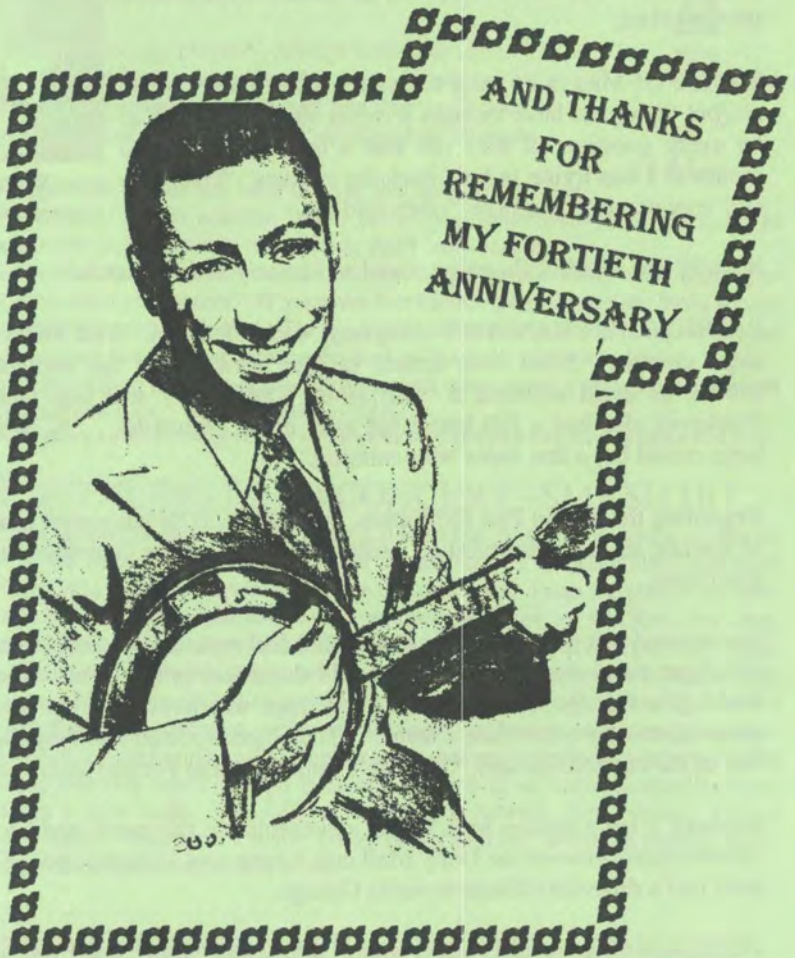


THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 70

Vol. 5
No.70
Apr 2001



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Welcome to Newsletter No.70—

Well I must tell you that Eva & I haven't spoke to each other this past month. All we've done is cough and sneeze over each other because we've had the most dreadful bout of flu ever. And it was just at a time when things were hotting up for George's 40th Anniversary, March 6th. As usual, everybody gave advice but none of them worked.



Stan Watkinson took no chances when he visited

The Isle Of Man radio rang to ask a load of questions, on air, but they must have thought it rather strange because after every question all they got was a load of grunts and groans as I was trying to hold back the sneezes. "George is still very popular over here," they told me.

It really is a dreadful flu going round so I hope you don't catch it.

ROUND THE BRANCHES—Anyway, each of the N. West Branches have drawn large crowds. Since Sale settled in their new venue the audience has doubled. Crewe, as usual reported a "Full House" and every seat was taken at Liverpool. Blackpool also had a full house but were down on artists N. Wales drew quite a large crowd but a few faces were missing.

Regarding the Wigan Pier Exhibition, **WARRINGTON** have gone quiet on the subject of loaning us the memorabilia. After the article in the Guardian I've heard nothing from them.

I mentioned last month that the Daily Mail had reported speaking to me on the subject of Wigan supplying a GF statue. I told them that in my opinion the best tribute we could give George was by holding meetings where we sing his songs and keep his name alive—far better than a statue! They then reported that they phoned Wigan and one of the councillors said, "We don't want a George Formby statue in Wigan."

Anyway, I have spoken to a Wigan representative this week and he told me that the conversation between the Daily Mail and Wigan was 10 years ago. Since then Wigan have had a different attitude towards George.

On George's Anniversary date, March 6th, Cyril Palmer and I did a radio broadcast with Greater Manchester Radio and the Presenter, Jeanette Kennedy, was very enthusiastic about George. "Unfortunately" she said, "we only have two of George's recordings—Lamp Post and Windows—throughout the entire building so we'll have to fill in with some other song." We chose "The Sun Has Got its Hat On" and told the story of when we performed outside at Wigan Pier and the moment we started singing, the thick heavy clouds parted to give us two hours of wonderful sunshine—a miracle!

SAM BASS—Sam sends his best wishes to all his friends in the North West. Unfortunately he has been unable to get to his local concerts throughout the winter. As a result of his throat operation Sam is no longer able to breathe through his nose and mouth, only through the tube in his neck, so in cold weather he cannot wrap up against the cold or he would not be able to breathe at all. Nevertheless he misses the meetings and all his friends and fans and sends his best wishes to everyone along with the promise that he will be back when the weather improves.



SAM also sends a few tips for uke players—Always keep your uke in its case for protection when not in use. Never leave it near to a radiator or where the heat of the sun can reach it, or you may find that you'll need a new vellum. Don't leave your uke on a chair as someone may sit on it.

Always keep the fingernails of your left hand short as this helps you to form the chords more accurately and in addition it will protect the fingerboard from nail damage. Invest in a chromatic tuner if you don't have one, as it is a great confidence booster to know that your uke is tuned correctly, especially when playing to backing music or with other performers. If your uke has friction pegs for tuning, these should be tight enough to stop them from slipping. Do not over tighten them. If you must use a capo make sure that you use one that will not damage the back of the neck of the instrument. Tidy up your strings – don't leave long ends dangling. Strings don't often break these days but always have a spare set in your uke case. Sent in by Brian Edge.

CREWE BOWLING CLUB CONCERT –SMASH HIT

The Crewe Branch's concert at the Crewe Bowling Club on the 10th March was a smash hit with the audience. The artistes were unanimous that it was our best audience since our prize winning trip to Youghal in the Irish Republic a couple of years back. From the start of the evening it was apparent that they were there to have a great time and when we said sing they sang! Never had Walter and Ron our bones duo had such a rousing cheer at the end of their act. They laughed at every joke in every song we performed and responded to "Out in the Middle East" in such a way that would have brought joy to any Blackpool Convention. Colin and Alan did a great job on the sound and Alan Newton performed admirably as Master of Ceremonies. Each performer put on a polished performance. The concert party was rewarded with a surprise buffet supper that was more than they could manage to eat and to top it all we were rewarded with another booking. It was a great night. The Artistes were Arthur Newton, Alan Newton, Glenys Huntington, Steve Hassall, Brian and Connie Edge, Don Chalkley, Walter Kirkland, Colin Wood, Alan Chenery, Peter Cain and Ron Whiston.

CREWE LYCEUM THEATRE CHARITY CONCERT

The Crewe Branch have been invited to perform as part of Crewe Borough's project "Local Talent –Local Pride" in a charity show LIVE AT THE LYCEUM on Sunday the 1st April next. The show is in aid of Cystic Fibrosis. The group will be performing three Formby Numbers followed by a sing along. Do get along if you can to support a worthy charity that badly needs all the funds it can raise. Tickets are on sale at the Crewe theatre. See local press for announcements.

DON'T FORGET AN ARTICLE FOR THE NEWSLETTER.

NEW SOUND EQUIPMENT FOR CREWE SOCIETY

There was the usual splendid attendance at the Crewe February meeting. Alan Newton was the Master of Ceremonies with Glenys Huntington ably assisting him as the show Director. This year we have a planned rota for M.C.'s so you will be seeing some new faces fronting our shows along with the usual favourites of course.

It was strange to be without our faithful Sound Engineer Colin Wood who was away on a short break, but his assistant Alan Chenery was on excellent form and he maintained good sound throughout the night. The Society had, that week, purchased a new sound echo unit and Alan was testing it out for the first time. We were very pleased with the results although there is much to learn when new equipment is introduced. However, the job is in safe hands. We are always doing everything that we can to give you the very best sound, although the more equipment we get the more complicated it all becomes to use. However, we hope that you will all see benefits from the latest acquisition.



Trevor & Ann Colley—blissful as a young courting couple

We were pleased to have with us four new faces in our audience. We welcome them and as they stayed to the very end of the show we are hopeful that we will meet them again next month. Throughout the night we had the usual thrashes along with 13 ukulele solo acts. The funny part of the show was an excellent act by Derrick Jones who explained why Murphy couldn't get to work that day. Derrick's act had the audience laughing in the aisles.

Alison Nadin had us all laughing too with her excellent "vent" act. There are not many ventriloquists about these days and few better than Alison. Her dolls are excellent and very convincing. An unusual speciality act was a highlight of the evening. John Williams from Weston brought along his street organ that he uses to raise funds for charity. John played a medley of war numbers that suited our members. John also has a large mechanical street organ on a truck, which he takes to Steam Fairs and Fetes to entertain the public.

EXHIBITION—The main talk of the evening was the forthcoming Exhibition of George Formby Memorabilia to commemorate 40 years since the death of George in 1961. By the time that you read this it will be all over so we hope that you found it a worthwhile effort. Special thanks to all those who loaned material for the show. Hopefully there will be a video, which will provide us with lasting memories of the special event. Brian Edge.

Paul Woodhead has sent in a great little song for the Guinness Book attempt at setting up a record as the Biggest Banjo Uke Group In The World. More next month.

FAITHFUL CREWE SUPPORTERS HONOURED.

The South Cheshire George Formby Ukulele Society is not just about playing the ukulele, it about people. So it is with pleasure that we can record in our newsletter that Mary and Brian Allen have been made "Alsager's Citizens of the Year". Mary and Brian were presented with a cut glass inscribed ornament by the Alsager Rotary Club to mark the occasion. Mary and Brian received their award for their neighbourliness and for taking hundreds of schoolchildren on holidays all over the country over the last 32 years. We congratulate them both on their achievement.

Robert Muirhead's Church Bulletin

Bloopers

1. The Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
2. The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pan cake breakfast next Sunday
3. A songfest was hell at the Methodist church last Wednesday.
4. Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.
5. Thursday night Potluck Supper. Prayer and medication to follow.
6. The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David, the sin of Rev. and Mrs. Adams.
7. Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
8. Our next song is "Angels We Have Heard Get High."
9. Don't let worry kill you, let the church help.
10. For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
11. This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
12. The senior choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join them.
13. And remember. If ever you are at death's door the church will always pull you through.
14. The five pound note found in the vestry last week has been handed over to our organist, Miss Helen Hunt. Anyone wishing to lay claim to the note will have to go to Hel-en Hunt for it.



Robert Muirhead

VIDEO—Des Redfern will be filming the CREWE EXHIBITION & CONCERT (March 23rd) and the films be on sale at £8 each. Ring Brian on 01270 569836.

UKELELE MARATHON TO COMMEMORATE GEORGE

THIS week is the 40th anniversary of the death of George Formby. March 6, 1961, marked the end of a 40-year career in showbusiness.

Now, George's loyal fans are planning a record-breaking, ukelele-accompanied singalong, which they hope will get them into *The Guinness Book of Records*.

The Lancashire Lad, whose most famous songs were *When I'm Cleaning Windows* and *My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock*, still has a huge following.

"We'll be trying for the ukelele record in Blackpool Winter Gardens in September," said Stan Evans, 72, of The George Formby Society. "Interest is as big as ever and there's a huge fan base.

Our thanks to Jim McDonald, a Formby Fan, of the Weekly News for the above article

and although his father was a successful comedian, he didn't want any of his children to follow him into the business.

So, at the age of seven, young George was sent off to become a jockey.

But when his father died in 1921, George took to the stage, using his father's material.

He built up a highly-successful music-hall act, but it was when he began appearing in films during the 1930s that his popularity rocketed.

By 1939, he was the



George Formby.

highest-paid entertainer in Britain.

His wife, Beryl, had a lot to do with this. She took over the running of his career and became one of the most effective and successful managers in showbiz.

George was awarded the OBE in 1946, and his

career was taking a new turn with success in musical comedy on stage, when he suffered his first heart attack in 1951. He slowly returned to work, but never at the same pace as before.

Strength

He was working in pantomime when Beryl died at their Blackpool home on Christmas Eve, 1960.

"After he lost Beryl, it was only two and a half months until George died," continued Stan.

"She was the strength behind him and did all the business side. I don't suppose George signed a cheque in his life."

George died of a heart attack aged only 56, but his loyal fans continue to keep the flame alive, and will soon be strumming their way into the record books.

Due to licence complications the Wigan Pier Exhibition has been put back to August 11th — 25th, when we hold a concert.

Record

"Sometimes the enthusiasm comes down through families, from generation to generation, but some youngsters see an old George Formby film on TV and drag their parents along.

"And the ukelele is perfect for a child. It's simple to play and not as cumbersome as the guitar. Three chords and you're away!"

The Formby Society's first attempt at the World Ukelele Playing Record will include well over 100 players, performing a song specially written by Stan.

"It'll be the biggest ukelele group in the world," he confidently predicted.

George was born in Wigan on May 26, 1904,

Loss of a Past Prominent Member—

Ray Bernard rang to report the sad loss of an old established member, Steve Miller. Steve was the member who pipped the GFS committee to the post when he successfully bid for items in the Sheffield auction without even being present in the hall.

GFS members were bidding for George's Dallas "D" and mystery bids kept appearing without anyone raising their hands or giving the nod. We kept looking round the hall to see who we were bidding against and in the end agreed that we must have been bidding against the invisible man.

When we enquired about the successful bidder, who was snatching our lots away, we were informed that it was Steve Miller operating his fax machine. In those days fax machines were new to us.

Steve also faxed in bids for George's Ludwig uke but was unsuccessful. It was finally sold to a Mr Walsh, a local dealer who tried to kid the TV and Press that he bought it with the intention of treasuring for the rest of his life. Within a few days he was ringing round the GFS members for a buyer and quick profit. It was sold to Steve who eventually sold it on to George Harrison.

He was a kind hearted man was Steve. And a delightful player. For the Warrington GF exhibition he loaned the two instruments, the Ludwig and the Dallas "D".

THIS regular picture feature in the Daily Mail Readers' Letters page offers you the chance to submit your photographs for publication here. They can be previously unseen, of interesting features and events, fascinating insights into famous people or occasions, or a little bit of history you were able to witness.

EARLY in World War II, George Formby made a film about the RAF called *It's In The Air* at Ealing Film Studios, playing a rookie airman. In one scene he got mixed up with an RAF fire crew and tender. Ealing Fire Brigade provided the tender, and my father, Claude, with two other firemen, went along to take part in the film. George gave my father two photographs with the promise that he would autograph them. Unfortunately he never did. Apparently George was not a happy man on set as Beryl, his wife, was interfering and causing a great deal of aggro.

Martin Gravener, Ruislip Manor, Middx.

■ SEND your pictures, with full details of who and what they depict, as far as you know it, to Picture Panel, Daily Mail, 2 Derry Street, London W8 5TT. Enclose an SAE if you want your picture returned.



Extra: Claude Gravener (middle back) with George

Our Cliff
has been in the
papers again.
The Widnes
Weekly News
recently caught
up with him at
his home in
Frodsham



**That's
Right!**
He's still
popular but
who's that
chap looking
over his
shoulder?

By George he's still popular

TO SOME, he was just a bloke who sang about cleaning windows – but to fans like Frodsham's Cliff Royle, the great George Formby was a leading entertainer of his time.

The comedian's showbusiness career spanned 40 years and during that time, he appeared in 21 hit films, cut more than 230 records and made hundreds of stage appearances.

By 1939, Formby was the most popular and highly paid entertainer in Britain based on the winning combination of personality and talent.

His death in 1961 after a second heart attack shocked and saddened his fans. He was buried in Warrington Cemetery and an estimated 10,000 mourners lined the streets at his funeral.

But his unique brand of entertainment lives on in the hearts of fans like Cliff and other members of the George Formby Society which

regularly celebrates the Lancashire lad's talent and popularity.

Cliff, of Cobalt Court, a keen member of the North Wales branch, said: 'My interest in the ukelele and George Formby started in the 1930s when, as a lad, I was part of a black and white minstrel show.

'This interest was aroused about nine years ago when I visited a George Formby exhibition in the library in Warrington.

'Following this exhibition, there was a tremendous increase in interest in George and his music and I too got hooked.'

Cliff insists the four-stringed Hawaiian guitar is an easy instrument to play, even for those without experience in music.

The International George Formby Society has members who gather four times a year for two day conventions but the enthusiasm for the star is just as great at local level. 'Our meetings in Penyffordd Royal

British Legion Club are held on the first Friday of the month. Normal attendance is about 70 including about 25 players,' said Cliff.

'We put on a good mixed programme. Not only do we play George Formby and other songs but there are also performances by magic, puppet and ventriloquist acts.

'While we welcome new players, we are always glad to see learners and visitors.'

The society often stages concerts for public events and some members go out to provide entertainment for the elderly and interest organisations.

A performance by the branch is also scheduled to take place in Frodsham as part of the town's summer celebrations.

■ For more information on the George Formby Society or any of its branches, contact Cliff on 01928 731088.

George's 16mm Films for Sale.

Is anyone interested in purchasing a 16mm Cine Projector along with several GF films? These were bought at the Sheffield Auction but unfortunately I just haven't the time to spend operating the equipment—although it is quite an interesting hobby to get involved in. The cost of the projector (including splicing equipment) is £80 and the films will be sold at whatever they were purchased at in 1989. These were from £50 upward. If interested please ring me on 01925 727102—Stan Evans.

Sods Law!

Isn't it amazing how things happen at the wrong time. For the past weeks I have been very busy transferring all my GF and Music Hall memorabilia into my office. This has been quite a mammoth task, climbing up and down the steps hundreds of times making sure that every square inch of wall space is completely filled.



Some of the bits and pieces collected over the years

Well, after a couple of back-breaking weeks I'd just completed the job when the phone rang and who should it be but young Connie Edge. "Hello Stan. We've got some news for you. For George's 40th we are holding a George Formby Exhibition at Crewe and we wondered if you would bring along your collection. Well! How can anyone refuse a sweet damsel? "No problem" says I, still as stiff as a board through all the climbing.

GEORGE FORMBY SHOW—Anyway, the good news is that we will have an excellent show at The Crewe Memorial Hall on Friday 23rd March and all are welcome to come along and talk about George. Jon Baddeley will be showing his collection of records and Alison Nadin will be displaying Frankie Wood's theatre props.

SONG CONTRACTS—Among the collection we have 460 George Formby senior and GF junior song assignments. These include songs like "Cleaning Windows, Auntie Maggie's Remedy, Back On The Farm, I'd Do It With A Smile, Swing Mama," and all the others. Among GF senior's collection we have the very popular "Standing At The Corner Of The Street." Also on show will be GF senior's original Band Parts which are almost one hundred years old. It'll be a great show so come along and join in.

Top of the Formby



George Formby FANS—Jimmy Nail turned up at a 1991 Wintergarden's meeting—along with George Harrison—and looked an awesome figure. He approached my little stall and asked for 6 George Formby Drinking Mugs. So maybe he's a keen GF fan.

He also went on stage playing a uke and singing one of George's songs. George Harrison was also encouraged to do a spot with his uke and later invited his son to join him on stage in the thrash.

Paul McCartney was taught to play the uke by his aunt, who was a GF fan and who brought Paul up. Her son, comedian Ted Robins said, "Give her a ring, she'll be pleased to talk to you." Unfortunately I lost her number.

George's Anniversary—Billy Sloan's article appeared in the Sunday Mail on Sunday 4th March, just two days before George's anniversary. I'm sure that Billy wasn't aware of the anniversary, otherwise he would have mentioned it, so I immediately sent him a fax to thank him for the article and to make him aware, and also the importance of his article. He couldn't have timed it better.

Jimmy and George in tribute to ukelele king

By **BILLY SLOAN**

It must rank as the most bizarre jam session in British rock history – the night Jimmy Nail and ex-Beatle George Harrison paid a musical tribute to George Formby.

The showbiz pals grabbed their ukeleles and bashed out a "plinky-plink" version of the Fab Four's classic song, Something.

As they strummed along, another rock star mate, Jim Capaldi of 60s favourites Traffic, joined in on the bongos.

The late-night jam was six months ago when Jimmy was choosing tracks for his latest album, Ten Great Songs & An OK Voice.

Jimmy, soon to be seen in a remake of the classic TV series Auf Wiedersehen Pet, started with a list of 300 songs he loved, and Harrison's ballad was one of those that made it on to the disc – though minus the ukeleles.

Jimmy said: "George wrote the song and there was a moment when I didn't know if he was going to laugh his head off or chuck me out the house."

On the new CD Jimmy covers his favourite songs by acts such as the Rolling Stones, Stevie Wonder and Talking Heads.

When I met the Geordie singer-actor last week at trendy London



Not worthy: Jimmy left after meeting Paul and George



Auf again: Top: Moxley, Bomber, Dennis, Oz, Neville with Barry, Wayne

restaurant Toast he told me: "One night at George's house I said: 'Listen, this will either make you laugh or horrify you.'

"I started playing Something on my ukelele but instead of going mad, he shouted 'Keep going, keep going', grabbed his ukelele and played along.



Hero: Ukelele strumming George Formby

"It sounded alright, but when I went into the studio to make the album I decided not to chance my luck. I did Something in the style of a brass band instead."



Young Cliff Royle our Top, Ace, and smartest dressed news hound, reports on N. Wales. Attendance was down a little this month no doubt due to many having rather bad colds, although some came along to support us, although unable to sing.

Jim Knight did a grand job as M.C. This job is more difficult than one thinks for not only has the M.C. to put together a balanced programme, but has to try to meet people's needs as to when they would like to perform. On top of this is the problem of ensuring that we finish at a reasonable hour for there can be times when one thinks there is going to be a shortage of turns and plans accordingly, only to find the position is eventually reversed and the programme starts overflowing.

Following the minor problems at the last meeting; Deg, Stan and Alison (our sound engineers) had the system working well. These are some of some of the many who work without glory in the background.

We were delighted to have Jim Murphy back with us for a quick visit. He certainly looks very well and seems to be enjoying his work in the Middle East. He brought along his two sons, and young Frank entertained us with songs on his unusual uke.

We now have some great youngsters in Stephen Ensall and Gregory Simister. The latter has only been with us a short time, but is improving rapidly. Apparently he plays both at half seven in the morning and nearly all night. Stan Watkinson played an excellent Stan Evans song to a backing tape, and Brian Ensall got a good cheer for his heart breaking love songs.

Tremendous applause was given to Alison Nadin and her mother, Jean for the two spots they put on with Frankie Wood's Puppets, and the concertina paper demonstration. My personal thanks to all three. It was great.

The party who came from a Frodsham Probus club really enjoyed their evening. One gent brought his wife to celebrate his (their) 44th Wedding Anniversary. He promised her a great night out; cabaret, meal in exclusive surroundings. And he was right. Yes; superb entertainment at the Legion and a pasty; cost 50p.

Recently I have been inundated with phone calls about our branch, and many of these enquiries bear fruit. One was from Jock Carmichael from Bagilt who went on stage for the first time and played very well. He was subsequently getting tips from some of the top-notch players so it looks as if we are in for some good playing from him in the future. He says that his Grandfather had connections with Frank Formby, George's brother, in Allerton Rd, Liverpool.

Should read 23rd March

I have been getting some publicity in a booklet published by the Wrexham Borough Council, but their support has now ceased. However not to be outdone we have managed to get in a new publication being issued by Flintshire Council which will be issued shortly as a What's On Guide for Flintshire. The ultimate aim is to have the information on the Flintshire County Web Site.

I have also received a slightly battered book of Formby songs presented with "Film Fun" of 21st January 1939. (Just three days before I started work)

FORMBY EXHIBITION—We cannot of course forget the support we get from members from Crewe; on this occasion Brian Edge, Alan Newton, Arthur Newton, Walter Kirkland, Alice Cronshaw and Des Redfern. No I haven't forgotten Connie Edge, she too supports us, and this time asked if we would provide as much support as possible on the occasion of their "do" on Friday 2nd March when they will be putting on a Formby Exhibition in the afternoon and following it with a somewhat special concert in the evening. This is in memory of George who sadly passed away 40 years ago.



May I this time offer our thanks to all those who provide raffle prizes. Your support is appreciated, and anyone wishing to donate a prize at any meeting will find it most welcome. Doesn't time fly.

Alex & Kitty from Bonny Scotland—

Let's spare a thought for Alex & Kitty Barrett because while we are outside sunbathing, they are up to their eyeballs in snow. Loads of it!!! They are completely cut off from everybody and it's the worst they've had for 40 years!

They've had no newspapers for a month so they don't know what's going. The world might have come to an end as far as they are aware and nobody's told them. They've not seen the milkman for 6 weeks so it's no use going there for a cup of tea. Anyway they are keeping very busy because they are all outside building igloos for the neighbours and when they've finished they'll be sending you all invitations to their housewarming parties. Take a shovel and a bottle of milk.

Alex & Kitty have been members of the GFS almost since day dot and Kitty does a great job every meeting organising the raffles. With a name like "Kitty" you've got to be a fund raiser! Not much GF activity goes in Bonnie Scotland so Alex & Kitty enjoy making the trip to Blackpool every three months. Hope you can both make the March meeting. Keep shovelling.

ONE LINERS URGENTLY WANTED TO FILL IN THE SMALL SPACES

DON'T FORGET, SALE MAY MEETING IS ON SATURDAY 19TH MAY

WARTIME NEWSPAPER REPORT

George & Beryl at Bank Quay Railway Station—The

last time the Warrington Guardian reporter went to see George & Beryl Formby, their train passed through without stopping at the Warrington Bank Quay railway station. His report went: "Here's George—that was."

However, on Tuesday morning he was more fortunate for the Fylde Express, carrying George and his wife Beryl south on their way to France to entertain the troops, stopped for three minutes in Bank Quay station.

Before the train stopped, George's head was through the window, "Hello Fred & Jessie" he shouted., as he spied Mr & Mrs Fred Bailey, two Warrington friends. "Here's my oranges" said Beryl, as Fred handed her a paper bag. "Wrong again" she said laughingly as she pulled out a peach



Both George & Beryl looked in the pink. "I am looking forward to this trip," said George, "and I'll certainly do my best to cheer the boys up."

He explained that during the week-end he signed up as an official A.R.P Warden at Castleford. "I'll bet I'm the first to be given the freedom of all A.R.P. points in Yorkshire," he added. "And Beryl has enrolled as an honorary member of the W.A.T.S.

It was rather strange that as George looked out of the window, another head popped out of the adjoining coach. Mrs Bailey recognised Mr Harry Smirke of Morecambe Winter Gardens and a friend of the famous comedian. Neither had been aware that the other was on the train.

"Well Cheerio, We'll probably be seeing Warrington soon," shouted George as the train steamed away from the platform.

Olwen Gale to the rescue!

In the last issue (69) Brian Edge reported that Glenys played a tune called "Perdido" but she didn't know what the word meant as it is not in the English dictionary. Well Olwen reports that it isn't in the English dictionary because it is a Spanish word which means "Lost."

Very interesting Olwen. So when Glenys stated that she didn't know what Perdido meant she was actually Perdidoed because she was Lost for an answer. Thanks Olwen. IF ANYONE OUT THERE IS PERDIDOED FOR AN ANSWER, DROP US A LINE.

SALE IS SWINGING by Cyril Palmer

True! Our February meeting was thoroughly enjoyable, with wide enough variety and some surprises. This was in spite of the absence of North West Editor Stan. (But I hasten to add that we did miss our monthly mag.) Reading reports of difficulties at other venues, I am pleased to say that our sound equipment is performing well, ably controlled by Alan Southworth and Dick Eaves through the evening. We hope to purchase a decent monitor in the near future. (In my young days a monitor refilled inkwells and gave out pens and pencil. How our use of words changes over the years.



Ged Collins arrived with Phil Jones and his daughter Tammy. Tammy surprised those who had not yet seen the transformation from a small schoolgirl to a delightful young woman. We hope she will sing for us soon.

Ged, with his very individual (manic?) style has become a favourite with our members. For starters, he wowed us with "Forty Shades of Green" Phil adds 60s numbers to his Formby repertoire, but also loves 30s & 40s material. Recently he has sung Irvine Berlin songs (a la Astaire). This time TT Races was followed by "White Tie, Top Hat & Tails." He didn't tap dance though).

Brian Edge put on the style coming to the stage accompanied by a fanfare. (If you got it, flaunt it! - and why not?). One of Connie Edge's songs expressed the spirit of our meetings as well as stirring memories—"Enjoy Yourself" We certainly did.

Young Ben Hallewell is still at an early age, but has already had a go at writing a piece of his own, - talk about growing in confidence! Alice Cronshaw is now performing more regularly. After owning up to having a "Boyfriend" she sang to Frankie Woods one of his songs "Maybe I Was A Fool."

Alison Nadin was magic and challenged us to explain how her magic tricks worked. There were no takers. There was much more, Margaret Moran, Alan Southworth, Walter Kirkland, Arthur Newton, Brian Jolly sang, but also brought Uncle Jim (Jolson) Jolly. The final surprise was the appearance from Yorkshire of Dickie Speake and Roy Fielding. Roy's contribution was "Albert and the Lion" followed by a harmonica medley. After Dickie, as only he can, a man who had not heard him before said, "By heck, he can rattle a uke can't he I can't argue with that. It was a rare, but welcome visit. Les Pearson kindly stepped in to M/C the second half of the concert.

ONE DATE CHANGE—We are now established at the Holy Family Parish Centre for the year, every 3rd Fri. EXCEPT MAY, when we meet on SAT MAY 19th. *Thanks Cyril. Sorry I wasn't with you on the night but Eva & I experienced the worst Flu bout ever. We thought we were dying! (and I've had a flu jab). I like your headline. Like "Monitor" "Swinging" also has a different meaning. Well if that doesn't pack em in, what will?*

George's Racing Colours—From George's Suitcase

A letter from Weatherby & Sons, 15 Cavendish Square, London W1, was sent to George at Hippodrome Theatre, Preston, on May 11th, 1920 (George was 16—9 months before his father died):

Dear Sir, In reply to your letter of the 10th inst, your Colours are registered for life under the Rules of Racing as— Dark purple, cerise sleeves and buttons, and black cap.

We are under the opinion that you should race under the name of Mr George Formby as before. Yours Faithfully, Weatherby & Sons



His smile was infectious at 10

The Mixture—A Comedy Double Act for Two Men

Part of a script written by Sydney Revill for George Formby

Scene: Doctor's Surgery. Characters: Doctor (straight). Patient (comedy)

Patient: Good morning doctor

Doctor: Good morning, name please

P: Simson

D: Employment?

P: No thanks

D: Your employment?

You work don't you?

P: I said my name was Simson,
not Samson

D: What can I do for you

P: I've come for some medicine

D: Run down?

P: No, I've come on the tram

.....

■ George Again - Just listening to ■
 ■ Manchester Radio and Jeanette ■
 ■ Kennedy is interviewing ??? ■
 ■ - a very talented impersonator. ■
 ■ When she asked if he could mimic ■
 ■ George Forman (boxer), he said, ■
 ■ "no problem, I enjoyed him singing ■
 ■ Cleaning Windows. ■

.....

Richard Booth Emails— I have this idea my Grandad is related to George Formby. It may be nothing but he has mentioned it in the past. He, like Mr Formby was bought up in Lancashire, but sadly my Grandad never talks about his family. My Grandad, Walter Booth was born in 1922 in Westhoughton, Lancashire. Do you have any records of him being a family member as it is interesting me. Regards Richard Booth. *Sorry I can't help you Richard. The best person to ask is your Grandad. Perhaps one of the Westhoughton group might do some research.*

And Here's the list for the French Trip

Colin & Chris Wood - Crewe
Alan & Pat Chenery - Crewe
Des Redfern - Crewe
Peter & Cynthia Whittaker - Macclesfield
Tom & Nora Meredith - Port Sunlight
Tony & Marg Elsdon - Chester
Harry & Elsie Walton - Crewe
Paul & Gill Woodhead - Telford
Gerry Robinson & Betty Cox - Telford
Walter Kirkland & Alice Cronshaw - Crewe
Peter Kirkland - Crewe
Bill & Sheila Found - Crewe
Arthur & Mary Newton - Macclesfield
Peter and Joan Cain - Hanley
Derek & Gill Platt - Crewe
Dennis & Lesley Lee - Buckley
Dominic & Mildred McGee - Leeds
David & Margaret Davies - Chester
Ray & Rita Martin - Caergwrie
Stan & Eva Evans - Warrington
George & Mary Atkinson - Leeds
Edwin & Ruth Kennedy - Warrington
Alwyn Gayle - Gatley Cheadle
Derek & June Price - Wrexham
Alan & Eunice Evans - Redditch
ALL SEATS NOW TAKEN and we are

looking forward to a good trip. Let's hope the coach is up to our usual standard.

ANOTHER WARTIME NEWSPAPER REPORT-George Formby was making "Let George Do It" when I popped over to Ealing Studios. He was getting himself all mixed up with Secret Service and winning a U-Boat war with his ukulele. In between times he has been entertaining the troops, and then planning a flying visit—literally—to France, to give the boys in the trenches something to laugh about. The "Dick Whittington" at Leeds.

He told me of one camp he visited on the Home Front. It was somewhere in the Air Force and the concert was to take place in a hanger. George went along early and found a very self-conscious young man scrubbing the floor. George said "Hello" and the floor scrubber said something in response. "I've met you before, haven't I?" said George. "Yes, I was in Jack Payne's Band," was the reply.

That night the young musician was playing in the orchestra again. These boys are very versatile.

Super Star Cliff Royle has

sent in a list of entries he has taken from an Irish Medical Dictionary. . .

Artery—Study of painting
Bacteria— Back door of a café
Barium— What doctors do after death
Bowel— A letter like AEIOU
Caesarean section— Roman council estate
Catscan— Searching for Kitty
Cauterise— Made eye contact with her
Coma— A punctuation mark
Dilate— Live longer
Enema— Not a friend
Genital— A soldier's ballgame
Impotent— Distinguished, well known
Labour pain— Hurt at work
Medical staff— Doctors cane
Nitrate— Cheaper than day rate
Node— Was aware of
Outpatient— A person who has fainted
Pelvis— Elvis's brother
Recovery room— Place to do Upholstery
MORE NEXT MONTH

Dallas "D" Uke for Sale—Evelyn Gerrard on 01244 344721 is selling a Dallas "D" uke with case. The uke is in first class condition so give her a ring if you are interested. Kind hearted Evelyn said, "The uke is for sale at £325—which is what I paid for it a few months ago, however, if anyone is interested I will throw in approx £80s worth of bits and pieces—instruction book, GF song book, videos, tapes etc, free of charge.

Les Dawson on Sky TV Blankety Blank impersonated George playing a make believe uke. He sang to the tune of "Skip To The Loo"

My Auntie Maggie by mistake Put senna pods in her currant cake
The only advice that she could make Was Skip To The Loo My Darling

Les proved just what a good impressionist he was when he impersonated George.

Wigan Invite We have been invited, along with many other groups, to take part in a Wigan Outdoor Event called May Dayze which will be held on Saturday 26th May from 11.30am to 3.30pm. Location to be decided.



Also at Leigh—The same event will be held in Leigh on the following day 27th May, between 12 noon and 4pm. The sites to be allocated will be in the town centres.

Come on lads, smarten up. Some are facing the wrong camera!

Just received an Email from Westhoughton organiser Gerry Mawdsley, who says that his group will be interested in handling the Leigh session. More news as it comes in.

Keen Eyed Albert Seaborn spotted an error in the Latest Vellum, Winter 2000. My article on "Which Uke Did George Play In His Films" claimed that no uke was used when he sang Wigan Garden in "No Limit." Quite right Albert, but I've just checked my records, which are correct. He played a small wooden uke, so, it's a printers error. Thanks for writing in Albert. Hope you are keeping well.

DON'T FORGET AN ARTICLE FOR THE NEWSLETTER

George's Photo and Autograph For Sale—

Here's an opportunity to buy George's postcard size photo with his autograph. George gave out many autographs and for the fighting forces he signed French five franc notes in pencil. But there's very few signed photos around. Some claim that Beryl would sell the signed photos to his fans but I'm not sure if that is true or not. I don't think so.



SOLED
David Abbott, on 017684 82296 wishes to sell a GF signed photo to the highest bidder so if you are interested then give him a ring. The signed photo on the right is my own property and not the one that David is offering. However, it could be assumed that the one on offer is similar.

And Don't Forget the GF Autograph (not a photo) that was offered last month in the March issue. This also is available to the best offer, - the latest bid stands at £40. Contact me with your offer as the autograph is under lock and key at my home. Proceeds go to Blackpool Branch. (JM)

Pro Artist's Dallas "C" for Sale—Mrs Lane on

01204 571185 (Bolton) is selling a Dallas "C" model which belonged to her husband, Maurice Lane, who was a professional artist. Price £200. She told me this week that her husband, when on stage, was the image of George and had all his characteristics to perfection.

Cliff Royle was given A GF Song Book and inside was this poem -

Sing a song of ukuleles, pockets full of swing
Laughter that delights the heart and brightens everything
Sing a song of Formby, our reet gradely lad
How could the weather make you glum or buff forms make you sad

Sing a song of ukuleles, pockets full of mirth
Have a joke with Formby, the funniest chap on earth
When you see his antics, bound you are to fall
For Britain's best comedian, monarch of them all. Thanks Cliff.

Look to this day. Yesterday is already a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision. But today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope.

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 Thursday 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. DATE CHANGE For MAY Meeting Only—Sat May 19th

Crewe Branch - Wistaston Memorial Hall - Every 4th Friday in the month - 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.

