

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 73

Vol. 5
No.13
July 2001



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Welcome to Newsletter No.73

and it has certainly been a hectic May month. All the action started with the Wigan May Dayze when our gang was invited to perform in the Wigan Town Centre. Once again we were blessed with great hot sunshine and the event flowed like best wine. More on page 4.

Trip To France—June 8th to the 11th. Colin & Christine Wood and Alan Chenery did a grand job in organising the French Trip, - mind you, they didn't plan the timing of the first pick-up very well as the coach was programmed to arrive at my house at 4.30 in the morning (It's no wonder Colin said, "Don't open the envelope till I've gone") However you can't beat a good early start.

They prepared a first class Information Booklet giving all the necessary information: Pick up points, List of members, Various information, Guide to French Francs, French map, Mobile Phone numbers etc. all of which came in very handy.

Once we boarded the coach it was a "laugh a minute trip" as everybody had set their minds to having a fun time irrespective of what goes wrong. More in centre pages.

Tough Luck at Sale—It certainly was a confused meeting at Sale because as soon as the members turned up, they were informed that the room had been double booked and the meeting had to be cancelled. Cyril rang as many people as possible to save them making the journey but unfortunately some didn't receive the message in time.



Before giving up hope they attempted to contact other venues, however, it wasn't their lucky night and they had no alternative but to return home.

Over the years Sale, have had some bad luck with double bookings. When they had regular bookings at the Sale Hotel they were informed at the last minute that the room had been booked to another party and similar happened at the Brooklands Sports Club, - although they did accommodate us for the night in the bar lounge.

It is unfortunate that they can't get settled with a permanent venue because they work extremely hard with their preparation and they are always adding something new to the programme. Let's hope that all goes well for them.

YOU'VE GONE AND FORGOTTEN THE NEWSLETTER AGAIN!

French Trip Chaos—No names mentioned but three of our group were accompanying each other late at night from our concert café back to the hotel. Now the distance was about 400 yards and it was a straight road. It was impossible to get lost! - don't you believe it! Somehow the little group (one man misguided by two ladies) took a wrong turn and finished up walking down the wrong street. I went back to look for them—nothing! I contacted the lads and they immediately ran in different directions all round the streets and buildings, - Nothing! We covered every square inch of the area, Nothing! - PANIC!

Expecting that they may have been mugged and dumped, I searched the bushes and shrubberies, Nothing! By now we were thinking the worst—PANIC! An hour later—amidst the chaos, I heard a voice, "Don't worry, they've arrived back at the hotel."

Although they were only 100 yards away from the hotel they'd lost the trail, so what did they do? They caught a taxi and being in a one-way system the driver had to travel all round the town to get back to the place he started from. Naturally the driver didn't want to lose three fares so he didn't tell them that they were a spitting distance from the hotel. The following night we all kept our eyes on the three happy wanderers.

Thanks from Dennis & Lesley Lee—Many of you will have heard of our plans to eventually settle in sunny Cyprus. Lesley and I would like to thank sincerely the Penyffordd & Crewe Branches for the lovely present of a wall clock on the occasion of our expected departure from the area. It really did come as a complete surprise. We were also gobsmacked by the many kind comments and sentiments given to us. Thank you one and all.

HOWEVER—Our latest information indicates that our prospective purchaser is on the point of pulling out of the sale. We are likely therefore to be around for quite some time yet until another buyer can be found. All this happened whilst we were on the trip to Lille in France. The trip was excellent and our thanks go to the Wood's and Chenery's for organising it.

DELIGHTED SCHOOL KIDS—Whilst waiting for the coach in Bruges a school opened it's doors and out spewed about 60 primary school children en route to the baths. They danced up and down to the sound of our ukes and it really was a sight to see.

APPLAUSE—Another memorable occasion was when we played on the return ferry crossing, where we received tremendous applause.

FAWLTY TOWERS CAFÉ—One of many humorous moments was when Stan ordered eggs for tea and ended up with some amorphous mess resembling cheese soup! The trip was a roaring success that everyone enjoyed.

Thanks Dennis. If you buy a large hotel in Cyprus we'll organise a Springfield trip.

Wigan May Dayze—Well Wigan did us proud on Saturday the 26th May. They organised a street entertainment show and sent us an invite to come along to do our stuff. About 25 turned up in total and the sun shone gloriously for the whole of the afternoon.



Wigan's Monologue Joe

Monologue Joe started the ball rolling with an hour of Wigan type verses which he'd possibly written himself. He was good, "Tha can't beat getting a few meat

pies darn thee lad," was part of his poem, and the crowd loved him.

Next on the bill was our George Formby players who dragged the crowd in from the full length of Market Street. Even the Chariot Duo on the right stopped to see what it was all about. One of our gang looked at the palefaced chap, who towed the cart, and asked him if he'd been ill.



The Lord of Wigan rides rickshaw.



Pam Baddeley looked wonderful in her ornamental top.

The gang played all George's popular songs, "Windows" - "Lamp Post" - "Wu" - "Ukulele" - "Rock" - "Maggie" "Express" and many more and the crowd was delighted. One old lady came to the front to thank us for keeping George's memory and songs alive.

Next on the bill was a group of smart looking dancers who couldn't wait any longer for us to leave the stage so they danced happily to George's songs. If one or two duff chords were coming from Cliff Royle's uke it was because he was taking a special interest in the pretty dancers.

We were informed by the council that a P.A. System would be provided along with as many mike as we wanted and enough power to flood Wigan. Well, what a grand set up it was. 1100 watts per speaker—which is a lot of watts. It was great to turn up without having to carry loads of equipment—quite a change!

After the concert we were invited to have a snack at the local art centre and the gang tucked in merrily. A good day all round and the weather was excellent. We did George proud in his own town.

Jonathan & Pam Baddeley Pay Tribute to

Dennis & Lesley Lee



Tom & Nora Meredith Zoe Renilson, Dennis Lee and Jim Griffiths . Zoe represented the Wigan Council.

We have learnt that Dennis and Lesley will shortly be leaving us for new pastures. They will both be very much missed. Through the Newsletter, we would like to say thanks for all that they have done to further the name of our George.

We wish them well in all that they do and hope to see them occasionally at George Formby events.

Thanks Jon & Pam. Yes it came as quite a shock when we were informed that they have almost sold their house with a view to moving to Cyprus, - after a short spell in Kent. Well, I'm sure that everybody joins us in wishing the very best for their future. The GFS won't be the same without them! Dennis is a natural "Let's Have A Go" Member!

NEW MINI DISC PLAYER—Several players are now

using mini disks rather than tapes. In fact, tapes are becoming quite rare at the meetings and the sooner we all switch over the better as it saves having to set up a tape player, and also the awful job of searching for the beginnings of songs.

Mini discs—which hold about 30 songs each—fit comfortably in your top pocket so it solves the problem of having to carry a box full of tapes. But, some players, with large repertoires, are now carrying as many as 10 discs.

SO GOOD NEWS—SONY have come up with a new hand held Disc Player that holds 4 times as many songs: about 120 in total—up to 320 minutes playing time. So if you are considering purchasing a player take a look at the new long players. **CURRY'S** are currently offering them at £199.95 and £179.99 and both are complete with remote control. No doubt in a short time the prices will be coming down. If you are considering purchasing a long player make sure that you can record on it as well as play.

6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* **Currys Price £199.95**

MINIDISC LONG PLAY

These 2 Sony MiniDisc Walkman Stereo Long Play Recorders, which quadruple the recording length of MiniDisc. In 5 minutes, you can now record up to 120 minutes of music onto a standard 10 blank mini-disc.

SONY MiniDisc Recorder

- Long play mode
- Multi-track
- Remode control
- CD, probe, etc.
- 100 level
- Auto recording
- Model: MDR-100, 102

SONY MiniDisc Recorder

- Long play mode
- 1. Protection
- High level play
- Model: MDR-100, 102

WALKMAN **Currys Price £179.99**

DON'T FORGET THE NEWSLETTER.



Cliff Royle Our Supersonic Star Reporter Sends in all the latest News from N. Wales. This was in a way one of our saddest meetings when it was finally announced that our mentors, Dennis and Lesley Lee, would be leaving us for more sunny climates. They will be greatly missed for without them our branch would never have been formed, and would not have been so successful. So thanks Dennis and Lesley.

We had performances by our usual hardcore of artists, supported as always by our friends from Crewe. Among of the entertainers who did something rather different were; M.C. Jim Knight who played Alexander's Ragtime Band to his own backing. Jim said he had been given a CD on which George Formby was said to have played this on the uke banjo. Alison Nadin performed her new ventriloquist act with Daisy the bird. June Griffiths, our latest recruit, both played and joked.

And first-timers from Crewe; singer Vera Jones, and Peter Cain who got a great ovation for his performance of "Putting On The Style". Peter's one comment at the end of the evening was "Them pies were great". How many did he have Geoff?

Youngsters Gregory Simister and Stephen Ensal did well. Stephen seems to have gained a lot of confidence of late which showed in his superb breaks made during his playing, and Gregory thrashed away so hard that it was difficult for the audience to hear the backing. So take it is a bit easier Gregory. Stephen now has another talent as he showed in singing a duet with his father, Brian. They sounded great together.

Dennis Lee's possible last performance at Penyffordd was "Out In The Middle-East" ably supported by sand dancers Alan Chenery, Jonathan Baddeley and three of our young members, with backing from bones player, Walter Kirkland. Sorry Dolwen Shone was not with us. Apparently she is not too well at present. Get well soon.

During the evening a presentation was made on behalf of members of the branch to Dennis and Lesley in recognition of all the hard work and support they had given to the club over the years. The gift was a wall clock. Does that account for the Daily Post photographer been present?

After the final thrash, all joined in playing and singing "We'll Meet Again". A somewhat sad ending to a memorable meeting. However in spite of everything the club will continue. We already have offers of help, but if anyone thinks they can assist and wishes to do so please let us know. Our meeting should be a bit special. Hopefully we will have a massed band playing it's "Somebody's Wedding Day" so come prepared.

Thanks Cliff. Can we take the clock back if Dennis doesn't sell his house?

David Bret is back again—Author, David Bret, has a reputation for rubbishing all the top stars and George was his latest victim. In the Daily Telegraph, on May 19th, a large article appeared written by Roger Wilkes and in it he supports Bret's unfounded claim that George was a philanderer, their marriage was loveless, George was tight-fisted, Beryl was a drunkard who flew into rages when she heard of his carryings on, and he had affairs with Pat Howson and Yana. He also suffered from stage fright and deep depressions.

But Bret has no guarantee that any of these accusations are true. When he first came on the scene, a couple of years back, he rang me up and the very first words he said were, "I enjoy writing about dead people because they can't sue you." No doubt he was admitting that he was about to print a load of lies. He had no evidence whatsoever that George had affairs and I am surprised that the press are allowed to print such stuff.



George's valet, Harry Scotham, started the rumours when he reported to the press that he heard George speaking to Yana on the phone. He claims that George said, "Well the opportunity is there if you want it," - which doesn't mean that they were having an affair. He also claimed that George was tight with his money but it was a well known fact that Beryl had all the dealings with the money.

THE FAIRCLOUGHS—Peter and Anna Fairclough have lived at Beryldene, 199 Inner Promenade, Lytham St Annes, since 1988. George and Beryl bought the house from Josef Locke when he ran back to Ireland to escape the taxman's clutches.

Back in 1991, Eva & I took Louie, George's sister, to Beryldene and Anna kindly showed us round the house. It was quite a treat being shown round the house where George and Beryl lived. It was interesting that George had used the attic as a Prop's and Costumes Room exactly like his father had done when George was a child. Peter & Anna were interested in George. In fact, they joined the GFS and attended some of the Wintergarden meetings.

Uke For Sale—Ray Davies on 01745 583509 is selling a Markendale Junior, resonator, with a soft case. Good sound, good condition. Price £230.

Nelson was dying on board ship HMS Victory when he looked up and said, "Kiss me Hardy." Hardy muttered, "All these years on board ship together and now he asks me."

Wild Animal at Crewe Uke Concert



We were a little concerned that we may be down on artistes for our May concert but we need not have worried for although we had apologies from Alan Newton, Glenys Huntington, Dennis Lee, Colin Wood and Stan Evans (where is that **guy**?) we were delighted to have Paul Woodhead, Cyril Palmer, Phil Jones and Jed Collins who along with all the other artistes produced an excellent concert. We had a big surprise too when Geoff and Dolwyn Shone called in whilst on their way back home from holiday. That was really nice for us.

We had four special guests, members of the select ancient and honourable *Never Again Club*. This small group of businessmen travel great distances to attend their events. They have tried horse racing and dog racing meetings, picnicked in dress suits at the Roman fort on the top of Hard Knot Pass in Lakeland on a wet Christmassy day, attended a session of All-in Wrestling and even attended the Laurel and Hardy Society. In correspondence I did warn them that if they decided to come, they might possibly breach their constitution! They agreed to take a chance. As I had expected they were all highly delighted with the evening's entertainment and they said that they would be very happy to return, as individuals of course, rather than in the official capacity of the *Never Again Club*! It was a pleasure to have them.

Jonathan Baddeley and Pamela were M.C. and Concert Producer respectively and it was not a surprise that they produced a really good balanced show. Pamela working industriously without being noticed and Jonathan was his usual witty self, giving the audience lots of fun and at the same time passing on information about George between acts. It was great to have Paul Woodhead with us again. Paul is a Country style singer with his own style of uke playing. Paul played his own composition that he had written specially for the now defunct Formby Wigan Exhibition and concert. It was very enjoyable and we hope he will be able to modify it so that he can use it again in the future.

Paul then picked up his mandolin and invited Ron Whiston and Jed Collins onto the stage. It seemed that they had rehearsed the next number in the car park outside the hall. Ron on the bones and Jed on the penny whistle it really went down well, an excellent performance. Come and see us again soon Paul. Phil Jones then gave us a taste of medley playing on the ukulele. Phil explained that he really enjoyed fiddling around with his ukulele looking for the right chords for his medleys rather than being a stand up performer, but I can tell readers that Phil has always been popular when he has been on the mike as he always plays something different. His performance covered a "Whispering" medley, followed by rock and roll and even the Beatles. Quite a variety but Phil is just as likely to perform Cole Porter or Al Bowley but that will be another time and we all look forward to seeing him again.

Jed Collins has established himself all over as a zany uke entertainer who can very

quickly have the audience rolling in the isles. Somewhere in the middle of his speedy, non-stop strumming on his battered wooden ukulele, accompanied by the beating of time from the knee downward, his expressions of pain, and his coughing and whistling, is a song! Jed is a very funny act although having said that he can be a very sweet and sentimental singer. I used to think that no-one put more into his act than Lonnie Donegan, but I have to say Jed too gets 10 out of 10 for effort and everyone it seems loves him.



Zany Jed Collins

I hope Ken Smith has read this article. I've been referred to as a GUY!!!! - Me! A GUY! Sort him out Connie.

Some readers

wanted to know why they were not informed of the

George Formby film, "Trouble Brewing" that was to be shown at the Plaza Cinema, Stockport on Friday 25th May. Well I did publish it in the Newsletter but nobody appears to have followed it up.

I received a phone call from the manager asking if I would organise loads of members to support the occasion. I assumed from the conversation that he wanted all the members to turn up along with a large group of players to make the night a special occasion. I told him that the 25th was the same night as the Crewe meeting so it would be a difficult task trying to get a whole band of players there. However, as the conversation went on I realised that it wasn't players he needed. He wanted the members to turn up along with all their friends to fill the house. In other words: "Bums on seats!"

Talking of George's Film

—Some years ago the Greenhall family owned one of the largest breweries in our area. The family lived in Warrington as far back as they could remember and Edward Greenhall was given the title "Lord Daresbury." Edward and his parents invited George & Beryl down to their manor house on many occasions and he rode their horses. About 12 years ago they had a few problems with the brewery side of the business so they sold out to Walker Breweries of Leeds. I received a phone call one day, about 10 years ago, and it was from Edward Greenhall, "Hello Stan, Lord Daresbury here, can you send me a copy of one of George Formby's films? I'll leave you to select one for me. Well you can guess which one I sent, "Trouble Brewing" but unfortunately, just like a Lord, he didn't get the joke. Anyway, he was a grand sort. He gave us £700 towards the Warrington Exhibition and was a member of the GFS until he died about three or four years back.

TWO UKES FOR SALE

—Tony Marshall on 0113 2740111 is offering a couple of bargains. BACON UKE BANJO, 1928, similar to Baby Gibson, resonator, 16 tension ukes, smart deluxe felt lined shaped case, £325. ALSO—1920s MAYBELL, SLINGERLAND—details as above, also £325. This is a good opportunity to own an original pre-war uke. They'll never lose value.

Ee Bah Gum We Had A Grand Do. Our grateful thanks to Chris & Colin Wood and Alan Chenery for their effort in organising a GRAND TRIP to Flanders Fields, France. All went like a dream, - apart from the 4.30am (in the morning!!!!) hiccup, when the driver overslept for an hour and a half, and got hopelessly lost driving round and round a Crewe Superstore car park. However the trippers enjoyed every minute and were determined not to let super snags dampen their spirits. Once again Dennis Lee paraded his merry men round the ship's deck with a firm message, "YOU NEED TO BE ENTERTAINED!!!" And entertain them they did! Everybody on the boat soon knew the words to Lamp Post.



On the way to the Express Holiday Inn Hotel, Peter Williams, our Welsh tour guide, gave details of the one-day trips to Flanders Fields, The Somme, and the famous Toth H House, at Poperinge, which was created by two Chaplains, Philip (Tubby) Clayton and Neville Talbot. Jacques Ryckebosch, the local born curator, who has dedicated his life to guiding the parties round Toth H, explained that the house was converted to a rest home for the allied soldiers who needed a break between battles. Tubby, an expert in convincing and persuading people, scrounged furniture and encouraged workers to build a chapel in the top attic, and also a relaxing garden area in the outside grounds. Many thousands of soldiers passed through the house to seek comfort.



Tubby Clayton

Jaqes told of the time when the German army forced the allies back and how the villagers gathered all the furniture, which included a piano and two small church organs, and hid them in their homes until the Germans were driven out. The furniture, including the organs and piano are still there and in good condition.



Peter Williams

Tubby was famous also for the posters he hung around the house : - "Wastepaper Baskets are purely ornamental." - "Come into the garden and forget about the war." and others. It was easy to see that the joinery work had been carried out by amateur volunteers. The stairs up to the attic chapel were so deep they were near to dangerous. However they have stood the test of time since the first world war.

It was by coincidence that the story of the Christmas Truce was told because Liverpool's Stan Watkinson has been learning this for his appearances with the Irish Guards Songsters, who entertained recently with Ken Dodd at the Royal Philharmonic Hall. They have produced a CD which includes Christmas Truce and it is well worth buying. The story goes that First World War soldiers on the front line, ceased fire on Christmas Day to play football together and sing songs. The following morning they began again to kill each other.



Christmas Truce

It was all very moving and especially when we read:

“We will not grow old as have, who are left, grow old. Age shall not weary them. At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we shall remember them. We SHALL remember them.

ALICE CRONSHAW—At times every minute was filled with fun. This triggered off Alice Cronshaw's infectious, rat—tat—tat laugh, which at regular intervals echoed throughout the hotel and coach.



Olwen Gale

OLWEN GALE—Olwen explained that she followed the “LADIES” posters at Dover docks but finished up in the gents toilets. Amidst the uproar, she faced up to the men explaining that the posters led her there.

THE STREAKER—Tom Meredith, after a night out, caused a riot when he woke up in the middle of the night—clad only in his underpants. After attempting to get inside the wardrobe (for the toilet), he ended up in the corridor with the door locked behind him.

Gerry Robinson missed the photo shot when she was queuing for ice creams so here she is.

Nora woke up when she heard low taps and whispers from the door. She couldn't believe for one minute that he'd locked himself out so she went back to sleep again. Finally she opened the door and said, “What on earth are you doing out there?”



The Streaker

The following breakfast Tom's Underpants Experience was the main topic. We all knew about it but nobody owned up to having spread the news. Maybe they picked him up on the Security Cameras and thought it was a Stalker. It might turn up on “You've Been Framed.”

Loads Of Kids!!!!!! - Just received a copy of the Essex Newsletter—The Lamp Post—from Andy Eastwood and what a treat when I saw an article covering the Dutch Gothenburg Ukulele Festival and all the Ukulele Kids that took part. Some twelve years ago, when the GFS was buzzing with kids, we took a bunch of them over to Holland and the Dutch members were delighted to see them. It now appears that almost all our youngsters have deserted us while the Dutch have encouraged theirs to strum their ukes and play their part in helping to keep George's name alive over the coming years. Well we wish them all the luck in the world. They deserve it!



A Letter from France NEWSPAPER ARTICLE—a member of George Formby's variety unit, which is entertaining the troops in France, is Terry Wilson who is well known to the theatre public of Blackpool. In a letter to the "The Diary" Terry says that George is, as they say in the profession, "a riot."

I feel more than pleased, and not a little proud, to have been given the opportunity to do my bit in entertaining the troops, writes Terry. It is a delight that that can never be expressed in words to see these hundreds of brave Tommies enjoying a well-earned spot of relaxation, and the experience of knowing that one is giving a little pleasure is most gratifying.

Beryl and George, he adds, have brought out with them hundreds of scarves, balaclava helmets, mittens and socks, knitted by girl members of the pantomime company in which they have been appearing recently, as well as many people who sent them to the company for distribution when they visited the troops.

Several of these gifts are distributed at every performance we give, and as a little note of good wishes and the address of the donor is attached to each, these good people can look forward to receiving a letter of thanks from the boys who receive them.

Joe Taylor Continues—Dr Murphy was showing a rich American visitor round the hospital in Dublin. They came to a bed in which was a man with one arm, "poor chap," said the American, "I'll donate £1,000 into the hospital to help in the good work." Further along the ward they came to a bed in which was a chap with one arm and one leg. The American was moved and said, "I'll double my donation to £2,000." Dr Murphy thought that here was an opportunity to get some more money for the hospital. They came to a bed where there was a single tooth lying on pillow. "how dreadful," said the American, "is that all that is left of the poor fellow?" - "It's worse than that," said Dr Murphy, "he's having it out tomorrow."

IT PAYS TO LISTEN -

When God gave out brains, I thought He said "trains" and I missed mine.
When God gave out looks, I thought He said "books" and I didn't want any.
When God gave out noses, I thought He said "roses" and I asked for a red one.
When God gave out chins, I thought He said "gins" and I ordered a double.
When God gave out ears, I thought He said "beers" and I asked for two long ones.
When God gave out heads, I thought He said "beds" and I asked for a soft one.
Since then I'm trying to listen better.

SOME KINDLY OBSERVATIONS -

His remark of a had as much effect as a poultice on a wooden leg.
His face looked as if it had been assembled by a drunken mechanic.
He should go far! Australia perhaps.
The speaker was very Rolls-Royce in that he was very well-oiled, scarcely audible, and gave the impression that he would go on forever.
The French horn player, in our local orchestra, is a strong individualist who sees small point in collaborating with his colleagues.
He has the charming habit of being last in the queue but first on the bus.
He never uses one word when eight will do.
To watch him pay for a round of drinks is to watch him die a slow death.
He's as useful as an ashtray on a motorbike.
He's seen better days, but not recently.
He has nothing to say, and he says it.
He looked as nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs.
They threw away the mould before they made him.

Des (Changing Trains At Crewe) Redfern

On the French Trip Des explained how he took a friend home by train from Crewe and when he returned back to Crewe again he found that the carriage door wouldn't open. He shouted to everybody to bring the guard but they ignored him. The train set off again and he had to travel the 33 miles to Warrington to jump into another carriage to get back to Crewe again. *You are not telling us that she actually believed that story are you Des. I've heard some excuses in my time but that beats the lot.*

George & Beryl bought a house

in Southern Ireland and immediately sold it to move back home. They were missing their roots. Anthony Mason, who has been living in Essex for the past 7 months, is also missing his home life since moving to Essex, about seven months, and he is considering moving back home shortly. As he said, "I want to get back to Lancashire where my type of music is appreciated."

For the past few months he has been working in a stage play in Essex, working part time in a hospital and also full time as a manager in a gents clothes store. So he's been a busy lad.

He is also currently working on preparing for a charity show at Chelmsford Civic Theatre where he will be entertaining and appearing with the Essex Branch of the George Formby Society. The proceeds are in aid of the Fairleigh House Hospice and about 15 members will be taking part in the show. Thanks to Helen Weathers, Branch Sec, and Syd De'Cort for the information.



Anthony Mason is homesick



George has message for Preston—

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE—"Thanks From The B.E.F. Men." George Formby was at the King's Palace Theatre, Preston, last night without his ukulele. He went there with Beryl to fulfil a promise they'd made to the troops in France, to thank Preston people for the gifts and comforts they had sent

Standing up in one of the boxes, he told the packed audience, who gave him a tremendous reception, that Preston soldiers, they had met in France, had asked them to convey their thanks to their many kind friends in the town. "They do appreciate what you have been doing, and are still doing for them," he said. George was introduced to the audience by Tom Moss as the person who had done more to entertain men of B.E.F. than any other artist.

Fresh GF Songs—Some time ago I loaned Jonas Svensson of

Sweden about 30 or 40 GF songs that have never seen daylight. These songs were purchased at the Sheffield Auction as part of the Rex Blaker collection of Formby material. Jonas has just Emailed me to say that he has put a lot of effort into sorting the songs (all faint copies) out, recording them on tape and producing some backing tapes for them. He is hoping to try these out at Blackpool this month to get your verdict.

Jonas told me that there are some very good tunes amongst the pile but also there are some poor ones. I'm looking forward to hearing them.

Thanks Paul!!! - A special thanks must go to Paul Woodhead for humping, shifting, moving, lugging, transporting, heaving, lifting etc. his P.A. Equipment on and off the coach and in and out of the hotel during the French Trip. It was all for our benefit and it made the concerts a huge success. Humping this equipment about is hard work for those doing the humping, but greatly appreciated.

Dennis Lee and his merry band visited all the pubs and restaurants in the area before settling for the Empire Café which was about 400 yards down from the hotel. "No problem!" shouted Noel, the proprietor, bring em all down and we'll look after them."

That night we all turned up in full force—it's a good job we did because we were the only customers there—and we filled the back half of the café. Paul set up his equipment and with a few knob twiddles from Des Redfern and some adjustments by Alan Chenery, we were on our way. Within 10 minutes we were blasting out Lamp Post and Windows like France had never heard before.



A brilliant guitarist but rubbish backing "Nightshirt"



Noel's two young children were so excited with the sound that they couldn't stop dancing to the tempo. They danced with huge smiles across their faces and enjoyed every minute. At the end of the night the staff were so delighted that they pleaded with us to come again the following night—Sunday.

Come Sunday and we repeated the process. However, a local guitarist had heard of our appearance and decided to come in on the act. He brought along his three expensive guitars and a young lady to back him and immediately thrust the jack plug into our hands to plug into Paul's system.

They were brilliant, and far better instrumentalists than we'll ever be, but, they were hopeless at backing us with Granddad's Flannellette Nightshirt, and Auntie Maggie. It sounded dreadful and our gang couldn't settle down for the night while they were domineering the backing with duff chords. After playing a classical piece they attempted to back us with "Bananas" and failed miserably.

Alan Chenery pulled the plug out and handed it to them. At that they upped and left and we started our concert.

The rest of the night went with a swing and we finished the night with a tribute to Josef Locke "The Soldier's Dream", dead on time 11pm—as requested. However, the waiter was enjoying the night so much that he pleaded with us to stay an extra hour. "Sorry" we told him, "We have to leave early in the morning for England." He couldn't get over our brand of humour, our lads were marching like war weary cripples to the applause and uproar of the crowd—a scene he'd never seen before. The emotions caught up with him and he broke down in tears. A fitting end to a brilliant night.

Anything On Jimmy Clitheroe? Manchester Evening News article.

Sandra Skuse, of Woking writes: - I am researching material for a book on Jimmy Clitheroe and a show, The Clitheroe Kid, which ran for almost 15 years on the radio from the Fifties to the Seventies. Jimmy got his first break when he was introduced to the all-girl juvenile dance troupe the Winstanley Babes in the 1930s, and became the only male member. With the troupe he learned to dance and skate. He also played the accordion and did female impersonations. Little Jimmy later used to tell the tale that he would go round the dressing-room after the girls and pick up all the hairpins they would drop on the floor. Later, when they got short of pins, he would sell them back to them at 5 a penny. Touring with a troupe of girls often meant that young Jimmy was left to sleep on the couch in the dressing room of guest houses when the landlady of the theatrical digs they stayed at ran out of options.



But where are the Winstanley Babes now? "I would love to track down anyone who knew Jim and the Babes. I know they also appeared on the bill with him in pantomime at the Palace Theatre in Manchester with Anita Harris as late as 1968. I presume this was another generation are babes. Sandra Skuse, 1A Woodbury Castle Road, Woking Surrey G U 21 4ET. 01483 726868. Email sskuse@hotmail.com

Formby takes up marbles (Newspaper Cutting)

George Formby has promised to take part in the annual Marbles tournament and "Reight Neet Aht" to be held at Castleford, Yorkshire early next month. Yorkshire's crack marbles players compete annually at Castleford for a trophy, a huge silver marble mounted on an ebony plinth.

The promoters of the tournament have sent George one of the souvenir marbles bearing the signature of Gracie Fields, which were made two years ago under her patronage, so he may get in a little practice. This year's event is being run by the Castleford ARP organisation, and George will be enrolled as an air-raid warden for the evening.

Before the tournament George will tour the town's factories. Proceeds of the event will be divided between funds to provide comfort for the troops and local charities.

Next Trip—The French trip was so successful that we are now considering a trip to Holland. Already names have been given and the coach is almost full. The reason for Holland is because we have a large number of active Formby members over there. Details will be given in later issues.

New Equipment!!! - To save a lot of time typing various letters into my computer for the Newsletter, I have invested into one of these gadgets that connect up to the computer and you simply have to speak into the microphone and all your words come up on screen. Ready for printing. Marvellous!!! A wonderful invention.

INSTRUCTIONS—To start with you have to read for about an hour into the mike, from "Alice In Wonderland", (what a boring tale it is). This enables the system to get to know your voice. Once you have completed this you are then ready to speak your text into the mike and it will come up on screen.

FIRST RESULT:— Jaws form b, the lanky shaw comedian bought the house town at leads last night when he performed be 4 parked out audiences. George sang hall is old favourites igloo ding; claiming windows, learning on a lamp pose and that never popular, mystery wool.

So you can see, I have a lot of practising to do.

Song And A Hint. George Formby's audience enjoyed his turn when the popular comedian appeared at an RAF Station. He said, "You can help to entertain the troops too, if only by sending musical instruments to the Daily Sketch War Relief. This is your opportunity.

BUSY STARS—George Formby has been promising to attend a London trade show of one of his films ever since he started making them, but always he has had some other engagement. He was all set to appear at the show of his latest film "Let George Do It" March 6th, after his Leeds Pantomime, but he will miss the show again as George and Beryl are going to France on March 2nd.

Email from Stuart Barker - somewhere in the



world:- Hi Stan, I was given your name by Christine Booth regarding a photo of George Formby on the Shuttleworth Snap motor cycle from the film "No Limit." I'm compiling an article for the "Two Wheels Only" magazine. If you have a suitable photo please Email me. Many thanks. *No problem Stuart, two photos on the way. These computers are marvellous bits of equipment. Stuart could be anywhere in the world but within a few seconds the photos would be logged into his own computer and ready for using.*

Connie Edge, British To The Core!!!

"Don't worry about me Stan," She said at Liverpool after singing her War Time Medley, "You'll never hear the word "GUY" from my lips. I'm proud to be British! - Land Of Hope and Glory, There'll Always Be An England, and all that"



We are proud of you Connie! You are as British as Red Raddle, Carbolic Soap and Donkey Stone, - perhaps with just a dash of Vikings added. Keep the flag flying.

So that's another one we've captured Ken. We've nothing to worry about, we'll soon convert the country. Dennis Lee trembles every time he forgetfully utters the dreaded word, and Bob Muirhead apologised a thousand times after he was brought to task.

Through The Keyhole

was shown on BBC One TV on Wednesday the 30th and one of the clues pointed out by Lloyd Grossman was a David Brett book on George Formby. The panel of three soon guessed who's house it was when he was described as a "Proud of Lancashire comedian" It was Jim Bowen.



Lloyd Grossman cleaning windows at George's old house in Hindley.

Lloyd Grossman possibly has an interest in George because some years back he was filmed actually "Cleaning Windows" at Hindley House, where George lived as a child, for one of the keyhole series. I don't think that they used the film in the series. Possibly this was due to the fact that George was no longer living there. The house is owned by Edwin and June Clews.

Looking For A Uke? - Andy Eastwood is offering Jim

Thorogood's collection on Email andy@andyeastwood.com or you can write to Jim direct at 8 East Riding, Tewin Wood, Welwyn, Herts AL6 0PA. The collection of no less than 30 ukes, range from a Dallas B at £75 to an Abbott Victor at £950.

Concert Recording—At the French Trip Concerts, Paul Woodhead made recordings of the artists and after editing he will be offering the tapes/CDs for sale. Watch this space for more details.

YOU'VE DEFINITELY FORGOTTEN AN ARTICLE FOR THE NEWSLETTER.

You're Getting Old When

You join a health club but don't go
 You look forward to a dull evening
 Your back goes out more than you do
 You need glasses to find your glasses
 Your knees buckle but your belt won't
 Your children begin to look middle aged
 A dripping tap causes an uncontrollable urge
 You sit in a rocking chair but can't make it go
 You turn out the light for economy—not romance
 You put your bra on back to front and it fits better
 Everything hurts—what doesn't hurt, doesn't work.
 You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there
 The gleam in your eye in the sun shining on your bifocals
 Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles
 You have all the answers but nobody asks you any questions
 You feel like the morning after, but you haven't been anywhere
 Your house is too big but your medicine cupboard isn't big enough
This number plate was seen in a Sheltered Housing Car Park "O2B 21"

ANDY EAST-
 WOOD—one of our
 young players is cer-
 tainly keeping the GF flag
 flying. He's had 22
 shows in 14 days and
 playing at places like the
 Metropole, Blackpool,
 and Scarborough. He
 also appeared at the
 Chelmsford Charity Show
 on June 16th. Hope to
 have a report on this next
 month. Best of Luck
 Andy.

Dallas "C" Model Sold—Trudy Lane was pleased that her husband's uke had been sold to someone who would treasure it. Maurice had been a uke playing pro-artist many years over in Canada and after he died she returned back to England and brought the uke with her.

It was advertised in the Newsletter and Alan Coventry, of Preston, a promoter and professional stage magician, purchased it. Alan intends learning how to play it and then adding it to his act. I showed him a few basic steps and within a couple of minutes he was strumming away merrily. Good for you Alan.

Live Shells—During the French Trip it was interesting when Peter Williams, the courier, explained that even though the war has been over for 56 years the French farmers are still finding thousands of live shells in the fields which are extremely dangerous. The lamp posts are designed with a series of holes from the bottom upward and when they find a shell they store them in one of the holes to be collected each week. At first we thought that he was pulling our legs when suddenly we spotted one of the shells stored in the lamp post. "That shell is still alive and is dangerous" he told us. To which all agreed that we should leave the area immediately. Nobody disagreed.

NEXT MONTH—Just received a pile of Uke Playing Email addresses from John Ceaser. These will be included in the next issue. Thanks John.

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.

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 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.

DON'T FORGET YOUR ARTICLE—OR ELSE

