

THE NORTH - WEST

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter 79

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*Best Wishes for the Festive
Season and a Prosperous New
Year*

Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
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Welcome to Newsletter No.79

and once again it has been quite an active month for the N. West meetings.

However, it has been a sad occasion for the world has lost a legend and also a very keen Formby Fan, Beatle, George Harrison.



George receives some expert tuition from our late friend, Ron Holiday of Doncaster.

George, who loved George Formby and the sound of the uke, joined the Formby Society at the tail end of 1990 when we were preparing for the Warrington Exhibition. His first words to us were,

"I don't want any publicity." When I queried why, he said, "If Beatle fans discover that I've joined they will want to join also and very soon it will turn into a Beatle Society. - Also, I want to be treated just like any other member." Which we did. He got no special treatment from us. Which he appreciated.

As soon as it leaked out that George was a member of the Formby Society, the phone got busy with people asking for application forms to join. And the value of ukes increased. On one occasion the phone rang, "Will you tell George Harrison that I've got a uke for sale, £4,000." No chance!!!

We were struggling to stage the Warrington GF Exhibition, due to cash shortage, but thanks to John Croft, who was the GFS President at the time, we received a contribution of £5,000 from George, which arrived in time to pay for some of the props.

George paid us a visit at the Warrington Exhibition on two occasions but refused to enter the building on the second visit. He sent his brother Harry in to check if there were any reporters around. He hated publicity.

I thought it unusual when he requested words and chords for one of George's most obscure songs, "I Told My Baby With My Ukulele" This was a song that previously nobody had asked for. During his visit to the Wintergardens, Blackpool, he got up on stage and played the song. His friend, and TV star, Jimmy Nail, also got up on stage with him. Alan Richardson, who is featured on page 8 of this issue, videoed the whole week-end event. CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

CONTINUED . . . George, who was very keen to learn to play the uke, invited Anthony Mason to stay with the family at his huge mansion in Henley. He also struck up friendship with Ray Bernard (an authority on ukes) and offered to sponsor Ray in writing a book on all the various models of ukuleles.

One scene I particularly remember was when during the GFS week-end I was walking from the café in Blackpool, back to the Wintergardens, when George and his family—all dressed in black from head to foot, pulled up in their all black car, and shouted, "Stan, where can we park?" I directed them and George drove off. Suddenly, a host of people gathered round. They'd recognised the scouse voice and descended upon me with, "Was that George Harrison?" They'd also recognised my GFS Blazer and Badge and proceeded to make their way to the Wintergardens to join the society. I informed them that they wouldn't be allowed in.

On arriving back home the phone rang and it was Granada TV Studios, London, asking for application forms to join, but only if George Harrison was a member. So, as George H wisely said, "It will soon become a Beatle Society once the fans find out." Needless to say, we tried in vain to keep the whole thing as secret as possible.

Concern—There's been a number of calls from players who are concerned that we may be requesting George Formby songs only to be sung at the meetings. These members in particular sing very few GF songs but sing ukulele type songs such as Five Foot Two, Ain't She Sweet, Sweet Georgia Brown, etc. So what's going on?

Well I can assure you that we have not asked anyone in the N. West to limit themselves to GF songs only. In fact, we pride ourselves on variety (as long as it is GF or ukulele orientated - or anything we feel acceptable to G & B)

George & Beryl toured with a variety troupe ranging from Jugglers, Dancers, Comedians, Magicians etc. and what's good enough for George & Beryl is certainly good enough for us. George sang many songs that were originally produced for other artists. We can't ask John Shreeve not to play William Tell, can we? So stop worrying.

Do Me A Favour—The phone has been quite busy with people ringing up asking for snippets of advice etc. on the GFS. Usually they are asking for details of anyone living in their area, which is information that I don't have. Or they require bits and pieces from the shop, also which I no longer have. One call came at midnight from a pub crowd asking for a London phone number, which I didn't have.

As my GFS membership has lapsed, - and I don't intend renewing it, please contact the GFS Secretary: Steven Wylde on 01773 763353, for any advice. I'm sure that Steve will be most helpful, and he has all the information at hand. Many thanks, Stan

YOU'VE STILL NOT SENT AN ARTICLE IN!!!!

You Make Me Feel So Young says Stan.

By Brian Edge.

You make me feel so young' sang Stan Evans at the November Crewe concert. "You know I come here feeling eighty and go home feeling only 65" said Stan. What a tribute to our friendly group who numbered 81 on the night.

Stan Watkinson our banjo-guitarist who hails from Knotty Ash and who once had Ken Dodd as his coalman, entertained with the popular number *Singing the Blues*. The ever-popular *"Living Doll"* followed this and the entire audience accompanied him.



Jonathan Baddeley gave a confident and polished presentation of Formby's war-time *"Get Cracking"* as one of his numbers and Trevor Hughes sang the nice version of Sergeant Major, which has never been sung before at Crewe. Trevor is now off touring the world so I hope he takes his ukulele with him so to keep in practise. Trevor's friend Len Warwick, one of our regulars at rehearsals, delighted the audience with a very special mandolin-banjo performance, which was well received, by the entire audience. It was Len's debut on the Crewe stage and hopefully we will hear more from him in the future. Ron Whiston accompanied Len on the bones.

What a wonderful surprise I received a few minutes before I was due to leave home for the concert. It was Carl Basford ringing to tell me that he was out of hospital. That was really great news. Carl has had a rough time for nearly two months and with his thoughtfulness I was able to give everyone the good news that they had been waiting for. Carl still has a way to go before he is back on his tank again but passing his MOT is a great start. Keep up the good work Carl we want you back soon and I know you will get a very big cheer.

Members all signed a card for courageous Sheila Palmer who has been quite ill since she fell whilst entering her hospital a couple of years ago. Sheila was geared up to having a hip replacement which would have gone a long way towards getting her back to health again but unfortunately at the last minute she had a set back and they were unable to perform the operation. Lets all hope that the specialists will be able to solve Sheila's problems very quickly as she has been suffering for so long.

Connie performed "Enjoy Yourself" and "I Don't Like" and yours truly tackled a new number "Wigan Pier", which seemed to go down quite well. Alan Newton compered the evening and the concert producer was Glenys Huntington. They made a very good team and the show seemed to go like clockwork but in reality there is much work to be done before such a state is achieved. Well done both of them. Glenys performed her spot with a solo on the flugel horn which she rightly claimed

was ideally suited to her number *Misty*. Alan put his own special touches to a vocal "*A, You're Adorable*" and was accompanied by the entire audience in full voice. His solo number, a wartime favourite of mine, the "*V*" *Sign Song*, was performed in grand style.

Alan Chenery outdid us all on the night with his gold waistcoat and white jacket. Didn't it look smart? Our audiences deserve a nicely dressed performer on stage. There are no marks for being scruffy however good the performance. Alan performed his spot well.

Vera Jones is gaining confidence all the time. She so much wants to perform well and I think you will agree that she improves with each concert. Vera is always well turned out on stage and I particularly noticed she had a lovely pair of patent leather shoes which really sparkled on the night.

Young Gregory Simister again performed well. Many other young performers could well take a lesson from Greg. This lad learns his songs and puts them over well. He then plays his uke well. Too many youngsters put the playing of the instrument first and do not concentrate enough on performing the comic song, which is a big mistake. Keep up the work Gregory and you will be a good entertainer.

John Williams entertained us all with his street organ with its unique sound. Among the songs that John played was "*Edelweiss*" followed by some Christmas numbers. John works very hard raising money for Cancer charities and he is often seen locally with his large street organ, which he transports on a motor lorry.

Bill Turner put on a great show with his rendering of "*Walk Tall*" and followed by the Formby number "*Sitting on the Ice in the Ice Rink*." This is a very funny number and having Jingle Bells as a chorus it is very topical at Christmas time. Few people have performed this song at Crewe. We are all so sorry that Bill's club at Werrington has had to fold up. Bill and Ivy and others have put in so much work for the Staffordshire Knott. It is sad that it has had to end like it has for these two very nice people. Of course it does not mean that we won't see Bill and Ivy at Crewe, we certainly will, and we look forward very much to hearing Bill performing on stage again hopefully at our Christmas party.

Colin got the sound just right on the night - a vital component for everyone's enjoyment, and with Steve Hassall on stage with his drums we had the icing on the cake.

Thanks Brian. It was a great night and the sound system is perfect.

Coventry Hippodrome—Just been informed that the theatre where they staged "*Zip Goes A Million*" is being demolished. This is a great pity as all the old stars performed here. If anyone has got any photos, or posters etc. I would appreciate a copy.



Cliff Royle A Super Giant Amongst the Country's Top Reporters. Hello Stanley; You get your posh name today.

Father Christmas could not have had a better night than we had at our Christmas celebration on Friday. It was voted "best ever" and I am sure that our Founder Dennis Lee would have been proud of his Club on that occasion. Dennis and Lesley have just departed for a three month initial "vacation" in Cyprus. We wish

them well.

The Party was held at the Penyffordd Village Memorial Hall; our usual venue being unavailable. It was an excellent venue having been the subject of a good deal of refurbishment and was all decorated out for the Festive Season. Our members complemented the decoration with Christmassy table cloths, crackers, and background music. An excellent buffet was provided by a local caterer, and there were even complaints that the trifle had too much sherry in it. Almost a hundred attended. Father Christmas came in all the way from Chester, and we thank Tony Elson (one of our staunch supporters) for performing this duty. Everyone sang "Jingle Bells" as he presented diaries to those present. An unusual touch was that each diary contained a pull out slip giving all the dates of our 2002 meetings.

The evenings entertainment programme had to be controlled in view of the time limitations, and so performers were limited to one song each. This worked well, for everyone was able to do their little bit and we still managed to finish on time (11.30 pm) due to the excellent job done by our M.C. and his capable assistant. There were a couple of new Acts which may soon be on TV. The Penyffordd Lady Bouncers under the musical direction of Jim Knight sang a Jolson Song (there was confusion and cheers when some moustaches fell off), and this was followed by a greeting to all those from outside Wales who had come to support us. It was the singing of "We'll Keep a Welcome in the Hillside". Some of it (actually most due to my error) was sung in the dark with the singers flashing torches. It was very impressive.

Later on the Crewe ladies performed an unusual version of "Twenty Tiny Fingers". They were all dressed up in pinafores etc, and had two lovely children performing in very inappropriate garb. Angela looked great, but I am speechless about the baby boy who shall remain nameless. Those ladies deeply involved with our Club were duly rewarded with boxes of chocolates, and our half dozen young supporters also were each given a little present.

I have refrained from mentioning any one in particular by name since so many of our members and friends helped out to make this occasion such a resounding success. It was a great team effort. However I, and our Club, would like to thank our friends from Crewe, Sale and Warrington for their tremendous support. Brian and Connie Edge have actually rung to say thanks for a superb evening. We in turn thank Alan Chenery for assisting with the sound system.

There was one hiccup: we were some 30 chairs short at the Hall. Hurried arrangements were made to get some from the Legion but as these were stored outside they had to be cleaned before use. Still the Show went on. Later it was discovered that additional chairs were stored at the Hall itself, in a separate locked room.

I am sorry to report that member Charlie Penman is in Hospital following a hip replacement. Sadly he is still in a great deal of pain, and has pneumonia. We wish him a speedy recovery. In conclusion may I and our team wish all our GFS friends and supporters a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Plonking New Year. Cliff.



Charlie (Heckler) Penman

PS. If anyone has taken home a half bottle of what appears to be whiskey you are in for a surprise. It is the baby boy's feed and he has been crying out all night for his bottle; of cold tea!
Yes Cliff, it was a great night full of surprises. Even though Stan W. and I gate crashed, I still got two helpings of trifle.

Ray Bernard Writes—Just a short note

to let you know that the "Our Gang" show at the Daneside Theatre, Congleton, was a huge success. Every seat was filled during the nine performance show. The cast, which was made up of scouts, guides, cubs, brownies, scout leaders and myself, numbered around 140.

My "Formby Tribute" went very well and I had a great little orchestra backing me. On the final Saturday show they awarded me Honorary Membership of the Congleton Scout movement together with a neckerchief and 'toggle' which I wore on the final performance, instead of a bow tie.

Following the final performance the usual dignitaries came back stage to congratulate us on a great show. These included MPs Nicholas and Anne Winterton, who said they were 'bowled over' by the banjolele.

I can certainly recommend the scout movement to any of our young players for comradeship and the opportunities to play their ukes in shows. Best Wishes to all. Ray.
Thanks for the article Ray. Sounds like a great show. You've got something there. Every scout should be taught to play a little wooden uke like they did years back.

Come Prepared

—For fear of Taliban reprisals you are requested to bring the following items along to the next Liverpool meeting:- One 10 foot ladder, one 20 foot rope, one bucket of water, three sandbags, one fire extinguisher, one storm lamp, one road map, identity card, ration book, blankets, candles and a flask full of tea.

LAST MINUTE SQUEEZE IN

—Jon & Pam were delighted with the Penyffordd Christmas Meeting and wish to thank all who contributed. Best Ever!!!

Blackpool had their best night ever with a host of players staying behind for an extra day from the Wintergardens meeting. Our M/C Alan Middleton was concerned that he may not be able to fit them all on the programme. One young man, Robbie ?, who is a pro stage artist, came along to the meeting to learn how to play the uke so that he can add it to his act. Peter Brown, from Preston, carries his uke banjo in a home made uke case shaped like a coffin. As he said, "I often die on stage."

Charles Stewart was reet chuffed with the show. "Just when you think that nobody is turning up and out of the blue come a host of entertainers. Best Night Ever," he said.

What a Grand Day!!!-

Eva and I had a great day with Kevin Bridgewater of Stourbridge, and Alan Richardson of Gloucestershire. They came to visit us here in Penketh. Kevin is a very keen GF photo collector and for a few years he was the official photographer for the GFS. Each meeting he would bring his photo albums along for the members to scan through.



Two nice lads, Kevin & Alan

Alan collects a range of GF memorabilia such as Newspaper Cuttings, Records, Cylinders etc. Over many years he has collected a few thousand GF newspaper cuttings which are pasted in six very large scrap books. The books are so heavy you need to be an all-in wrestler to handle them. He brought them to the Warrington Museum, on one occasion, and the poor lad was out of breath by the time he'd unloaded them.

The lads came specially to see my collection and were overwhelmed with the Formby (Father & Son) collection of song contracts. For a couple of hours they had their cameras clicking. We are very pleased that you enjoyed the day with us and our good old Lancashire hospitality. You must come again lads.

Olwen Gale Reports—Newspaper Heading— **PRIVATE PASSION FOR GARDENS and GEORGE FORMBY.** The passions of George Harrison, known as the quiet Beatle, ranged from restoring his historic garden, to enjoying the works of George Formby. The interest in the 1940s musical star enabled him to fulfil an ambition to appear on stage with his son, Dhani, without publicity. The pair joined a crowd of George Formby players in Blackpool.

When I sat with him on this occasion, I found him a quiet, nice, unassuming man and asked him his favourite GF song. He told me definitely "Riding In The TT Races."

Jon & Pam Baddeley Email—Hello Stan, Pamela

and myself were asked to tell the life story of our George at a very nice Residential Home For The Elderly. We were invited to the Supper Club and the meal was a superb three course meal. There was a printed programme for the evening but the programme itself had been devised by a young person who had never heard of the word UKE.

Consequently, the subject for the evening was to be THE LANCASHIRE LAD AND HIS BIKE. Needless to say that this became relevant when mentioning the film No Limit. All the best. Pam and Jon Baddeley.

New Fan Club—

The phone has been busy again with various people asking about a new George Formby Fan Club. One caller said, "If you've started up a Fan Club Stan, send me an application to join. Well, I haven't started a fan club but I was curious to find out who had. My searching led me to Cambridge where a new GF Club has been formed.

George Formby is the main personality of the club, however, all ukulele related music and styles are appreciated (i.e. music hall and uke melody). The club welcome fans of all ages, especially families. A possible meeting is being planned.

Membership is £7.50 a year and includes

1. Membership Card
2. Quarterly Magazine
3. George Formby - Uke case sticker
4. Beginner's guide to playing the Formby style on the uke
5. Free georgeformby.com email address
6. Details and invitations to all club special events.



Subs are due on the 1st Jan every year. Cheques payable to "Formby Friends."

Addressed to, C. Ackers, The George Formby Fan Club, Suite 110, Parkers House, 48 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1FD.

Email - admin@georgeformby.com

Web Site - www.georgeformby.com

Best of luck to the new venture. The more outlets we have for George and his songs the better.

Other societies are: The Ukulele Society of Great Britain. George Formby Society. The Yorkshire Ukulele Society. The Pudsey Plonkers. Do you know of any other GF clubs or societies? If so drop me a line and we'll give em a plug. Ee I reckon George & Beryl must be reet chuffed!!!

More From Brian Edge

THE JAZZMEN PLAY FORMBY.

Our local Jazz Band "The Salt City Jazzmen" play each Thursday at 8.30pm in the Barbridge Inn (a couple of miles outside Nantwich – the Salt City). It is a great two hours free entertainment for those who support the band and quite a number of the South Cheshire George Formby Ukulele Society find themselves there. As many readers will already know, Crewe favourite Alan Newton has played the trombone in the band now for 32 years. Now that is an awful lot of puff, just how much I would not know how to calculate, but perhaps it would go a long way towards inflating a decent sized airship! When members of the band are unable to perform they have to engage a stand-in musician and this week the band had a stand-in guitarist/banjo player. It did not go without notice that during one of the band numbers he strummed away in a similar fashion to the George Formby split stroke syncopation. It was therefore not such a big surprise when later, he got up and gave a solo of *Blackpool Rock* backed up with his banjo. This is another bit of proof that Formby's music is yet another form of Jazz. What the performer didn't know was that there were nine Formby fans in the room at the time.

FORSYTH SAGA.

In an autobiographical programme on the TV the other night featuring Bruce Forsyth a picture was shown of Bruce as a young man holding a Keech banjolele. It is surprising how many would be stars took up the instrument as a standard part of their stage training. Examples being Max Bygraves, Donald Peers, Norman Wisdom, Peter Sellars, Roy Hudd, Joe Brown just to mention a few.



ROY HUDD TOTALLY CHEESED OFF WITH GEORGE. Roy Hudd relates that he bought his first record player for Christmas. It was bought out of his earnings from delivering beer on Saturday mornings. It cost him three pounds. The record that he got with it was George Formby singing *Levi's Monkey Mike* on one side and *Sitting On the Ice In The Ice Rink* on the other. Roy also bought his Gran her favourite record *The Londonderry Air (Danny Boy)*. To quote Roy's own words "By the time Christmas was over I was totally cheesed off with George Formby and Gran hated Danny Boy".

WILL JONATHAN BADDELEY WIN THE MARS BAR?

d question (worth a Mars Bar) goes to Record Expert Jonathan Baddeley. The scene is Thoresby Hall a stately home in Sherwood Forest. In the Great Hall amongst many other antiques a Wind up Gramophone complete with large brass horn. On the turntable of the gramophone is an HMV 78 record. Your question for the Mars Bar Jonathan: - In what language is the writing on the record label? The result of this private challenge will be published in the next edition of the newsletter. *Thanks Brian.*

Andy Eastwood—My thanks and Apologies.

Andy rang up. He was extremely thankful to the Middletons—Alan, Carol and Francis, for looking after him during his weekend stay in Blackpool. Also he apologises for the sharp exit from the Monday night meeting at the Cricket Club when, after feeling ill, he had to leave us. However, he's now feeling well again and ready for work again.



Andy is doing well with his bookings and hopes to make the grade as a professional entertainer. Currently he has bookings for a 10 day tour in the south of England with Danny la Rue, two nights in January with Ken Dodd and a trial one night spot with Jimmy Cricket. Andy is working the hotels around the country, playing guitar and uke banjo.

Well we are all very pleased for you Andy. I remember well when you first appeared on the scene ten years ago and members have eagerly watched the progress you've made since. Great!!!! Keep up the good work.

Just Received a Call from BBC Radio.

They are launching a Lancashire Special in January which will run for 12 months. It will be an Exhibition of the old Lancashire stars: George Formby Senior & Junior, Gracie Fields, Frank Randle, Les Dawson, perhaps Ken Dodd, Eric Morecambe etc. and each month they will concentrate on one particular star. It was suggested that we choose either March for George, which is his 41 years since his death, or May for his birthday. The event will be held at one of the Lancashire studios.

During George's period they require us to give talks on G & B, beginning with George Senior. Also arrange for a number of players to entertain at a special concert. Sounds Great!!!

WHAT A COINCIDENCE!

Olwen Gale writes: It is interesting that George died on the anniversary of Denis's (late husband) birthday, while George Harrison died on the anniversary of mine. *Thanks Olwen.*

John Shreeve

—On the way to Werrington, John Shreeve told Stan Watkinson and I the funniest account of his first (and last) day working for the GPO.

Now John, - as brilliant as he is with a uke—is simply not cut out for heavy labour. He's got fingers like match sticks. But the Job Centre sent him to start working for the GPO delivering mail. "Well" he thought, "There can't be much heavy work in sticking letters through letterboxes so I'll have a go."

He turned up at the depot and was allocated a delivery round. "Oh no! not that one" they all shouted, "It's the worst round in the depot. You'll never get finished."



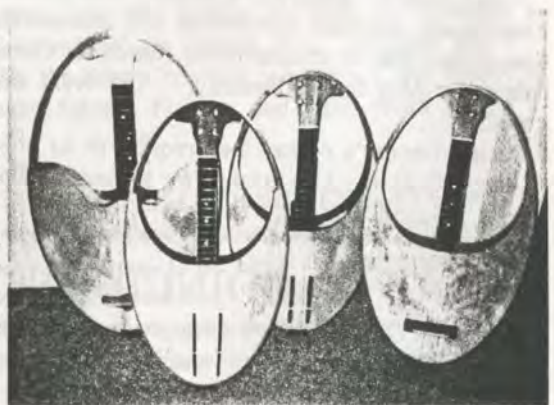
John braved on, determined to prove them wrong. They threw a bag full of letters on his back and he sank to the floor. They helped him up on his feet and loaded him and his day's deliveries into a van. They drove him to his delivery area and left him with three heavy bags of letters to deliver.

As soon as he started to post the letters the heavens opened and within a few minutes poor John was saturated wet through. He wasn't given any street plan and had absolutely no idea of where he was going. He was lost, freezing cold and soaking wet through. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon it was beginning to go dark and he was still wandering the streets with a bag full of letters. With the rain the bags were becoming heavier by the minute and the damp was causing the addresses to smudge across the front of the envelope.

Completely despondent, John gave up and found his way back to the depot. Needless to say, the boss wasn't too pleased. And so ended John's career with the post office. *Our thanks to Joe McCaffrey for the brilliant cartoon drawing.*

Ken Smith

—Just received a photo from Ken who is working on a new design of ukulele with a very unusual shape. Well we are interested Ken, but what is it all about? Can we have a full report in the next issue? Perhaps a shot of someone playing one of your models. Where did the design come from? Are they for sale? Price? Can't wait to hear from you.



What's Paul Woodhead Been Up To???

Just received an article from Paul. Paul and Jill booked a holiday in Tenerife, which they enjoyed, but the flight back was little unusual, - in fact, "scary". They boarded the plane on time and were delayed for about 20 minutes when the pilot informed them that they couldn't have air conditioning because there was a fuel leak. But don't worry we'll switch it on when we are airborne.

A few minutes later he announced that one of the tyres was flat but the tyre company was on the way to fix it. Another 20 minutes went by and they were told to disembark as the company couldn't jack up the plane with all the weight on. 40 minutes later they were told to board again. They discovered that the tyre valve hadn't been screwed down correctly which caused the tyre to leak.

2 hours later they set off into the most turbulent and stormy weather.

Thanks Paul. As I was reading your letter, SPRINGFIELD COACHES came to mind. I wonder if Bill, the proprietor, has ever considered going into the air transport business?

Dianne Kelly—Matthew's Daughter, sends in a few jokes

How many honest, intelligent, caring men in the world does it take to do the dishes?
Both of them

How does a man show that he is planning for the future, *He buys 2 cases of beer*

What is the difference between men and government bonds, *The bonds mature*

What do you call a woman who knows where her husband is every night? *A Widow*

When do you care for a mans' company? *When he owns it*

Why are married women heavier than single women? *Single women come home, see what's in the fridge and go to bed. Married women come home, see what's in bed and go to the fridge*

What is the one thing that all men in singles bars have in common, *They're married*

How do you get a man to do sit ups? *Put the remote control between his toes*

What are a woman's four favorite animals? *A Mink in the closet, A Jaguar in the garage, A Tiger in the bedroom, An Ass to pay for it all*

SO COME ON CHAPS—WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT?

Sale November Meeting By Cyril Palmer

The evening began with Dick Eaves making his debut in the role of M.C.—"About time," - who said that? - I bet it was Walter Kirkland—Anyway, thanks to Dick for stepping in and filling the gap. Dick is one of our most regular members—oh, now, you know what I mean, - he is always there helping with the sound, the raffle, and clearing up at the end of the evening. etc. Although he can't be persuaded to go on stage solo, he is there in the thrashes.



Roy Fielding

As usual there was a good selection of volunteers to entertain us with Roy Fielden from Huddersfield making his first visit to our new venue in Timperley. Roy recites comic monologues and also plays singalong medleys on his harmonica. On this occasion we were treated to an account of the disastrous sequence of events when, "The gasman came to call." Ten year old Ben Hallewell continues to make excellent progress. Recently he took part in a Radio Lancashire programme which was recorded to be broadcast on the night of our meeting. He sang George's "Home Guard Blues" for us. Not an easy song. Keep it up Ben.

Alan Chenery was in a daredevil mood. He told a joke suggesting that men have superior brain power. I was surprised that he got off stage in one piece. Bring your minders next time, Alan. Something different! Towards the end of the evening, Brian Edge and Jack Valentine got together to play and sing the rhythmic "Dr Jazz" which was done on the spur of the moment. Nevertheless, it was well performed.

For the rest there was a good measure of Formby songs, a couple of thrashes, contributions from Walter Kirkland, Connie Edge, Alan Southworth, Les Pearson (M.C. for the second half), Des Redfern, and myself. Finally, last month I wrote a separate piece about Les Pearson, in which I said he will be entertaining the Monte Casino Veterans Association in December. My apologies to Margaret Moran for forgetting to say that he had offered her services for this event. *Thank You Cyril*

Bob Simister—Just had a phone call from Bob who rang to say that he thoroughly enjoys attending Liverpool meeting because it is run with typical scouse humour. Nothing serious, just a daft night out.

Well thanks Bob. I never looked at it that way. We try to put the night over as George Formby would wish it to be, in good old Lancashire style. The gang at Liverpool will always join in with a bit of fun.

HAVE YOU POSTED THAT ARTICLE YET?

Everything you ever wanted to know but were too smart to ask...By Brian Edge

If vampires can't see their own reflections, why is their hair always so tidy?

If nothing sticks to Teflon, how do they make Teflon stick to the pan?



Alice is enjoying Brian's one-liners

Before they invented drawing boards, what did they go back to?

If all the world's a stage, where does the audience sit?

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

If God sneezed, what would you say?

If ignorance is bliss, why aren't more people happy?

Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?

If a tortoise loses its shell, is it naked or homeless?

How do you tell when you've run out of invisible ink?

In a country of free speech, why are there phone bills?

Why do they call it a TV set when you only get one?

Why do we wash bath towels? Aren't we clean when we use them?

If rabbits' feet are so lucky, then what happened to the rabbit?

If a word in the dictionary were spelled wrong, how would we know?

MORE NEXT MONTH!!! Thanks Brian.

Joe Taylor Explains A Few Medical Terms

Morbid—A better offer

Fibula—A little white lie

Acne—A area of London

Artery—Study of paintings

Dilate—Live to a ripe old age

Enema—Definitely not a friend

Vertigo—Not sure which way to go

Fallopian Tube—Greek underground

Caesarean—Neighbourhood in Rome

Outpatient—A person who has fainted

Dialysis—Improving Alice's hair style

Auto Immunity—Not interested in cars

Parasite—Where airborne troops are sited

Scarlet Fever—Caused by watching "Gone

With The Wind 50 times

MORE FROM JOE NEXT MONTH. Thanks Joe.

A BIT MORE HUMOUR

"Not tonight darling I've got a headache" Anne Boleyn.

"We'll soon fix that" Henry VIII

An Irish Blessing: May you be in Heaven half an hour before the devil knows you're dead.

Paddy died in his sleep, - he doesn't know he's dead yet. When he finds out it will kill him.

Uke Banjo Wtd Peter Price on 01925 485505 is looking for a banjo uke loud enough for some stage work. Not necessarily expensive. Peter plays guitar in his act but needs a uke to add some comedy.

Neil Forshaw was entertaining with the Newton Le Willows Male Choir and they were supported by a childrens choir. The childrens opened up with "Leaning On A Lamp Post."

Great Night at Werrington—Stan Watkinson, John

Shreeve and I were just setting out to go to Werrington when it was announced over the radio that there was an accident on the M6 and it was causing a 40 mile hold up. Not to be put off we set out and braved the long queues to reach Junction 16 where we arranged to meet Brian & Connie so that they can lead the way to the Werrington Village Hall. We all arrived together at Junction 16 which we thought was a good omen for a perfect night. Don't you believe it! I was keeping close to the tail of Brian's car when suddenly the brakes collapsed. NOTHING!!!! They were FLAT!!!! And beads of sweat came at the thought that if they'd gone a few minutes earlier we would have smashed into the back of somebody's vehicle. It was frighten. An arriving at the Village Hall we checked the wheels only to find that the rear off-side was hot enough to fry eggs. The thought of having to drive about 60 mile back home without brakes brought more sweat.



May and Derek made us welcome

However, Stan Watkinson's words of hope brought a little comfort, "Don't worry," he said, "we will get home. Half the vehicles in Liverpool have no brakes!". We all drive on the gears. "Right" said I, "We'll go and enjoy the meeting and worry about getting home later.

Well, we had a nice reception and they were all



Bill twiddled all the right knobs

pleased to see us arrive. The Village hall is typical of being council owned, clean but very clinical and sparse in décor. Because of lack of colour and trimmings, to absorb the sound, it is always very difficult to create an atmosphere. However, once the music started we were all determined to make a happy night of it.



Happy and smiling Bill Turner was the sound technician for the night while Peter Gratton kept us alive with his very humorous M/C role. This lad is good at creating a pleasant atmosphere and should be on TV. If he hasn't got an agent he should get one.

Stan W. entertained them well with his Beatles, Elvis and Tommy Steele renditions and the crowd all joined in. They were shouting for more. When the electric fingers of John Shreeve hit the strings the crowd were in dead silence. You could hear a pin drop as John gave them "The William Tell Overture" and showed how a uke banjo should really be played.

There was always a standing joke with John whenever he got on stage. The M/C

would say, "Some members pay as much as £1,000 for a uke banjo and never learn to play it. This lad however, pays £15 for one and makes it sound like a £1,000 instrument." It's true!!!



Matthew Kelly

Janice Bentley took the stage and gave us a sample of her professional tones with "The Sound Of Music" and "Sunrise Sunset" from 'Fiddler On The Roof.' Great voice. How on earth Andrew Little got his surname, has me beat because he must be 12 foot 15 inches tall in his socks. The lad's a giant, and not only in size but in his singing too because he oozes the love of George Formby and his songs. In fact he was the only artist on the night to give us pure Formby. Good for you Andrew.



Andrew Little

Above we have possibly the oldest member in the GFS, Matthew Kelly, who at 87 looks fit enough to go many more rounds. Matthew didn't get up on stage this particular night but he often does a turn at Crewe. You are doing well Matthew, and I know for a fact that some of the members consider you an example to follow.

It is truly wonderful that we have an organisation that encourages older folk to get up and entertain. There's certainly nothing on Television for the older generation. **ASOLUTELY NOTHING!!!!!!** Thanks for a good night Bill.

Another of George's Ukes???? - Quite a number of uke owners claim that theirs is one that was once owned by George. Alec Downie (right) was recently featured in the Cumberland News. . . .

"With his little ukulele in his hand, Alec Downie delighted Women's Institute members in North Cumbria. A George Formby admirer who played an instrument that had once belonged to the great man, he sang many of the great man's risque songs.

As a practising Christian, he also played at church functions where his song selection was rather more restrained. He had one great advantage, a safeguard which ensured that his programme was always appropriate for the venue: Joan, his wife of 59 years, would cast a knowing eye over the places and songs he proposed to play. Alec, a man with a great sense of humour that enabled him to laugh at himself, was 80 years of age when he died."



Isn't it great that 80 year old Alec got so much pleasure from playing such a simple little instrument. Wonderful!!!!

Brian's Joke—A group of girlfriends went on vacation and they see a five-storey hotel with a sign that reads "For Women Only". Since they were without their boyfriends, they decide to go in. The Bouncer, a very attractive guy, explains to them how it works. "We have 5 floors ... go up floor by floor, and once you find what you are looking for, you can stay there. It's easy to decide, since each floor has signs telling you what's inside."

So they start going up, and on the first floor the sign reads "**All the men here are horrible lovers, but they are sensitive and kind**"...the friends laugh and without hesitation move on to the next floor. The sign on the second floor reads "**All the men here are wonderful lovers, but they generally treat women badly**". This wasn't going to do, so the friends move up to the third floor where the sign read "**All the men here are great lovers and sensitive to the needs of women.**" This was good but there were still two more floors. On to the fourth floor, the sign was Perfect. "**All the men here have perfect builds; are sensitive and attentive to women; are perfect lovers; they are also single, rich and straight.**" The women seemed pleased but they decide that they would rather see what the fifth floor has to offer before they settle for the fourth. When they reach the fifth floor, there is only a sign that reads: "**This floor was built only to prove that it is impossible to please a woman.**"

Come On Trevor which Trevor Are You? - Just received an Email Trevor but I've no idea which Trevor it is. Are you out there Trevor? Which one are you?

Dear Stan

We went for a weekend at a hotel in Llandudno which featured the Parade jazz band and the Chicago Teddy Bears. The Teddy Bears brought the house down with a jazz number of Leaning on a lamp post. I think it would be a good number for our jazz band to feature special events, I will bring the tape along to be played to the audience at our November meeting to see what the others think Best wishes, Trevor

Brian Edge writes—Actual evidence I have none. But my aunt's charlady's sister's son. Heard a policeman on the beat. Say to a housemaid in Downing Street. That he had a brother, who had a friend. Who knew when the war was going to end.

John Shreeve is available for good quality uke lessons. Tel 07909 832330. John must be among some of the best uke players in the world. There's no doubt about it. His fingers are electric.

Joe Taylor says: Never go to a barber with a pie shop next door. He was sweeping the chimney with his son-in-law. He had no brush.

Bob Muirhead Emails—Stan, I have five American Songbooks mostly 49 - 50s that I no longer need, they have around 25-30 songs in each and are.

- Ukelele Hits
- Song Gems of Yesterday for Uke
- A Pocketful of Songs for Uke
- World Famous Songs for Uke
- Ukulele Ike Collection



They cost me between £5 - £10 each but I will accept £5 each for them if anyone is interested.

I LIKE GEORGE! - My wife read out a passage from one of her Liverpool books, in it a little girl said, I like George Formby because he makes me laugh, he is so funny, sings with a smile in his voice, and makes me feel happy. I guess that says it all.

Good attendance at last Liverpool meeting, you were missed but Stan Watkinson did a good job. Regards Bob Muirhead

Another Email re. Joy, who was George's sister in law during the time she was married to George's brother, Frank.

She also appeared on the same theatre bills as Frank when she was billed as Joy Glenroy, A Voice To Remember. At the 1961 auction Joy went along and bought two of George's uke banjos on behalf of Frank: Lot No. 449 a Dallas "C" and Lot No. 459 a Dallas "E" model, both of which were sold to Bill Logan when Frank ran out of cash.

Dear Stan, Just had a letter and a copy of a poster relating my mother-in-law, Joyce Ash from Christine Booth. She has given me your e-mail address so I thought I would pop you a line to see if you have had any luck finding any other information relating to Joy. Unfortunately Joy died just over four years ago now but never lost her love of music and singing. We have very little theatre memorabilia relating to Joy and it would be wonderful if someone, somewhere has any. After she died we cleared her bungalow but I think during her marriage to her last husband, much of this was disposed of, not through her choice. Sandy and Chris Whitcombe whitcombe@lineone.net

So if any readers have any photos or information on Joy would you please Email Sandy & Chris on the above address or drop me a line if you don't have access to Email. Many Thanks..

Date Change Blackpool December Meeting will be held on the 17th December—See you at the Cricket Club.

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 - December is the last meeting. Before finishing—THURS DEC 20th. Ring Bill Turner on 01782 304858.

Sale - NEW VENUE - AGAIN—Timperley Liberal Club, 43 Park Road, Timperley. 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 (see page 19 for December only date change) in the month -Tel Eve & Charles Stewart on 01253 768 97.

W o n d e r f u l B u f f e t .

Wintergardens GFS Meetings:

Sat & Sun 24th & 25th Nov 2001

No dates yet for year 2002

N. West—Two Lancashire Lads

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DON'T FORGET YOUR ARTICLE—OR ELSE

