went to Milan to start a new job but when he arrived there he found that the firm had gone bust the day before. In his spare time Guiseppi sold lucky charms.

Newspaper Cutting

Beryl's Log Book

(Beryl's log book was on show at the 1991 Warrington Exhibition) - When Beryl Formby left England with her husband, the famous George, to entertain the troops in France, she determined herself to keep a diary of incidents during their stay. "I never thought for one moment that so much could happen" Beryl writes, "but from the time we left England so much has happened." I (the reporter) have had a look at this log of a memorable tour and it records the enthusiasm with which George was received wherever he went.



Beryl relates to an outstanding incident. She went to France determined to find a Castleford boy to whom to present a Clay Pipe which was given to her by the Mayor of Castleford. "I thought I had been rather rash taking on what seemed a very difficult job," the log continues. "Anyway, I had made a promise and I had got to do something about it." "We had a nice trip over and when we landed on the other side a handsome soldier took my cases. To make conversation I mentioned that I was looking for a boy from Castleford. Imagine my surprise when he said, "That's funny, I come from there" "I just stopped in the street and gave one yell, George, I've found him!

In her log book Beryl goes on to say, "Whenever we were looking for George we only had to look for a crowd of lads in khaki and you could guarantee that George would be in the middle of them entertaining.

She continues to tell of a completely unexpected meeting in a cafe with her only boy cousin, who is in the Air Force.

Charlie Landsborough—

If you've never heard Charlie sing you are in for a real treat. He's got possibly the best relaxed singing voice ever recorded. It is guaranteed that if ever you play one of his tapes in a public place, several will come to you to ask for the name of the singer. He also writes a lot of his songs. Charlie, from Birkenhead, was a schoolteacher who started entertaining late in life. Great Voice!



His fan mail address is: Forever Friends Fan Club
P.O. Box 568 Wembley, Middlesex HA9 8XW

Joe Taylor recalls an Evening At The Theatre -

The most memorable and emotional evening I have ever spent in a theatre was during World War Two. Gracie Fields was making a tour of military camps in Britain and I was fortunate to win one of the two tickets which were allocated to my mess for her Garrison Theatre show. The theatre was full to bursting. Chairs were brought in to fill every inch of space. A Health and Safety expert of today would have had a fit!



Joe in his younger days

What a performance we got from Gracie. She had us laughing and almost crying in turn. Her repertoire of songs seemed endless. And of course the audience were reluctant to let her go and we got encore after encore from her. On the way back to the billets, after the show I felt quite punch-drunk from it all. When after the war I saw Gracie's home in Capri I thought, "Ee By Gum lass, tha's come a long way from Rochdale!

AND THERE'S MORE - Joe's Headlines - THANKS JOE.

Dublin's Patrick O'Flynn was arrested today for streaking through a nudist camp

Of the 2 rabbits stolen last week from Peter's Pet Shop, 14 have been recovered

Dutch football striker, Budget Van Rental, was badly hurt after scoring a goal this afternoon. Apparently it was because nobody had kissed him.

Mrs Riley of Killarney phoned the council to say that she had found a hole in the road. They put her through to the Lost Property Office.

George Mumble, Yorkshire's most hen-pecked husband, died yesterday. By the terms of his will his ashes will be scattered all over his wife's new carpet.

In support of their pay claim the Irish Wall Of Death Riders Association will be starting a "go slow strike" as from today.

On the radio tonight a talk will be given by Mr Jack Higgins, a very wealthy man who was a snow plough driver in Saudi Arabia. He will be speaking on how he fiddled his overtime.

I once took my girl to Southend
Intending a loving week-end
But imagine the fuss
In the room next to us
Was my wife with a gentleman friend
Thanks Joe. Keep sending them in.

Beneath this stone lies William Burke
A decent man entirely
His stone was bought from a
second-hand shop
And his name's not Burke, it's Riley

Chaos—It was like Muldoony's Performing Dogs for the first half of the N.



Resident Operator, Deg.

Wales Jan Meeting. Dennis & Lesley are away for the next two months so I offered my services as assistant sound man. But little did I realise what I was getting myself into. To save carrying all the equipment—speakers, amplifier, mini disc player, tape player etc. it was decided to use the British Legion's equipment which is operated from a very small room at the back of the hall.

Now the problem is that this small room is also used for storing any surplus or broken tables and chairs, which leaves a very narrow path to get to the operating area. Deg, the resident Tape and Disc Operator and I, could just about fit inside this room, with no space to spare. But just as we were about to press the first button everybody started to pile inside

with all sorts of queries: Too loud, not loud enough, turn the mike up, can't hear the artist singing, playing the wrong song (which was because the artist had given us the wrong number). We got every complaint possible.

WHOOPS—But we had one or two good laughs. Dennis and Lesley came in to explain how the system worked, and Dennis sat down at the table. Then he stood up to explain the buttons on the amplifier. Just at that point, to make more space, Lesley removed his chair, and Dennis sat down—on the floor. The look of Dennis's face as he scrambled off the floor was worth recording for Candid Camera. "Who took me chair away? He said.



Whoops

However, although we had a poor start we made up for it in the second half. Next month will be perfect!

More Comments from Louie (George's sister) - Jack Cottrell's wife complained because George only gave him £4 for "Chinese Laundry Blues" but she doesn't mention that George was soft with him, always giving him money. Jack drank a lot and also George paid his maintenance money. Beryl didn't agree with this and soon put a stop to it. Our Georgie also paid maintenance money for Harry Scott—who's real name was Harry Scotham. Harry worked on stage but when his act failed George took him in and employed him as a valet.

Jack Cottrell claimed credit for writing Chinese Laundry Blues but our Frankie came up with the original idea. He used to go to the Chinese Laundry shop in Park Rd when we lived in Alexander Rd, Liverpool. One of George's sayings was, "If I don't make a success of this I'll go window cleaning."

Ashley Caldicott - What a wonderful surprise when a small parcel arrived in the post. It was a video of Ashley enjoying himself at various Crewe functions. Eva & I slipped the video into the machine and enjoyed an hour or so of Ashley joining in with the Crewe thrash group, and thoroughly enjoying every minute.



Ashley, with his tambourine, now manages to keep in perfect tempo with the group and at the same time give off a huge, bright smile to the audience. This is a wonderful achievement for dear Ashley and we sincerely hope his progress grows on. Our thanks to Angela & Philip for the tape. A wonderful treat!

NEWSPAPER CUTTING around 1942.

We're Too Daft! - Why Germany Cannot Get Us Frightened. "It would take three Germanies to put us under. We're too daft to be frightened" George Formby the famous comedian said this to a crowd of workers at a North West munitions factory after he had been entertaining them for half an hour during the lunch interval. The concert was organised by ENSA.

George who was accompanied by Beryl, said it was grand to see the way people were carrying on in this country. "I have been over the areas where they have had a bit of plastering (bombing). They came over dropping their pineapples, but the people go on just the same. When the lights go up again it will still be "Rule Britannia." George was given a rousing reception.

Paul Woodhead writes - Our "Tunes In The Trenches" concert went very well. The concert began with a slide show of Dunkirk 1940 which was very sensibly done. An air raid siren announced the beginning, intervals and the end. Tea and coffee was served to the sounds of Vera Lynn, and served in costume. The whole hall was adorned with photo and memorabilia. The concert included WW1 and WW2 songs gathered from the Shropshire and Hereford area. A few standards were thrown in such as Kiss Me Goodnight Sergeant Major - The Thingummybob - and Keep The Home Fires Burning. I contributed with George's "I Did What I Did With My Gasmask" which went down very well. To cap it all we had a buglar and a piper. A BBC sound engineer recorded the whole show in order to produce a tape.

Thanks Paul. The concert is held at the Community College, Bishops Castle and anyone wishing to take part could ring 01588 638871. Proceeds are in aid of The British Legion.

Cliff Royle follows on with another article . . . Two friends of mine in Frodsham, who have been to some GFS occasions, - Warrington and Peniffordd, have just returned from a month cruise to the Carribean on the "Saga Rose" ship.

On the ship, as an entertainer, was Alan Randall to whom they spoke about his playing and also Warrington and Penyffordd concerts. He played the ukulele banjo, piano and vibraphone and they enjoyed his excellent playing of all the instruments.

However, during the holiday a very bad storm was encountered - Storm Force 10 - which meant the ship was battered by heavy seas. During the storm his vibraphone got very badly damaged and became unplayable.

Thank you Cliff. Alan Randall is very talented on the keyboard. Some years ago he came to my house and I'd just bought a portable keyboard for travelling round different venues with. However, our pro. keyboard player had difficulty playing it claiming it was only a toy piano. Alan tried it out and made it sound really great. At the same time we had a man cutting trees down and while he was having his morning cup of tea he couldn't stop himself from dancing to the wonderful music.

Continued from last month - This is further to the Geoff Shone fiasco when he conned Eva & I into spending £33 on useless knives and forks for the Christmas Dinner. We'll get you back young Geoff!

When we arrived back at the car it was still throwing it down in buckets and we came across a woman carrying a large box up and down the huge car park. I asked her if she was OK and she told us that she couldn't find her car. "Jump in" we told her, which she did and we drove her up and down every aisle in the car park about three times over. The poor woman was distraught and ready for bursting out in tears.

We were just on the verge of giving up, - thinking that her car had been stolen, when she said, "I'm not sure if we are in the right car park." We drove into the next car park and there it was, waiting for her. She was now a very happy woman.

The lady was full of thanks, and, "Can I give you a treat?" she said. "No fear, we are only too pleased that you've found your car."

Before we left her she said, "**You're not going to believe this but I work in a hospital and my job is to look after those with Alzheimers!**"

In The Bahamas a lorry loaded with 400 cases of high strength beer overturned and shed the load across the full width of the road. Traffic Police arrived 20 minutes later to find 200 people staggering about trying to drink the lot.

George Upset The Theatre! During the war years it

was clear that George & Beryl preferred to visit the war front rather than stay at home working the theatres however this upset some of the management. The following are cuttings from various national newspapers at the time.



HE STILL SAYS NO! - The music hall people are furious with George Formby but he can be stubborn when he likes. He thinks it more important today to work for the services for nothing than to work for increased profits from the theatres.

His films can bring more money than he can spend and more than he ever dreamed of in his early days. Indeed, if you ask me, I think George is still wondering where all the money comes from.

BEN HENRY WROTE:- George is sacrificing a huge figure in contracts to go over to France to entertain the troops at the end of February. He wished to go earlier but film and pantomime contracts stood in his way.

FORMBY FROLICS FOR FORCES - George Formby has given up his holiday to entertain the troops for N.A.A.F.I. and will visit searchlight and A.A. units in isolated places. N.A.A.F.I. yesterday denied rumours that George is going to Canada and America to raise funds for the Spitfire Funds. He will however be appearing during the next few weeks in E.N.S.A. concerts for munition workers.

The amazing thing is that George also made 10 films during the war so how on earth did he fit it all in?

French Trip All Booked Up! Just received a notice

from Christine Wood to report that the trip to France June 8th - 11th 2001 is now finalised. The hotel is the Holiday Hotel Express which is situated in the centre of Lille. It is hoped that all the special hotel requests will be met, but, as you will appreciate, it is not always possible.

IMPORTANT! - The holiday company have asked for a list of insurance details so would you please send this to Christine Wood, 4 Claremont Rd, Crewe CW2 7NL.

I'M ALWAYS DESPERATE FOR SHORT COMMENTS OR ARTICLES TO FILL SPACES LIKE THIS ONE. HAVE YOU ANY TO SEND?

Paul Woodhead Emails - Trip To Tenerife

I am organising a one week trip to Tenerife in November 2001. The budget cost is £300. At this stage I am trying to gauge interest. We will be able to play local bars & clubs as well as the usual sun sand and sea.

If you are interested please contact me with your name, address and number in your party to The Lupins, 2 Boatwell Meadow, Off Holywell Lane, Gravel Leasowes, Doseley, Telford, TF4 3QY or eMail paulw@simpop.com

AND THERE'S MORE - By the way Stan - did you see The Windsors? GF was mentioned but not in the way we may hope. When talking of the abdication of Edward and the succession of George it was said that "The public had been used to Clark Gable and now found themselves with George Formby"!!

John Ceaser, one of the

Yorkshire GFS members, and a very keen Formby fan, has achieved something that we found impossible to do for George. Some years ago, for George's 30th Anniversary, we applied to the GPO to have George's head printed on the postage stamps and they turned it down. Well John appears to have managed it OK, with his uke, but we are not quite sure how he has done it. Looks like a good idea. John is on the left alongside a 1sr class Christmas stamp.



Delayed Applause

- I did a Christmas Concert in Warrington and as part of my spot I told a joke. NOT A TITTER!!!! But then, part way through the next song there came an outburst of laughter from the audience. The penny had suddenly dropped and everybody was having a belly aching laugh.

Jon Baddeley

Emailed an item on a book that was being offered by auction by Ebay, who are the biggest auctioneers on the internet. They always have at least a hundred ukuleles on offer.

They were offering a book - or is it a record? - or is it sheet music - I don't know! But it is titled Rebel Rock, which was written and composed by Tommy Steele in 1956 and classed as "Another wild cacophony from the first rock idol" Now here's the interesting bit, ". . . although he was really a cross between Bill Haley and GEORGE FORMBY. Well I suppose he was a kind of cockney George Formby.

HAVE YOU SENT AN ARTICLE IN YET?

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. Where can you get a better bargain than that?

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 - NEW VENUE - Holy Family Parish Centre, Old Hall Rd, (continuation of Marsland Rd) 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. Every last Monday in the month -Tel Eve & Charles Stewart on 01253 768097. Wonderful buffet.

Wintergardens GFS Meetings:

- Sat & Sun 17th & 18th Mar 2001
- Sat & Sun 23rd & 24th June 2001
- Sat & Sun 15th & 16th Sept 2001
- Sat & Sun 24th & 25th Nov 2001

N. West Web Site: www.thehollies.u-net.com/ formby. E Mail: stan@thehollies.u-net.com

For 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 Front Cover.

