

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 74

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Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
by Stan Evans, The Hollies, 19 Hall Nook, Penketh, Warrington,
Cheshire WA5 2HN

Tel or Fax 01925 727102

Welcome to Newsletter No.74 and it certainly has been a hectic month in the N. West, with Penyffordd Carnival—Frodsham Carnival and a Grand Party at Rhyl. . Details inside.

The distressing news this month is that Dennis & Lesley Lee have sold their house in Buckley, N. Wales and they are leaving to live temporary in the Kent area on the 17th of July. Eventually they hope to move to a house in Cyprus.

This is a severe blow for the N. West as Dennis & Lesley have both put in lot of hard work both with the N. Wales Branch and with any special events. Dennis has notified the GFS that he won't be taking a position on the committee in September.

Brian Edge—the original king of the swingers wishes to thank all his friends who sent their good wishes during his recent stay in hospital.

“It was great to read your cards and to hear of the messages that you had sent by telephone which were all a great comfort to both Connie and myself. I got some lovely cards amongst which was the above. The verse read ‘I’m the King of the Swingers.’ My special thanks to everybody. Brian.”

Thanks Brian. The poor old baboon looks so sad he looks like the King of the Winge—rs. Nice to know that the op went well and you are getting back to normal again.



One of the songs in Brian’s repertoire is “I’m the King of the Swingers.”

Rob Davidson—Rob is the Sale member who brings Walter Langshaw to the meeting. He hasn’t been for some months so I rang him today. Poor Rob has been having it very rough since he heard of the death of his niece. This has affected his own health. Anyway he is now picking up and has recently started back at work again. Rob works at the Manchester Air Port. Mustn’t let things get you down Rob. It’s a tough world at times but we have to keep peddling on. You can be confident that George’s light is shining for you.



Penyffordd Carnival Concert—

This was held on Sunday 16th June at Penyffordd where we were supplied with a large marquee, about 40 chairs and an electric plug point. Dennis turned up with all the equipment and soon had the music flowing. For the first hour we were asked to set up the equipment outside the marquee so that the organisers could use it for the carnival and fancy dress parade. This was OK until the rain started when I quickly snatched Eva's raincoat to cover one of the speakers. Well, speakers are expensive!

BE PROFESSIONAL—

After the parade we moved the equipment into the marquee and began our concert. The first song in the Concert Medley went down very well but for the second song, on the backing tape, they actually skipped a song out and sang the wrong song to the tune. I couldn't believe it!



Be professional so someone hangs his coat up at the back of the stage.

They've practised this Concert Scrip 10 million times without fault. The leader of the pack was definitely Dennis Lee, and all the others followed him. Fortunately Lesley, who had been taking a walk round the stalls, came back in time and waived her arms about to get them back on track.

But, on the positive side, this gang is certainly improving in quality. A couple of years back Dennis had difficulty in raising a group that could produce a decent sound but now they are good enough for any occasion. It all turned out to be an excellent show and they enjoyed the day. It also helped to raise funds for the Penyffordd Community Centre.

Bones Thrash—

Well things are certainly buzzing in the N. West. Enthusiasm is so keen that we now have a "Bones Thrash" at each of the meetings. My hero, Walter Kirkland, the finest bones player on the planet—apart from Ron Whiston, that is, has been teaching the lads to rattle dem bones and now they have a Bones Orchestra. On the right they are performing at the Frankie, Jean & Alison Rhyl Party.



And to prove it here are some of the lads showing their skills at rattling dem bones. Great work Walter.

Alas their lead bonist, Dennis Lee, is leaving soon so they are looking for a replacement. Get your applications in quick. Mind you, young Walter is a bit of a cheat! I thought he was actually whistling to the tune of "Jeepers Creepers" and I thought, "What a great whistler he is." But after a couple of years of adoration I realised that the whistling is built into the backing tape. You cheat Walter Kirkland, - But we'll forgive you!

Glenys Huntinton reports on the

Crewe Meeting - The South Cheshire group held their June meeting, in Wistaston, Crewe on a warm, sunny evening, reflecting the relaxed, happy atmosphere within the Memorial Hall. With several absentees from the usual crowd, due mainly to holidays and the fact that it was also the Blackpool weekend, the audience was more in the 60's, rather than the general 90+.



This proved to be quite an advantage with both performers and audience being totally focussed on the stage and what was being presented. Alan Newton was the MC for the evening and, in spite of him being a special friend of mine, I feel I can say that he did an excellent job in that easy going style of his. (Hope that's earned me an extra biscuit with my coffee). Alan started the solo proceedings off, with the up-beat tempo of, "Daring Young Man."

Without exception all those taking part put on very good performances, displaying much progress in quality of play. Following a rousing opening Thrash, with 16 members on stage, including young Ashley keeping perfect time on his tambourine, Carl Basford chose, "Always Get To Bed By Half Past Nine," although knowing it wasn't likely that night. Then we had Trevor Hughes, sporting a bright, red tie with musical notation, growing in confidence in his uke playing, before hearing one of the Society's most knowledgable members on George, the very able Jonathan Baddeley, blowing a Blast on his Whistle, ably accompanied in the relevant bits, by numerous whistles appearing from no-where, throughout the audience.

The growth of "bones" experts appears to be increasing monthly at Wistaston, too, with the clicking sounds around the audience, (and also from Colin Wood in the "Sound" department), becoming a regular percussion player. Adding to the variety, Alison Nadin demonstrated her unique skills in entertaining us with her paper folding act, Vera Jones led a sing-song of old favourites, giving everyone a chance to sing, Lesley Lee dressed the part to bring a touch of Old Tyme Variety with "Burlington Bertie" and I brought my flugel horn and trumpet along for 2 contrasting numbers.

From that, you will realise that this report is not being written as normally, by our leader, Brian Edge. Unfortunately, Brian was in hospital, recovering from an operation. (What I mean is - it was unfortunate that Brian was in hospital, not that it was unfortunate that he was recovering!) Everyone signed a card to wish him well and it was obvious from the messages, that Brian and Connie are appreciated for all their hard work and were being missed in their absence. Luckily Brian did know that he would not be at the meeting and had organised others to take on his tasks and everything went very smoothly. NEXT PAGE

Peter Cain modestly introduced himself as being the best ukulele player in his street, before admitting to being the only one! Jim Knight was a welcome visitor, treating us to, "Long Time Gone," and both Arthur Newton and Alan Chenery had everyone enjoying their songs and Don Chalkley made us laugh with his droll humour, promising to put an end to the fun, taking us on his rendition of, "Pleasure Cruise."

The extra dimension of having drummer Steve Hassall is always enjoyed and he also showed his versatility with his singing and excellent uke playing. We were pleased that Dennis Lee had joined us, knowing that his departure to Southern parts is getting nearer, and Dennis gave his expected, happy interpretation of "Torreador", from his native Lancashire, joined Alan Newton in, "Bring me Sunshine," suitably attired in matching, brightly striped waist-coats and finally lead the final Thrash of the evening. *Thanks Glenys. I'm not "blowing your trumpet" but you've done a fine job.*



Farewell

from Dennis & Lesley

As many of you know, Lesley and I have finally managed to sell our house in North Wales. By the time you read this we will have moved to Kent for a few months with the eventual aim of settling in Cyprus.



Our many friends both inside and outside the GFS will be sadly missed but remembered with fondness and we will of course be keeping in touch with them. Some will no doubt be popping up in Cyprus and we'll visit the U.K. from time to time (in summer of course)! We take with us many happy memories of the times we've enjoyed so much.

Amongst these countless events the Warrington Exhibition (which initially started me off), the Llandudno Conventions, Nantwich Jazz Festivals, Normandy and Lille trips and of course the Irish Busking Festival spring to mind. Weren't they great?!!

Also we leave behind the Penyffordd Branch and my thanks go out to all who have given their support over the past 8 years and helped to achieve one of the most successful branch meetings in the UK. There is no reason why it should not flourish and go on to greater success in the future. Whatever becomes of us you may rest assured that wherever we end up we will fly George's flag. So from Lesley and I it's farewell. May God bless you all until we meet again.

A COUPLE OF CHANGES AT PENYFFORDD—Due to price increase and delivery problems there will be no more PASTIES. But the cash will supply a Christmas Buffet. ALSO—Please sign the Reception Book at the door.



Cliff Royle Our Super Kid Reports—

Regrettably we are saying goodbye to Dennis and Lesley Lee who will shortly be departing for a possible future in Cyprus.

There were a couple or "duos"; Dennis Lee and Alan Newman sang "Sisters, Sisters" suitably clad in seductive drag. Then Alan returned with Brian Edge with a wartime recollection with a hidden meaning. We wish Brian a good recovery following his recent hospitalisation.

Our Ladies did us proud. Lesley Lee gave two excellent song-and-dance acts in full regalia; Connie Edge sang well, and we had the two lovely ladies on reception. It was a delight to have Sheifa Beech back with us after almost two years' absence, but regret to see Margaret Royle (the missus) with her arm in plaster following a fall.. (It has of course been attributed to me).

We get a lot of support from youngsters at present and they are fantastic. Our regulars, Gregory Simister and Stephen Ensall played well and there was a newcomer in our midst in Ben Hallowell. Some talent. We had a pleasant surprise when Bryan Wright, (our very own artist/sculptor) played a very unusual melody. We had the usual welcome support from Crewe with Steve Hassall visiting us again and Des Redfern coming up smiling after a hiccup at two with his Mini Disc. You can't knock this lad down can you. He always comes out on top. A good group played "Somebody's Wedding Day" for Margaret and myself to celebrate our Golden Wedding Anniversary and everyone was given a piece (or two) of Anniversary Cake. Dennis Lee then made presentations to us on this memorable occasion.

Our team of MC's is expanding to cover for emergencies and both Alison Nadin and Jeff Shone showed their talents this evening. These jobs involve much more effort than one may think. Amongst our guests were Ray and Rita Martin who had booked tickets for a band concert when Ray was told he had to go into Hospital. He sold the tickets to Geoff Shone, and then handed over the ticket money (£6) to go into the club funds. Nice gesture Ray, and we hope your hospital visit will be successful. The evening was rounded off with a number of heart-searching songs sung as a send off to Lesley & Dennis. God Bless You Both, we will miss you.

As a consequence of this we are having to make a few minor changes to the way we operate, and so we now have a group of people running the branch on an informal basis. However we will welcome anyone wishing to help or make suggestions about improving our evenings. A number of minor changes are being proposed and details were presented to the meeting. Regrettably the "pasties" are being dispensed with but the consequential savings will go towards the cost of a Christmas buffet. *And thank you Cliff for a most wonderful report. Sorry I had to trim it down but 36 pages is a bit much.*

CHANGES AT PENYFFORDD—Due to the loss of Dennis & Lesley, an informal committee has been set up:-

COMMITTEE and DUTIES—Treasurer, Dolwyn Shone. Assistant, Phyl Hughes. Auditor, Brian Harrison. Publicity, Cliff Royle. Sound Operators, Alison Nadin, Deg, Bruce. Reception, Dorothy Davidson, Margaret Royle and Myra Knight. M.Cs and Assistants, Jim Knight, Cliff Royle, Alison Nadin and Geoff Shone. Other Committee Members, Jean Nadin and Tom Meredith.

BEST OF LUCK—MUST KEEP THE FLAG FLYING

Frodsham Carnival—1st July 2001 —Our taking part in this was arranged by our super organiser, Cliff Royle, who actually lives in Frodsham. The Super Duper Sound System was supplied by the Frodsham Committee and was one of the best we've heard.

Geoff Shone ran into trouble when he attached the GEORGE FORMBY banner to the front of the trailer stage. "Take that down" said one of the Equinox Group "we are not associated with George Formby." Minutes later they mounted the stage and sang, "Leaning On A Lamp Post" - not as good as our rendition I must admit. In fact it sounded very much like the pro singer in "Feather Your Nest" when he sang a toffee nosed version of Lamp Post. But they are a good act with a vast repertoire.



One of our stars was Alison Nadin who went on stage four times. Twice with the gang, followed by her ventriloquist act and then "A touch of magic." Alison's come on well with her act. A few months back she showed nerves but she has conquered it now. During her magic act we sat on the front row and gave her some barracking but that didn't bother her.

QUALITY—It certainly shone through on the day when our gang mounted the stage. It all went through without fault and the crowd joined in when they knew the words. They sounded GREAT!!!!



CANDID CAMERA—Came my spot and the most unusual thing happened. I'd just announced my first song when I was stopped by a lady who wanted the raffle tickets calling out. Just got going again when a young lady wanted a message reading out. Then one of the organisers, Sam Williams, asked me to advertise the flower pot stall who were selling off at half price. I couldn't believe it! Just got going again when Sam was back again with another announcement, - and then another. At first I thought it was all a joke. Amidst the chaos, the young man on the sound kept pressing the button too early—NOT YET!!!

Sam Williams should be working for Candid Camera.

Before parting to come home I began to tell a small group Jim Bramwell's joke about the chap who went into a pub and was offered a Pie, a Pint and a Romp upstairs with barmaid, and at that stage one of the men left us with the words, "I think I must leave you, I'm giving a service in half an hour." Great Show Cliff. Thanks to all.

George & Beryl Out Front - How did you like it out

at the front? How are the lads getting on? What's it like out there? What's the real truth about ENSA and NAAFI and the muddles we are always hearing about?



Well Beryl and I are back from France where we had four and a half weeks with the lads. We had a cast of 23 altogether - that was for the places where we could get anything you might call a stage. And you had to stretch the imagination a bit sometimes to call some of them stages. But a lot of the time I was giving shows on my own. On an average about 28 shows a week. Sometimes they would be with the full company in an opera house holding thousands of men. Sometimes there'd be just myself, singing them songs in a barn, or a farmyard, or in the train or in the village street. One time our dressing room was a goat stall. We held a blanket up while the girls changed. Then the girls held them up while we changed. On the way back I sang to a thousand men on the quay side, with Beryl. And did we feel big? These fellows had only just arrived. We'd been there more than a month. "We are veterans," I told them, "If there's anything you want to know just ask us."

Wherever we went we had to have volunteers to help shift scenery, pianos, and the rest. A corporal always looked after us for this. Once a dozen Sergeants volunteered and a corporal had a rare time ordering them about. He turned to me and out of the corner of his mouth said, "First time I've ever seen * * * * * Sergeants volunteer for a fatigue. The trouble we had with the foreign language! I can say, "The complet , s'il vous plait" in the morning, and that's about all. Beryl's was no better. I tried to ask for ice-cream and they sent a man to clean my boots. People won't believe that one either - but it's true. In the end I let him clean my boots.

And now let me tell you the truth about ENSA and NAAFI, as we saw it - and Beryl agrees with what I am going to say. The way they looked after us was marvellous. They did everything for our comfort that circumstances would permit. But that does not mean there was no discomfort. There certainly was but I have been used to roughing it from the time as a kid I worked in the stables. Why the whole time I was there I never wore a suit - just a pullover and a pair of breeches. Now we're back for two weeks' holiday then a film, and then - why, we've both of us only one ambition. That's to get back among the lads in France again.

JUST HAD another great night at Liverpool. It was quiet until Gerry Mawdsley and Glyn Mitchell turned up so we had a good meeting. Visiting players are always very welcome.

Another Frankie Woods Special—A GREAT

DAY at the home of Frankie Woods, Jean & Alison Nadin and they treated us like Royalty. About 170 people turned up on Sunday 8th July and within a few minutes Dennis Lee had the system set up and artists ready to perform. The show had been rolling for half an hour when a big bundle of noise moved in in the shape of GMR Presenters, Fred Fielder and Bob Oliver, along with variety agent, Larry Ash. From then on the air was electric and the huge crowd joined in the fun.



You'd think we have a bunch of drunken slobs propping up the beer tent, but you are wrong! These are the very worthy GMR Radio Presenters, Fred Fielder, Bob Oliver and agent: Laurie Ash, who all added to the fun.

Like Kevin Blanchfield, Fred is another

who can whisper over three fields and I'm sure it was the Fielder blast that kept the threatening rain clouds away on the day. Laurie gave us a song, "New York, New York."

Brian Edge & Dennis Lee M.C'd the show and after the first half we were invited to form a queue to devour the most wonderful buffet that the ladies and their friends/relatives had arranged. The whole thing was a well organised event.



FRANKIE, JEAN & ALISON WRITE— Many thanks to all that came to our garden party. It was a lovely happy occasion on such a dull day. First and foremost we would like to thank you all for your generosity in supporting the raffle and auction, the total amount raised, including donations, was £410.00. The money has gone to Thelma and Walter Scott for their three young grand-daughters who are left without their dad, Mark, after his unexpected death at the age of 33, he was such a supportive dad and he will be sadly missed by all.



The entertainment on the day was, as usual, brilliant with such variety in the programme. We would also like to thank the G.M.R. presenters Fred Fielder and Bob Oliver along with their friend the singer Laurie Ash for their contribution to the afternoon. He has promised to give the George Formby Society a mention on his radio programme on Sunday 15th July between 11.00a.m. and 1.00p.m.

Many thanks to Brian Edge and Dennis Lee for the wonderful job they did, keeping the show flowing so smoothly. This will have been Dennis and Leslie's last get-together with us all and we hope it is one they will always remember. We are sure that Stan's kind words will always be with them, there were certainly a few tears shed. If any of you are ever passing through Rhyl you are always welcome to call and have a coffee and a chat. Best wishes to all, Frankie, Jean and Alison. *And many thanks to you all at Rhyl for giving us such an excellent day. MEMO—I must take a photo of Jean at Penyffordd next month.*



GEORGE FORMBY



FRANK RANDLE



Every now and then Tracy pops up at the meeting.

WAITING GAME: Tracy Dawson has expressed a wish to have a statue erected on the Promenade in memory of her late comedian husband Les Dawson



Was/is Les & Ken Dodd Britain's most talented Comedians?



REGINALD DIXON



CHARLIE CAIROLI

A Reader's Letter

A Long Wait In for Les's Statue

I think the comments of Mrs Tracy Dawson (Blackpool Gazette June 16th) echo the thoughts of many locals with regards to the so-called modern art on the South Promenade. If she is waiting for a statue of her popular husband, Les, she will need to join the queue as many years have passed on the on-going saga of Charlie Cairoli, Reginald Dixon, George Formby and Frank Randle, all of which are debated every so often with negative results. Don't hold your breath Tracy. M. Weighman, Molyneux Drive, Blackpool.

STATUE??? - I'm not particularly in favour of a statue for George. The younger generation wouldn't respect it and as the years go by, less and less people will remember George. Holding GF meetings to play George's songs is our finest tribute.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? LET ME KNOW.



Young Ben's Granddad, Frank, is getting in on the act.



It's difficult raising a smile when you're playing outside in the freezing cold. However, Alan Yates, Eve Stewart, Alan Middleton and Charles Stewart kept the flag flying for George.

Beryl Formby writes— I've got a grouch against army regulations. Perhaps you heard a little while ago that George had announced his intention of going out to the front to entertain the Tommy's and I said that I would go there too.

But I'd been told that I can't go into the front lines. I shall have to wait way back somewhere in France. Army regulations! George says he's fixed it with Lord Gort and General Gamelin - fixed it so that I shall be kept well in the rear while he carries on his trip with Mademoiselle from Armentieres. We'll see about that. He can't go anyway, until after the pantomime season. In the meantime, he is doing quite a lot to entertain the troops over here. He has already entertained 25,000 of them, and his ambition is to entertain a minimum of half a million. He carefully checks up the number present at every concert and gleefully tots up the total.

He was pleased when about 14,000 soldiers applied for tickets at one of these concerts. The hall seated less than a quarter of this number, and the organisers were in a bit of a fix. George promptly suggested a way out, and said he would give four separate concerts so that as many as possible could attend. The Tommies are great fans of his and they know most of his songs off by heart. They always demand autographs, and the requests have become so great that we tell them to write in. We sent nearly 12,000 signed photos to one camp alone.

These concerts have caused them a great deal of embarrassment, though I expect you heard his song, "Our Sergeant Major which he sang in the film, *It's In The Air*". It certainly pulls sergeant-majors to pieces. At every concert George appears the troops have yelled for this song. George's tries his best to get out of singing it but the Tommies deliberately insist on it. I'm sure it is all part of a pre-arranged plot on their part so they can score off their Sergeant majors. Many of them are present in the audience. Poor George always goes red when he is forced to sing the number.

We lost George one night after a camp concert. We were invited to visit the Officers Mess. We drove around and then George went off to park the car. It was pitch-black, and he lost his way back. We waited for him and began to get anxious. Somewhere in the darkness George was wandering round and round - in as bad a predicament as it gets into in his films. He turned up eventually though covered in mud and grinning, "Ee, it's nice country round here. I thought I'd just take a look round."

Another of these camps camp concerts cost him a new wireless aerial for his car. He was driving round in the pitch darkness and a bump told us that he had hit something. We thought it was a mudguard. A few minutes later George switched on the radio set, nothing happened. Next morning we discovered that the whole of the wireless aerial, which should be fixed under the running board had been ripped away.

A little song entitled—

Don't go down the coal mine daddy, there's plenty of slack in your pants.

The Birth Of Modern Music—

from :SKIFFLE - THE DEFINITIVE INSIDE STORY BY CHAS McDEVITT and sent in by Paul Woodhead.

I thought it was a bit unfair to generalise about modern performers. There are some excellent ones and there are some wonderful song writers, many of whom are probably our age ! Whatever you think of modern music I am sure you will appreciate the following extract from a book I recently read :



Paul Woodhead

" Until the post war period, popular music was not the pastime of the very young. The record buying public was to be found amongst the wage earners, not the school kids. All this was to change. many a paper round wage was soon to be spent on the latest record heard on the radio or at the movies.George Formby was to blame, well, George Formby and his ukulele, or to be more precise, his ukulele-banjo.

Like thousands of kids my age I was bored with the dreariness of the popular music of the immediate post war years.....as dull as dish water & so sentimental, as were most of the dance band tunes of the day. George Formby's records & films, made in the late 1930's & wartime years, cut a swathe through all this romantic candyfloss. As my peer group & I grew up, this string driven music found it's full expression in the skiffle music of the 1950's. We realised that music could be made quite easily , & bright and cheerful music it was.

Many a youngster in that post war decade would have been given a uke, as I had been & would have graduated to banjo & guitar. The initial interest in music, aroused by Formby & his ilk, was nurtured by the jazz & the blues of the late 1940's & 1950's that was gradually filtering onto the airwaves.I was often accused by my tutors of being vacuous. They said my constant whistling was a sign of being brain dead."

What a Wonderful Surprise! Anthony Mason made

a flying visit back home and dropped in for a few hours to show off his baby, Elliott. Hannah was in France so she couldn't be with them.

Well I must say that Anthony and 7 month old Elliott certainly blend well together and he is turning out to be an excellent father, - he replaces nappies quicker and better than fitting a new skin on his uke.

All his time was spent entertaining the baby and making sure he was comfortable. Eva & I were amazed at how Anthony has matured over the past months.



Always laughing baby Elliott with his dad

John Ceaser writes— Stan, you asked a few issues ago how your readers can have postage stamps made with their own portrait on. Well all they have to do is write for an application form to The British Philatelic Bureau, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PD and they will send all the details.

April 12th this year I went to Leamington Spa to an afternoon concert in which Clem Vickery was on the bill. In 1966 I went to London to a banjo rally at Camden Town Hall. It was the Annual Meeting of the Southern Federation of Banjoists. Top-of-the-bill was Clem Vickery and the Vellum Stompers.

In the restaurant that day I was sat opposite Clem and on his left was his lead tenor banjo player John Head. On his right was his pianist and at the side of me was a world-famous banjo player George Barnes, who introduced me to Don Van Palta, the Flying Dutchman of world record in fame. I've been following their careers ever since.

Clem did 22 years with George Mitchell's Black-and-White Minstrels and I went to every venue they ever played and bought every record they made. Don Van Palta sends me Christmas cards and keeps in touch.

All Alive at Sale—By Les Pearson. Considering the main

meeting at Blackpool was approaching we had quite a good turn out. Alan Southworth opened the evening with a couple of songs written by the well known artist, Billy Uke Scott, followed by Paul Kenny who sang, "You Don't Need A Licence For That." Walter Kirkland sang another George Formby song, "I Wonder Who's



Under Her Balcony Now." As a Always helpful bar staff at the Holy Parish Centre, ever Laurel & Hardy fan I personally cheerful and nothing is too much trouble for them. appreciated Brian Edge—with his bowler hat—singing, "The Bowler Hat My Granddad Left To Me" and another favourite, "Football Pools."

Jim Bramwell gave us "I Blew A Little Blast On My Whistle," which was well received along with a new batch of well delivered jokes. Alice Cronshaw, accompanied by Connie and Brian Edge and Walter Kirkland gave us a medley of war-time songs to get the crowd "stamping their hands and clapping their feet." Well done ladies, it's nice to see you performing. Thanks to all who helped out on the night. It is all gratefully appreciated.

Broughton House Fund by Les Pearson—The

North of England were never short of volunteers and conscripts during the 1st World War from 1914—1918. The heavy casualties sustained in the trenches in Belgium and France were too great in number for hospitals in East Lancashire to cope with; and it was this desperate shortage which led to the founding of five East Lancashire Homes as temporary hospitals for disabled Sailors and Soldiers. One East Lancs Home, in Park Lane, Salford, was renamed Broughton House and since opening has provided care for over 6,000 Ex-Service personnel. Today, the home is in need of funds to make improvements.



The Lord Mayor of Manchester has launched a £1 Million Fund for the Home so over the past month I've been extra busy with the collection boxes. I would like to thank the Sale members for their generous contribution of £114. 33, which was collected at the June meeting when the box was handed round. This was appreciated by Welfare Officer, Marion Daintree, who attended our meeting on the night.

After an invitation from ENSA Entertainer Paul Harper, Margaret and I attended an 8th Army Reunion at Norbreck Hotel, Blackpool and once again went round with the boxes to collect a further £152. 20 to be divided between Broughton House and The Institute For The Blind. Both very worthy causes. A letter of appreciation has been received at my home from Colonel Gibbs.

Email from Cilla dot com—Ee Stan, a friend loaned

me your Newsletter and I got a reet kick when I read that George's light was shining for your readers. It makes it all worth while getting ill just to get better again. I can't wait.



No problem, Cilla dot com. Anytime you're wishing you were a bird and the cat had you, just send an Email and George's lamp post will be lighting the heavens for you. Works every time. It should be put on National Health. Good old George.

The Wisdom of Bob Muirhead— Always keep your words soft and tender. Because tomorrow you may have to eat em.

I bought my wife some bloomers from the pawn shop, two pounds ten. She gave them to her mother. Now I won't see them again.

Ukulele Web-site by John Ceaser -

Riot Ukes	www.speakeasy.org/-marks/riot/features
Ukulele Diner	world.std.com/-syphers/ukediner/home
Brudda Ukulele	www.geocitoes.com/-ukulele/
Roy T Cone's Site	www.phoenix.net
Cliff Edwards	www.mindspring.com
Ukulele Orchestra	www.geocoties.com
Tiny Tim	www.ponk.com
Jim Beloff	www.flea-mkt-music.com
Elderly Instruments	www.elderly.com/
Ukulele Roundup	home.att.net/-d.newton/
Cool Hand Uke	www.oro.net/-dscanlan
Ian Whitcombe	www.ianwhitcombe.com

There was a French farmer from Nice. Who did terrible things to his geese But he went too far with his budgerigar So the parrot phoned the police.

A LITTLE SONG ENTITLED:
You'll be dancing on my heart to-night, so please take off your boots.

Sticky Fingers—

There used to be so many of my fingerprints to see.
On furniture and walls from sticky, grubby me
But if you stop and think awhile, you'll see I'm growing fast
Those little handprints disappear, and you can't bring back the past
So here's a small reminder, to keep, not wipe away
Of tiny hands, and how they looked, to make you smile someday.



SLIPPED UP!!!!

- As soon as I'd finished printing I knew that I'd typed an error in the last issue. Gothenburg is in Sweden, not Holland. "Well" - I thought, "Maybe nobody will spot the mistake." Low and behold, a few hours after the first batch went out there was an Email in my post-box. "YOU'VE SLIPPED UP!!!"

Well, how it came about was like this. At the same time as I received the Essex Newsletter from Andy Eastwood, giving details of the Gothenburg Festival, I also received an Email from Jonas Svensson who told me that he had just returned from a festival in Holland. Now there was a photo of Jonas in Andy's little mag so I naturally assumed it was the same festival. Very confusing ain't it? I rest my uke case.

Another Convert—

Just had a very pleasant couple of hours with Paul Woodhead who called in for a chat, and Ken Smith will be pleased to know that we have another convert. For the first ten minutes it was "guy this—guy that" and then he suddenly realised that we don't allow the word "guy" to be used in Penketh. This is a Yank Free Zone. We allow, "chap, bloke fellow etc. but "guy" is definitely BANNED!

I don't think we will have any more problems with Paul. He's now one of us.

Uke Banjo For Sale—Just had a cheery chat with Glyn



Mitchell of the Westhoughton Branch. He's recently bought a uke that was advertised in the Newsletter so he's selling his Cartwright—which is in brand new mint condition. Price is £425 including case. You can ring Glyn on 01942 873954.

He also rang to express his thanks for having introduced him to the GFS some three ago. He's learnt how to play the uke since joining and also gathered confidence to get up on stage to entertain. "It's changed my life" says Glyn, "and I've met a lot of new friends."

Well, we are very pleased for you Glyn. Keep up the good work in helping Gerry with the monthly meeting.

The Silver Stars Competition is here again and

Yours Magazine has published a two page spread of contestants who entered the competition throughout the year. Low and behold, who should be in the competition but our own Jim Knight from the Penyffordd Branch. Jim does a fine job as Master of Ceremonies at Penyffordd.



The finalists will be appearing at Southport Theatre in the Grand Finals on Wednesday the 25th July. All the best Jim, we hope you make it. Also competing is another uke player from Liverpool by the name of Gerard Caunter. The name rings a bell.

Extended Mini Disc Players—Last month we

reported that Sony have produced a player that records about 320 minutes of songs, (on a standard 74 min disc) which is over a 100 songs on one disc. It saves switching discs and the prices are £199. 95 and £179. 99.

GOOD NEWS—Richer Sounds have a table top model extended Sony player and the price is £130. The model No. is MD 440. The Liverpool number is: 0151 708 7484 and their Mail Order number is 087001 12345.

Jimmy Cricket said "Always treat each day as if it was your last. And some day you'll be right."

DON'T FORGET THE NEWSLETTER

Report from the Warrington Guardian 5th July 1901

George Is Tops!! - Warrington Exhibition. It failed to

beat George Formby into the record books but the Burtonwood Air Base Exhibition at Warrington Museum and Gallery came very close. In its final weeks thousands passed through the gallery's doors to get a glimpse of life in wartime Warrington. And by the time it closed last month, it looked set to edge past the number of visitors which came to the George Formby 30th Anniversary Show in 1991 - but the figures have finally been counted and it has missed out by just a few hundred people.



The Formby show clocked up a total of 41,144 visitors while the air base exhibition attracted 40,174 people. That does not detract from the exhibition's success. It surpassed the Ossie Clark and Jim Henson (Muppets) exhibitions which clocked up 32,187 and 33,788 visitors respectively. Hopes are that a scaled down version of the exhibition will be created on the former air base as a living memorial of its historical significance. RAF Burtonwood, which was known as Little America in his wartime heyday is being demolished to make way for Chapelford, a purpose built village. Meanwhile the "Keep That Light Out" story of wartime Warrington is still running in the community gallery until July 14th.

A REPLY TO THE GUARDIAN—It is pleasing to read (5th July) that the George Formby 30th Anniversary Exhibition is still holding the record for the largest attendance. This is quite a tribute for a local living lad who died 30 years previous and well before many of the visitors were born.

The exhibition was possibly a test case as we were not sure if it would be a success or a failure. We feared that it might be considered "old hat" compared with modern entertainment, - how wrong we were. We were amazed at the number of children that came to listen to George's old songs and how quick they learnt the words. The media - TV, Radio and the Press, turned up almost every other day and our GFS members received invitations to perform in studios all over the country.

I arrived in the morning on occasions to find a huge crowd outside the front door. At first I thought there had been an accident until I discovered that they were actually queuing up to get inside - something never known before at the Museum. Regarding the head count, I can assure you that the number was higher than the 41,144 recorded. The opening night wasn't recorded simply because the staff were far too busy assisting the crowd. There were times, especially after a TV promotion, when it was impossible to count every head. And during the closing down days, the people insisted on getting in if only to watch us dismantling the display units and to ask questions. These also were not recorded. It was a very exciting show that changed the image of the Warrington Museum and put it on the map. Stan Evans, Penketh.

Jim & I have just performed at an Old Folks Party and while I was setting up the sound system I asked Jim to let me know if the volume was OK. "Up a bit—a bit more—up a bit more—more still." I couldn't believe it, as we were almost blasting those on the front out of their seats. "Are you sure" I asked him, to which he replied, "Hold on. I forgot to put my hearing aid in."

Jim sang a great little medley which got them all tapping their feet. The problem he was didn't know any words of the five songs in the medley, so he had to la, la, la, all the way through. Anyway it sounded really great and the old folk wasn't bothered. They enjoyed it.

Email from Anne Frizell from somewhere in the world—I've been asked if I could find out what the 'wigin moon' means in the song 'I told my baby with a ukulele' - at least he think that's what the words are! Have you any ideas or a copy of the words that I could pass on? Many thanks, Anne Frizell
No problem Anne. Wigan is the town where George Formby was born and he's serenading his sweetheart under the Wigan moon. Anne replied saying 'that is what we thought'. These Emails are wonderful for quick postage.

Family Fortunes—The Jones family, from Rotherham, was competing in Family Fortunes on Challenge Sky TV and Presenter, Les Dennis, asked the mother of the family, Flo, if she would sing one of her songs that the rest of the family complained about. This was because they are old songs that they can't join in with. Flo sang George's "I Wish I Was Back On The Farm."

Repairing a Uke Case? - I've just used some 2" wide black carpet sticking tape that is excellent for repairing the corners of uke cases. I've tried some tapes before, and found that after a time, the edges start curling up and the case is looking shabby again. However this tape is Super Sticky!

The name on the roll is DUCK, and I assume that it is foreign because it's got pictures of chickens on the inside of the roll. You've got to be careful using it otherwise it will cling to your fingers and won't let go. In fact it clings to anything in sight. You need very sharp scissors to cut it otherwise it will stick to the blades. It is lethal stuff if you don't keep control of it. It appears to have a mind of its own searching round for anything it can grab at. Once it spots its prey it attacks it with vigour. So be careful.

More Wisdom from Bob Muirhead—Life is like a toilet roll. The nearer you get to the end, - the faster it goes.

N. West Meetings

North Wales Branch - British Legion, Penyffordd (10 miles from Chester) Every first Friday in the month. Tel Geoff Shone on 01244 544605 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 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