

THE

# GEORGE FORMBY

# Newsletter 96

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Specially Produced for George Formby Fans  
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# Welcome To Newsletter No. 96 and once again we've got a bumper book full of news from Formby Fans.

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HOWEVER—There is sad news that dear Cynthia Basford, who lost her husband Carl only a few weeks ago has now lost her son. He suffered from gangrene. Poor Cynthia must be devastated. It's a tough world for some and tougher for others. Our thoughts go to her during her most dreadful ordeal.

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## Countdown To George's 100th.

On the inside back cover we are keeping a log on future activities leading up to George's 100th Anniversary. We will be reporting any special shows, exhibitions, etc. if fact anything where we can publicise George's Grand Year.

This will be the last major opportunity we will have of keeping George's name alive so it is essential that we make this a grand occasion. Newspapers, TV and Radio must be informed of our special year. If you intend getting involved in any GF events then we want to know about it.



**GEORGE'S ALVIS CAR**—We have news of George's Alvis being on show at Houghton Towers, Blackburn. And a photo shot outside Lytham St Anne's Beryldene. (George's home). We are invited to play. See page 19.

**We have report** on the AC Sports Car that, about 14 years they claimed was George's—but we don't think so. In fact we are certain it is not George's car.

**Also a further episode** from the Milton Keynes Dolly Birds and their fruitless trip to The Ukulele Society meeting at Digswell.

It's all exciting stuff so carry on reading. My thanks to all who contributed to this issue.

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**Stooge in the Crowd?**- Anthony Mason is performing well. He did a show with me last month at Ryfields, and he was oozing with confidence. Half way through his spot, an old lady walked in, - one of his 'hard up' bingo clients. She was cross-eyed, and with only one tooth (Anthony said they call her one eater) but they performed well together. She stood in the centre of the hall shouting out and heckling him. They all thought it was a set-up. Her main theme was: "I won't be coming to bingo until Thursday when I get me pension." and "He never picks my bingo numbers out" It was like an old music hall act and it brought the house down. One lady in the crowd was helpless laughing and couldn't control herself. Anthony took it all in his stride.

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**My Grandson** has fitted a video player to my computer. Now I'm typing and also watching George in "Spare A Copper" in my top corner computer screen. It's great because it creates a Formby atmosphere while typing away. Irrespective of what some think of George, he really was a good comedy actor. Many times I'm typing merrily and suddenly break into laughter. Then, one click of a button and George pops up on the front cover.

**Malcolm Palmer Emails** (Via Martin Thomas) this newspaper cutting: "Does the Queen ever let you know what she thinks of a particular issue? "No" said Mrs Bean, firmly. "The Queen doesn't express views as such, but she will sometimes put a comment on the envelope. When The George Formby Society wrote asking if the Queen remembered their hero, she wrote, "I still remember all his songs and sing them!"

The news reporter wrote: "My mind boggles as I picture Her Majesty leafing through assorted begging letters, petitions, requests for recipes (or asylum) while gaily humming snatches of "When I'm Cleaning Windows""

*Thanks to Malcolm and Martin for the article.*

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**Julie Bird writes to Jeffrey Booth** not knowing that Jeffrey (George's Nephew) had sadly passed away. Christine passed the letter on.

Dear Jeffery, My name is Julie Bird and I am very keen on doing my family history. One of my family lines is Sharples, this may not mean anything to you, but my great grandma Ellen and your grandma Eliza are cousins. I am stuck on their link. Do you know if your great grandma Louisa or great granddad George had any siblings? Or maybe great grandma Sarah Booth had siblings. I believe that Ellen's maiden name is Gaskell, but can't find any record of this. But I also believe that she is from Ashton-under-lyne.

If you know of anyone who has done your line of family history that could pass on this information on, that would be great. My granddad Harry Sharples and your uncle George were pretty close; maybe he was close to your father also. It would be great to keep in contact with you and if I find out any more on your side if I would be happy to pass this on. Hope to hear from you soon .

*So is there anyone out there who has heard of the Sharples family connection with George. If so, drop me a line or Email. Personally, I don't know of any Sharples relatives.*

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**Alan Chenery** is appealing for players and supporters for the Fleetwood Festival on Sunday July 20th. We will be entertaining from 12 noon to 5pm. Sounds like a GRAND DAY with: Tram Rides, Vintage Cars, Lorries, Motor Bikes, Steam Engines, Side Shows, Trade Stands, Railway Exhibition, Gathering of Town Criers—and it's FREE—so HOW'S THAT? See you there. Alan's phone numbers are on page 19.

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The Times Newspaper did a double page spread on ENSA during the 1st World War and George was well mentioned. Churchill said in the article: "Your job is to sing while the guns are firing," and they did. By the end of the war ENSA had put on more than 2.6 million shows—even the biggest names like George Formby, Gertrude Lawrence, Paula Green, Jack Buchanan, travelled with basic props and gave as many as 4 or 5 shows a day on makeshift stages in dangerous conditions.



George's nephew, late Jeffrey Booth.



# FLU BUG HITS CREWE APRIL SHINDIG

BUT ASHLEY SHINES AGAIN.

Apologies were received from a number of regular Crewe supporters and Artistes who were unable to attend due to a flu-like illness. As a result the attendance was down to eighty. So you can well imagine that it was great to see Alan and Eunice Evans arrive coming all the way from Redditch. Other surprise guests who travelled far to see the show were Dot and Val Wood from Colwyn Bay. Dave Clews of Endon brought his wife Hazel along for the first time and Herbert Locke introduced a couple of his friends who all seemed to have enjoyed the night's entertainment.



Jonathan and Pamela Baddeley took over as M.C. and Concert Producer in place of Alan Newton who was unable to attend due to an important commitment. Needless to say they did a splendid job of presenting the show. Steve Hassall our resident drummer gave his usual invaluable contribution assisted in the percussion department by Ron Whiston on his bones.

The show started as usual with a "thrash" where all those with a banjolele are invited on stage to perform two or three Formby numbers together! For a number of would-be artistes this is their only chance to play as it takes a lot of courage to get up there in front of so many people - alone. But it is just one step towards that end and it certainly does help to build up ones confidence being up there.

Sporting Cliff Royle opened the show with "*Swimmin with the Wimmin*" a song with a strange title but many readers will not realise that 85 years ago that was something that one could not do in public. Local bylaws at seaside resorts (up to the time of the end of the first world war) allocated beaches for women and others for men and even boatmen were forbidden to approach within 200 yards of beaches where women were swimming. Knowing that, the title of the song is understandable. Cliff then followed with "*Somebody's Wedding Day*."

Alan Evans then sang two numbers "*Have I told you Lately that I Love You*" and followed with that famous Geordie song "Keep Your Feet Still Geordie Hinnie" a special favourite of Connie whose folks come from that part of the world. Alan's performances are ever improving. Our drummer Steve Hassall gave a medley of his own which featured "*Half Way to Heaven*." Steve, a very good uke player as you know, performed this medley on a converted banjo to great effect.

Then it was Pam Baddeley's turn to tread the boards (sounds much better than "strut her stuff" as one M.C., to Pam's indignation, put it). Pam sang a delightful ballad "*More*" which the writer particularly enjoyed. They certainly don't write them like that anymore which is more the pity. Pam followed with a medley that included "*For me and My Gal*."

For my own contribution I ventured a new song for me "*Mr Wu's a Traffic Warden*" an Alan Randall composition featuring the very versatile Mr Wu who has worked in virtually every occupation from Chinese Chip Shop owner to a Window Cleaner! Then I tried George Formby's first recorded song featuring the Ukulele recorded way back in 1929 and entitled "*All Going Back*." It is a catchy number with words that need some understanding. The song bears George's name as the song-smith but I have my doubts about that. Jonathan Baddeley, M.C. on the night and our own Formby expert sees this song as the very point where George emerged from his father's image and became the George Formby that we all remember.

Connie took the stage after a week with the flu and tackled "*Radio Bungalow Town*" a Formby number and "*Living in the Middle of Trafalgar Square*" a song credited to the late

Stanley King who became a film star when he played and sang "Princess Lulu from a Honolulu Isle" in the film "Somewhere in England" which starred Harry Korris, Frank Randle and Robbie Vincent (Let-me-tell-you!). At this point in my report Connie came into the room and said, "I have a ticklish job for you to do". I thought to myself "Cor not another!" "You will have to have a plan of campaign" she went on. "What is it this time" thought I (I just thought it - never let the thought pass my lips - I know my place I do). "There's a pigeon in the pantry!" "Be careful," she said as I tutted and left my computer. Well she was right, it was a white fantail homing pigeon, a lot calmer than Connie I might say. Very friendly in fact and it was soon flying on its way! How it got there and how long it had been there I've no idea. Well I have digressed momentarily from the main agenda haven't I? Not to worry but I do get a lot of stick off the Editor if I overrun my space allocation.

Veteran Bill Turner, founder of the sadly defunct Staffordshire Knot Ukulele Society, took to the stage with his own version of the late Stanley King's "50 percent of its Mine" accompanied by his own keyboard backing. Bill clearly works hard at his music as he is always coming up with something new. Jim Knight played "It's a Long Time Gone" followed by "Twelfth Street Rag."

Arthur Newton performed "I promised to home by Nine O'clock" very well and Des Redfern sang two and a quarter songs but I don't think I have the space to explain that! One was "Saving up for Sally" and his last number was "Guarding the Home of the Home Guard." Which went down very well. I love the bit in the song that goes "One night whilst on L.D.V., (Local Defence Volunteers an early version of the Home Guard) Three German soldiers I did see, they ran like hell - but they couldn't catch me!" Yes it was good that Des.



Vera Jones

Vera Jones, gave us that old favourite "Who's Taking you Home Tonight" and everyone in the audience sang along. Vera followed with that Jessie Matthews favourite "Over My Shoulder." A good performance by Vera.



Our mate, Ashley

"The Pastits" entertained next showing off the talents of the Two Stans, Stan Watkinson and the other chap Stan Evans our Editor. They are a good turn "The Pastits" and their final number was "If I have my Life to Live Over."

"The Pastits" didn't leave the stage after their act, as it was then to be Ashley's spot. Stan has always said Ashley should have a spot of his own and at some signal known to Ashley he was on stage like a flash complete with his tambourine. Ashley has learned to mark time to the music and Stan had prepared a new song for him in "Blaze Away - We've made a bonfire of our Troubles." It was soon clear that Ashley really loved it and our audience loved it too. Everything new that Ashley does on stage is a big bonus for us as I have said before in these notes what is simple for us is like climbing Everest for Ashley. Well I am sure that some of you must have noticed Ashley twisting his tambourine in a backward and forward movement. We have never seen him do this before and Stan and I were really delighted.

We had the pleasure of having two of the three Penyffordders to entertain us. They sang a variety of numbers during the night including "The Old Kitchen Kettle" and "Blackpool Rock." and I couldn't help noticing that Frank has now caught the bones syndrome!! I wonder whether that has come from China?

Jonathan Baddeley our super M.C. finished the night by singing "Pleasure Cruise" a comic song that featured in the 1951 London Hit Musical "Zip Goes a Million". Jonathan explained that whilst Formby was cast in the lead there were no numbers for the ukulele. This did not please Beryl and eventually "Pleasure Cruise," a Formby number from the mid 1930's was included in the show, which was a big hit.

## This man is the Fittest Man in the country

Read on to find out why.

We were pleased again to welcome our special visitors; Alan Chenery from Fleetwood, Alan and Eunice Evans from Redditch, and George and Pat Forrest from Sunderland. Apparently there is no Formby activity near George and Pat, and did they enjoy their evening with us! George of course plays left handed which makes things a bit more difficult, and he would really like to hear from anyone in his area interested in playing. Now I nearly forgot our friends and supporters from Crewe and Sale. Thanks for everybody's support. It was an excellent evening with a good attendance.

Alan Chenery sang "Wigan Boat Express" and (before anyone else got in) did "Little Back Room Upstairs" supported by Jonathan Baddeley

on clarinet; Vera Jones and Pamela Baddeley sang and Walter Kirkland "performed" with his Bones Team. The bones family seem to be breeding somewhere. Jonathan Baddeley sang "Pleasure Cruise" and "Chinese Laundry Blues", then followed Alan Evans with "Lady of Spain I Adore You" and "Keep Your Feet Still Geordie"; amazing how he has come on since visiting the Crewe Exhibition only a couple of years ago; and his songs are usually somewhat different.

Brian Edge, who is still unable to stand for too long, split his allocation into two by singing a song about George, and then the humorous one "Mr. Wu's a Traffic Warden Now". He was followed by his compatriots, our farmer friend Arthur Newton, and the other namesake Alan Newton who gave us "You Can't Love Two Girls at the Same Time" and "If You're Irish Come into the Parlour"

Regrettably I have to leave out mentioning many members of my own branch. This is due to the fact that this report has been delayed as a result of my being away with our team over the Bank Holiday Week-end (for which see separate report) and our normal space in the News Letter has to cover both reports this month. However I do think I should mention the superb performance of our "Up and Comer" Greg Simister; he was marvelous. I am also pleased to say Tom Meredith who, having not been too well of late, is now getting back to his old self again.

Lastly can I say that at the meeting we was played part of the recording we have done of some of George's Songs. We think it is an excellent recording considering it was done by a group of amateurs, and we have to thank Alison Nadin for bearing with us for seven hours during the actual recording. The title is "Ukulele Memories" and is available on CD at £3.50 and Tape at £2.50. All proceeds are going to provide something of use to the Sick Children of Hope House Hospice as a Memorial to Lesley Lee. READ ON



## Llandudno & Colwyn Bay Festivals—SOME WEEK-END!

*(Can I butt in here Cliff? I want the readers to realise that you are 80 years of age while they read this report)*

After getting to bed at 1 AM following the Friday Meeting, we were all up at about six the next morning to go to perform at the Llandudno Extravaganza on the Saturday. Here we entertained for six half hour sessions a floating audience of one hundred and fifty to two hundred. It was a cold and windy day, with the occasional shower, and even though we had shelter provided by the organisers it was somewhat inadequate. Apparently the wind became so strong just after we closed for the day that our roof covering blew off and may now be in Ireland; so look out for it when you go there on the trip at the end of the month.

**PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 8 FOR MORE OF CLIFF (superman) ROYLE'S REPORT**

**Bob Muirhead Emails**—Hi Stan, Afraid I will miss Broadgreen again in May. American friends who will be with us for three weeks have decided that we will be doing the all England tour including that weekend.

Stan can you send me two copies of Newsletter, I will put cheque in post for you. Enjoyed your last issue very much, it was nice to see Margaret Moran featured she has a nice voice and is a special person.



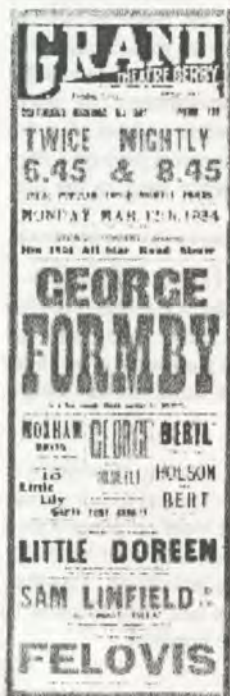
Wilf, Howie and Bob Muirhead, or The Dicky Hart and The Pacemakers Trio

Had a smile at her story of them finding a little room in the Hotel, reminded me of them renovating a Hotel in Blackpool and when they knocked a wall down found a little cubby hole with a skeleton in it when the murder squad went in they found a medallion around the skeletons neck engraved with "Shamus O Flaherty all Ireland Hide and Seek Champion 1962". Will try to make June meeting HONEST. Kind Regards Bob M.

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## George's Theatre Bill Brings £99.

Someone in Chorley, Lancs, had a George Formby poster for sale so he put it up on auction on Ebay, which is an Internet Auction Membership Club.



It was described as : "Genuine George Formby Poster made for his appearance at The Grand Theatre, Derby. Poster, dated March 12th, 1934, in good condition.

The size of the poster is 30" x 10". It has three folds at about 7" intervals, but in my opinion they have not damaged the poster (I'm no expert) The poster will be sent to the winning bidder in a tube for safe keeping." The winning bidder was "Formby 2 (184)" whoever that is. The final price brought was £99 plus £1 postage and £5 Insurance.

On the theatre bill were, "George & Beryl. Little Doreen, Sam Linfield, Holson & Bert, Felovis, and Motham." Unfortunately the rest of the print is too small to read.

One company has high hopes. They are offering a GF photo and a separate GF signature for £200. They put it in the auction with their starting price of £140 but nobody has made any bids.

Anyway, with a theatre bill going for £99, it is very pleasing to know that George's stuff is still in good demand.

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## Collecting Newsletters?

Some Newsletter readers have collected every issue since Edition One and some have them bound every two years. Well this issue completes another two years to be bound, so if any collector is short of back copies from No.1, I will be pleased to produce them.



# Didn't He Do Well? Well for my money

young 13 year old Nick Fuller, of Prestwich, was the best of the lot on "Kids Stars In Their Eyes" which was screened on Saturday the 19th April on ITV. The lad, who no doubt is a keen Formby fan, was oozing with confidence as he sang George's "When I'm Cleaning Windows." His singing was excellent, his timing was perfect, and his cheeky smile and wink was as good as George's. This lad will be a star some day.



Here's the wink

But what a pity he couldn't play the wooden uke he was holding. While Nick was miming with his uke, we heard sounds of some very nice banjo uke playing in the background. Naturally, most of the many millions of viewers would think that he was actually playing. Nick plays a brass instrument in a brass band.



Although Nick was the best on the show, he didn't stand an earthly chance of being the winner. A George Formby impersonator is of no value to their commercial department, who's main concern is to make money.

I remember taking Anthony Mason to Manchester some 10 years ago. When I asked the producer if he had a chance, he replied, "Well, you know that there's no profit to be made in selling George Formby." At that moment a young man walked past. He was collecting empty glasses off the tables and as he passed us the producer noticed that he had a strong resemblance to Jason Donavon. He quickly dropped our conversation and ran after the young man, "Will you ask your parents if you can appear on "Stars

In Their Eyes." The young man froze on the spot. No doubt he'd never sung in his life. "Don't worry about the singing we can sort that out," said the producer.

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## MORE OF CLIFF (Superman) ROYLE'S REPORT from PAGE 6—

We also did similar performances on the Sunday, but this time we were under a Gazebo provided by the Nadins. It was still very windy, and although it was lashed down there were occasions when it was all hands on deck to stop it blowing away. Eventually the wind won and for the latter part of the day we stood out in the open. Although it was still windy the sun came out and we got a little sunburned.

So another day ended, but we were not finished. Off to Colwyn Bay on the Monday to perform at their Carnival Day on the Promenade. The weather was dull and wet as we headed to our venue, but as we started to get organised things began to improve. Luckily here we were provided with a large lorry with one open side, which gave some protection from the wind which unfortunately blew partially on to us, so for some of the time it was a case of keeping jackets on. However eventually the sun came out and things really improved. Here we did seven half hour sessions to an audience which seemed to vary from about one hundred and fifty to three hundred.

*AND THAT'S NOT ALL! - I rang Cliff on the Tuesday morning to ask him to limit his report to one and a half pages, and Margaret said, "He's not in until 5pm. He's gone walking!" - "Gone walking?" I said, "how far?" - "About 18 miles" said Margaret.*

*And on Tuesday night and Wednesday he types out the two reports. I spend about 5 hours typing away merrily and then collapse in the chair for an afternoon kip. How do you do it Cliff?*



# Dennis Lee in Cyprus — Hi Stan, We

had our monthly meeting which attracted 120. The Ukulele Band as we've become known did 5 songs throughout the evening and are doing well. We then had monologues, other singers, a comedian, a keyboard player and a piano player. After every meeting we get comments like, "It's been the best concert ever!" and I really wonder whether we will be able to keep attracting such comments. However, as you know, you have to work at it all the time and never rest on your laurels. Whenever I'm introduced to anybody I gradually steer the conversation round to their interests and probe whether they might be interested in doing something at our meeting.



Last week the group did a half hour spot at a church hall which went down well. They then invited us to do a full evening in June. This week saw me at the office of the Cultural & Public Relations Officer seeking permission to play down at the harbour. It appears that we'll be invited to the "Pafos Day of Music" in June and I've also asked if we can have a monthly spot at the harbour throughout the tourist season. I await their reply.

The group are brilliant as regards helping at the meetings and each one has his particular job. I don't get involved at all with the sound equipment and only minimally with the programme. My job is m/c and it's wonderful when you can devote your time exclusively to that. I now have time to plan it all out and enhance it with jokes, stories and playing the audience.

A favour. Can you let me have a copy of the backing and words to "Soldier's Dream". I'm sure it'll go down well when our group starts to broaden its repertoire. Thanks a lot. Dennis.

*Thanks Dennis, you are doing very well with your group. Keep very busy and best wishes from all your friends over her.*

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# Bargain for Someone — Jim Thomas on

George Formby Complete

01706 367813 is selling three books and among them is a much sort after "THE GEORGE FORMBY COMPLETE"

Also "The 1st Ukulele Tuition Book" by Lew Stern and also "The George Formby 1st Album" which contains six GF songs: TT Races, Swimmin, Fiddler, Nothing Proud, Rock, Growing Lad.

All three books are in good condition and he wants £25 for the lot. Bargain! This includes postage to your address. First come first served.

*Jim sounded like a very genuine chap to deal with.*

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# Brian Nation of Bournemouth has just phoned. He has bought one of

George's boats and wondered if we had any information on it. He claims that George owned the boat in the early fifties, and just recently he was giving the living quarters a spring clean when he found a high quality walking stick behind one of the cupboards. He wondered if George used a stick and, if so, could it be his? Well George didn't use a stick as far as I am aware, but in the early fifties he was recovering from a heart attack so maybe he used it on the unsteady boat. I don't know.

Has anyone seen any photos of George using a walking stick? If so, Brian wants to know.

**Bob Muirhead** asked about all the kids who were dedicated fans of George Formby. Well of all the children we had, - and there were loads—none were more heart touching than **Ashley Lynch**—I received a phone call one day about 9 years ago. It was Ashley's mother. She was appealing for help for her little boy who was in Alder Hey Hospital suffering from a brain tumour.



Ashley on stage at the Winter Gardens sporting his Badge.

She followed this with a visit to my house where she told the story: "Ashley had been ill with a brain tumour for the past two years and during this time he was terribly sad. He never smiled and it was as if he knew that his condition was terminal. Although she never told him. He couldn't play outside or anything like that. He was deeply depressed.

One day, she was making her way down the hospital wards and heard a great uproar of laughter. She was sure that it was Ashley having a hearty laugh but couldn't believe it. When she got to Ashley's ward he was laughing his heart out. 'Mum' he shouted, 'get me some George Formby videos, he's great!'

George Formby had certainly made a big impression on Ashley's life so she searched around for videos for him. She remembered that the Warrington Museum had held a George Formby Exhibition so she immediately contacted them and they put her on the right track."

This resulted in the Warrington Branch of the GFS holding events to raise funds to give Ashley a few holidays. One of them was Disneyland. At one occasion he was made Warrington's top personality and he was presented with a huge George Formby badge to wear during his trips. When people asked him about the badge he would tell them about George and how he has helped him to start living and laughing again.

At the Winter Gardens, a raffle was held to raise funds for Ashley's holiday trips. He went on stage and sang his two favourites, "Out In The Middle East" and "Lamp Post" with Wilf Salt. What the crowded room of people didn't know, was that to give him the energy to mount the stage he had to be injected by his mother, Denise.

News of Ashley's love for George got to the media and he was featured in national magazines and on TV. Alas, there was no hope for Ashley and he sadly passed away. This was a sad blow to our Warrington Branch. A few days after the funeral, a TV camera turned up at one of our meetings to make a documentary, but we were so emotionally filled we had to ask them to scrap the film. Which they kindly did.

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## Another Great Night at Blackpool

The Blackpool nights are getting better each month with some grand atmosphere, a good audience, very well organised show, good equipment, and a table full of good grub. Latest on the scene is Brendan St John, a brilliant guitar player and accompanist. He has a bag full of Irish songs to sing, and Alan Chenery does a great job of Mceeing the show



# Well Bob, here's more youngsters of a decade

ago who were keen uke players and who invaded the Wintergardens, Blackpool, after the Warrington George Formby Exhibition in 1991. Young **Michael Davies**, (right), was only five years of age when he brought the house down on Yorkshire TV, and was chosen as "Pick Of The Week" by Granada TV studio. Michael, who played the bones at four, went on to play several instruments including cornet and keyboard. Since then he has raised a considerable amount of money for various charities.



Michael Davies



Formby Kids on Big Breakfast TV waking up the Wigan neighbours at 7am in the morning



Andy aged 15

Andy Eastwood on the left is now a very confident professional artist.



Alan Yates 16

Alan Yates on the right works as a shop assistant but is always available for club book-

ings.

Mark Walsh, on the left is busy playing and making uke banjos and would like to become a professional artist. Mark has turned out to become a star player in the Formby Society

Grandson, Lyndon, far left, switched over to the guitar and no longer plays the uke. Now 24, he is very busy setting up his practise as a professional Hypnotist and has offices in Warrington and Manchester. Actually

Lyndon is well cut out to be a top rate hypnotist. With his influence he convinced me time and time again that it is better to give him pocket money than to receive it. He'll go a long way.

Runcorn's Kieran Marshall, on the far right, made a big impression with TV viewers during his many TV appearances. After the George Formby South Bank Show, stars like George Melly praised him with quotes like: This lad should have a show of his own. Quite right too. Kieran was bubbling with enthusiasm and he loved being a TV star. He went on to appear with Alan Randall, and Little & Large on Belfast TV, and again he was a hit. Well Bob, you asked

about our George Formby kids, but these are only a few of them.

These kids thoroughly enjoyed George's songs and you'll agree that if kids are involved, then it's got to be wholesome.



Lyndon aged 10



Mark Walsh 9



Mark Allen 10



Tom Cutler



Jenny Cronshaw



Claire Moody 8



Kieran Marshall's cheeky smile captured TV viewers

# George's AC Car (I don't think so) has reared its head again

Way back in Spring 1989, a 1948 AC Sports Car was found after being stored in a locked up garage for many years. With a GFY 900 number plate, Bob Johnson, the finder, assumed that the car belonged to George Formby. In a newspaper interview he claimed that the house was part of the Formby estate and that the car had once belonged to The Formby Society. He claimed also that the garage doors had been nailed up and the windows were covered in dust and cobwebs. He had a great surprise when he found the treasure inside the garage.



Well, the only Lytham house that was sold as part of George's estate was Beryldene, Lytham, and we know that the garage wasn't run down and neglected like he claimed. And the car most certainly didn't belong to the GFS.

It was reported also that George bought the car to enable him to run his girl friend around. That simply doesn't make sense.

The AC car was taken to a garage owned by David & Derek Prince who got publicity in the local newspapers. I rang one of the partners, asking for proof of GF ownership and he nervously said that it was an assumption only and that George's name was NOT on the log book.

**HOWEVER, HERE IT IS AGAIN—**Recently I received mail in the post from Liverpool member, Tony, who follows the classic car auctions on the internet. He enclosed details of the same AC car being offered for sale by auction and it read as follows: AC 2 litre 1949, this car REPUTEDLY owned by George Formby is now offered for sale part restored, but with NO ENGINE. Large file of paper work and a large amount of spares. Buyer to collect from Liverpool 6. No reserve price, space needed. At the end of the auction, on March 30th, the highest bid was £460. Photos were attached showing the car stripped down in, what appeared to be, a very untidy garage.

It doesn't mention if any of the paper work is connected with George so we can only assume that again they are making false claims.

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## War Time Weekend

Les Pearson has sent in news of a 1940's War Time Weekend on Sat/Sun/Mon 24th—25th—26th May. For further details ring the organisers on 0161 764 7790. Les claims that they have a great weekend and ukes are playing. Thanks Les.



# The Alford Rosebuds & Stooges Society and the origin of the Po

Stan & I (The Past Its—Well & Truly) did a show at the Alford Rosebuds & Stooges Society and what a great night we had. These people are a fun crowd who see leisure as a joke and enjoy every minute living it.

Once again, - we appear to be getting a number of these lately— we found ourselves in pitch darkness groping our way through the blacked out countryside, searching for a glimmer of light that would lead us to the Alford Community Hall. The Chairman, Derek, said, "If you get lost just ask somebody the way. That was another Rosebud joke because there wasn't a soul within five miles of Alford. However, eventually we stumbled across the hall and outside there was a cheery crowd waiting to greet us. Within minutes this army of men had the gear unloaded and we knew we were in for a good night.



Now the Royal Emblem of the Rosebuds & Stooges is a well cared for Po, or Potty, or Jerry, and the story of this dates back exactly 50 years when the Po was first presented to them. These Rosebuds and Stooges take pride in their prize possession.



### Chairman Derek Weaver tells the story:

"The Willow pattern chamber pot you see before you has more history than you may think, and no, not in the way you are thinking, I'm not sure it has ever seen use as you would determine it in it's truest sense.

What you see before you is Aldford's own F. A. Cup, it was originally presented to the winners of a football match between the 'Stooges', whose team of gentleman all came dressed as ladies and the newly formed for this occasion 'Rosebuds' who of course were all ladies dressed as men, the purpose of this event being to raise funds to celebrate the Coronation in 1953.

At the end of the match the trophy was presented in all it's glory by our version of Mayor and Mayoress, the latter of course in drag. The winners could then rejoice, yet I doubt they ever used their trophy for a celebratory drink.

The 'po' as it is now christened still retains use today after all these years, albeit for maybe a more practical purpose, it is now used at the annual 'Rosebuds and Stooges' party, where the winning tickets in the raffle are ceremonially drawn from it every year and always brings a smile to everyone's face when it is produced."

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**Paul McCartney on George Harrison**—George got really good with the ukulele and had some great ukes, so we'd go round to his house and he gave me one to use on stage—it's called "The Gibson." I liked George Formby but George was fanatical about him—he was even in the fan club! Once he got on the uke, he learned all Formby's songs. George was nice like that. If he liked something, he really liked it, and learned it all.

# Sale: April meeting by Cyril Palmer

The April meeting coincided with Good Friday and the beginning of the Easter weekend. So it was not surprising that a few of our regular members were missing. However, in spite of the timing, more than forty arrived to make it a very good Friday in musical terms.



Vera Eaves. I don't believe she's 50

It was "friends and neighbours" as Ray and Sheila arrived with Margaret Moran and Les Pearson for a first taste of the delights of a Sale meeting. Pauline came from Frodsham with Cliff and Margaret Royle, while Alf Caldwell and Helen brought their friends, Dot and Brian. Alf is described in the last issue (No 95) as "Warrington's little ray of sunshine." About four days after the meeting I received a letter from Alf saying how much the four of them had enjoyed the evening.

After being around the ukulele scene for a good while, we too easily take things for granted. So it is always a great pleasure to see the joy and wonder on the faces of those experiencing their first taste of our entertainment. During the evening I sat across from Ray and Sheila, mentioned above. Their faces were an absolute picture of delight throughout the evening.



The Dolly (Parton) Sisters

So what was so enjoyable? The thrash introduced the magic sound of banjoles at the start. There were Formby and Formby-style songs in variety, sung by Alan Southworth, Brian White, Walter Kirkland, Brian Edge, Cliff Royle, Connie Edge, Alan Newton and Paul Kenny. Other songs, mostly from the Formby era, were sung by Jack Valentine, Alice Cronshaw, Alf Caldwell, Jim Knight, Cyril Palmer, Margaret Moran and The "Past-its." There were sing-a-

longs and, as always, more than enough repartee from our irrepressible audience (or should that be irresponsible?) Finally the surprise item, something different. Not long before the interval the announcement was "Dolly Parton" Suddenly it went all Country and Western as three glamorous young ladies took the stage --(Well, all right-young-looking ladies!) Looking lovely in stetson and western gear, "Dolly" sang "Stand by your man" and "On a blanket on the ground," while the two "Silver Dollars," similarly attired, danced seductively to the rhythm. This has to be the highlight of the evening, so, thanks to Margaret Moran, Vera Eaves and Hilda Southworth for this treat.

Before I finish, let me thank the dozen or so friends who so willingly volunteer their help in preparing and running our meetings. Their help is very much appreciated, without it we could not continue to run successful evenings. *Thanks Cyril. It was another great night.*

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**Cartwright Uke for sale**—Pro artist, Gary Mac, currently playing Torquay, is selling a Phil Cartwright Ludwig Copy—Gold Plated—Ideal for stage work, excellent sound. Hard, shaped case. Price £495. You can ring Gary on 0151 339 1492. Nice lad to deal with, splendid artist, known him for years, wouldn't rob anyone.

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IF YOU'VE GOT A UKE FOR SALE ADVERTISE IT IN GEORGE'S NEWSLETTER

# It Could Only Happen to Janet & Christine

Janet & Christine decided to visit the Ukulele Society meeting at Digswell. They set off at about 11am and all went well until they entered Hatfield Tunnel. Janet said, "There's something wrong with the car. It's gone all wobbly wobbly" They crawled on to the hard shoulder to phone the RAC and found that the mobile phone had disappeared from Janet's pocket. They waited for some time for a good Samaritan to come along but no luck.



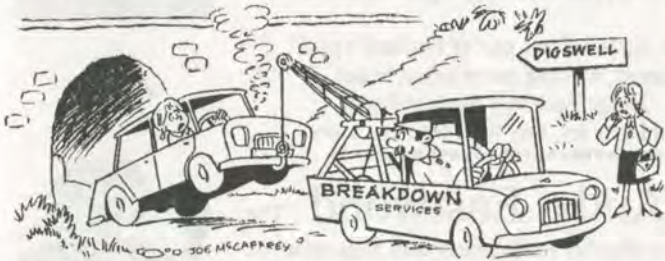
Christine & Janet having a cuddle with Cliff

After another search, crawling round the seats, they found the phone and rang for help. At that moment who should turn up but Mr Plod, the police. "Hello, hello, hello," he said, "And what have we got here then? You can't park here you know." "Hello officer," they said, "We are waiting for the RAC to come to fix the car." "Well, you can't stay here, you'll choke to death with the fumes from the exhaust, and we don't want any dead bodies on our hands do we? So get it shifted." Easier said than done, they thought.

Christine said, "You know, it's a very lonely place waiting inside a tunnel for help and thousands of cars shooting past you. The draught from the cars certainly made a mess of our hairdos. After mauling underneath the seats scrambling for the mobile, and standing in this wind

tunnel for two hours we looked dog rough. If we'd turned up at Digswell they wouldn't have recognised us.

A few minutes later two Police trucks turned up to tow us out. One at the front and one at the back, and both with flashing lights that lit up



Many thanks to Joe McCaffrey for an excellent cartoon.

the whole tunnel. Suddenly we

felt very important and protected. But that didn't last long because they towed us to the end of the tunnel and left us there, - dying for a toilet and a cup of tea. Half an hour later the RAC man turned up to repair the car but unfortunately he couldn't do it. However he towed us to Hatfield Service Station where we both shot off in search of the toilets. And a cuppa.

At 3pm the RAC breakdown truck turned up. Now I've always fancied a ride in a breakdown truck so we both scrambled in with the driver. Soon after, we arrived back at our local garage in Milton Keynes and Dave was waiting for us. It was a day of disasters but we had a good hearty laugh trying to explain to everybody what had happened. They didn't believe us.

*Thanks Christine, sounds like an exciting day. Eva & I had a good laugh as well.*

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**GEORGE ON TV**—Did you see George on Wednesday night 23rd April? It was an episode of "This Is Your Life" with Bob Monkhouse as the victim. When asked how he came into show business he said that he saw the film Boots Boots and got completely hooked on the antics of George Formby, and has had great admiration for him since. He's done many things but never could he equal George.

# Ode To George Formby

By Barrie Cordingley—A keen Formby fan

I was strolling down the promenade, on Blackpool's golden mile  
When I heard the strains of a banjo-uke, it made me want to smile  
My mind went back to the good old days, when variety was king  
And people would flock from miles around, to hear George  
Formby sing

He sang about a Mr Woo, and how his laundry wouldn't pay  
And his auntie Maggie's remedy, that would chase your cares away  
With his little stick of Blackpool rock, in the sunshine or the rain  
He'd call to people passing by, Eee' its turned out nice again.

In his granddads flannelette nightshirt, this Lancashire toreador  
Would have us rolling in the aisles, all crying out for more  
With a toothy grin, he'd sing a song, that made all the ladies frown  
About a window cleaner, and what he saw, whilst working on his round.

Throughout the war he sang his songs, to raise our spirits for a while  
With a message to all the nation, to count your blessings and smile  
He sang about Madame Moscovitch, and the barmaid at the Rose and Crown  
Sitting on the top of Blackpool Tower, you can't keep a growing lad down

Now those golden days we knew and loved, are part of England's past  
Its as though that feeling of happiness, was just never meant to last  
But locked away in our memory, George Formby's songs still play  
And no matter how hard, the world may try, they can't take that away.

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## Report From Andy Eastwood

The Good Olde Days will be on every Monday in Skegness until September - a nice music hall style show. In July I start a season at the **Winter Gardens (Blackpool)** every Tues/Wed/Thurs, but I'll tell you more about that next month. Glad to hear Anthony is doing well, haven't seen him for a while. I saw Christine and Janet & Dave yesterday though, they read about the Ronnie Ronalde show at Milton Keynes in your newsletter. On Friday 20th June we may be at the **St Helens Theatre—with Ken Dodd**—will confirm that.

Yes the Des O Connor show was well received. Tons of people have mentioned seeing it. Des being the good old pro that he is, wanted to spice up his show with some real live music. But the TV shows today are all organised by kids straight out of college, who have never seen real variety entertainment. The producer didn't even know what a ukulele was! So they gave me a two minute slot, just enough for a brief chat and half a chorus of Lamp Post. Well of course Des was fascinated by the uke and the studio audience, who were all in their 60s, went wild and shouted for more. So it was a good plug for traditional variety and afterwards the producer wished he'd given me a longer spot! By the way, the Ronnie Ronalde tour is going well - it's a really good show, hope you can see it. *Thanks Andy, nice to know that you've got a full programme for June. I didn't publish it as they were mainly too far to travel. Best of luck.*





**Uke Demand**—There's still a good demand for Uke Banjos. On the internet one of Gordon Markendale's ukcs—manufactured 1970—came up for auction and two days before the end of the auction the price was £400. Another uke banjo, by Ozark—sounds like a plastic skin—was selling at £200, also two days before the end of the sale.

Well bashed inferior ukcs usually bring around the £30 mark and good average, middle of the road ukcs bring around the £60 to £70 mark. All the above prices are plus postage

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**Mark Walsh**—In Issue 94 we reported on the talent of young Mark Walsh, a London lad who is on his way to being a star of the future. Well, What I didn't know was that he is also gifted in the workshop and makes excellent uke banjos. Although I've not seen any of the ukcs made by Mark, Bob Muirhead Emailed to say that the quality of his work is first class. A great job. Mark sent in a copy of his uke advert.

Well it's great to see these youngsters making progress so if you are looking for a uke

banjo give Mark a ring.

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<p><b>For Sale</b> <b>Baby Gibson</b> <b>Copies—£400</b> Available in Sunburst or Dark Mahogany finish Contact Mark Walsh for more details on 0208 3105422 or 07939 664 645</p>
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**Bob Muirhead Emails:** A Sunday school class was studying the Ten Commandments and they were ready to discuss the last one. The teacher asked if anyone could tell her what it was. Susie raised her hand, stood tall and quoted, "Thou shall not take the covers off the neighbour's wife."

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**Email from Miles, a Cousin in Germany** - Yesterday the first of our storks arrived back from South Africa, a journey of over 8000 miles. Every winter they fly out to Africa and return in the April. Some have their nests on top of brewery chimneys and they always go back to the very same nest that they left. Generally the male is the first to land and the female follows about four days later.

Since they attract a great deal of attention they are an extremely good free advert. Hence the breweries look after them and feed them. In fact we even have special brews called "Stork Beer".

How the storks find their way is a mystery. It takes me all my time to find my way home in the same town after drinking five pints of "Stork Beer". Miles.

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**Grand Charity Show** on Friday 16th May at Vagabonds Tennis Club, Queens Drive, Liverpool 13 in Aid of The Zipper Club at Broadgreen Hospital Cardiothoracic Centre. Hot Pot Supper, Raffle, and Entertainment by **The Past Its**" (Well & Truly) plus others. Tickets from the Tennis Club £3. Or ring Beryl Fisher on 0151 228 0652.

# No Name Given

but one of our men players received a reply from The Centrefold Division of PLAYGIRL MAGAZINE . . . Report from Charles Stewart.

Dear Mr— Your name has been submitted to us, together with a photograph, but I regret that we will not be unable to use your body in our Centrefold Display.

On a scale of 0 to 10 your body was rated 2 by a panel of women judges, whose ages ranged from 62 to 76. We had tried to assemble our panel from the age bracket 25 to 35, but unfortunately we were unable to get them to stop laughing long enough to reach a decision.

Should the tastes of British women change so drastically that bodies such as yours could be used, you will be notified by this office immediately. In the meantime, we have taken the liberty of submitting your photograph to our sister publication, the "Saudi-Arabian Camel Keeper," which as you may know is a weekly publication.

Yours with sympathy and sincerity, Sophia Dunnal, Editor Playgirl Incorporated.

P.S. We do commend you for your unusual pose. Were you wounded in the war?

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## Nantwich Easter Jazz Festival by Brian Edge.

Once again the South Cheshire "George Formby" Ukulele Society lived up to its reputation as being, in the organiser's own words, "an annual highlight of the festival who always play to a packed house."

Again the audience left the performers in no doubt that they had loved the show and the Festival Organiser had eventually to plead with them to let the group leave the stage, as demands for encores had exceeded the two hour allocated slot for the show. They don't come better than this folks! What a great audience we had, led of course by our very own special band of loyal followers, who must be thanked for their staunch support which really brought out the very best of the fourteen playing members of the team.

The one thing that stood out a mile was that the 180 people who turned up to see us really appreciated our performance. After the show the band was swamped with people wanting to shake hands and eagerly thanking us for so much for such a great show. It was very rewarding for the band, but at the same time it was a big tribute to Formby and his music which is very much alive and will be for many years to come.



The Society's name appeared on the Official Festival T-shirt along with great names like *Terry Lightfoot and his Jazzmen* and *The Drifters*.

Those taking part in the show were Jonathan Baddeley (M.C. and clarinet), Pamela Baddeley, Alan Newton (trombone), Steve Hassall (drums), Des Redfern, Arthur Newton, Angela Caldicott (Sound), Cliff Royle, Don Chalkley, Colin Wood, Connie Edge, Brian Edge, Walter Kirkland, Ron Whiston (Bones) and Alan Chenery. The event raised the sum of £180 for charity.

*Thanks Brian, sounds as if you all had a grand day.*

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**Danny Kaye said:** All life is a great big canvas. Throw all the paint on it you can.

## Dates For Your Diary—Building up to George's 100th

**Mon 26th May 2003**—George is 99 years old

**Friday May 30th**—Four day trip to Dublin, Christine Wood—01270 663558

**Sat June 21st**—Alvis car, George's Beryldene House, Lytham. (Alan Chenery—01253 681439 or Mobile 07967 665069)

**Sun June 22nd**—Alvis Car Show (George's car is on show here.) Houghton Towers, Blackburn (Alan Chenery—01253 681439 or Mobile 07967 665069)

**Sat July 12th**—Paul Woodhead House Warming Uke Party, Paul Woodhead—01952 598840

**Sun July 20th**—Fleetwood Tram Festival. 60,000 people expected. We will be entertaining from 12 noon to 5pm. Alan Chenery—01253 681439 or Mobile 07967 665069.

**Sat 15th May 2004**—Grand Show at Frodsham Community Centre, Cliff Royle 01928 731088



Roll up folks and see my Alvis car.

According to George's brother, Ted, the first car that George had when he set out in show-business was an Alvis, bought by Eliza, their mother. If George only owned the one Alvis car then this is the one that will be on show at Blackburn (above).

If you are holding any events leading up to George's 100th Anniversary, don't forget to send details in.

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## Email from Leonie Pipe of New Zealand

Dear Stan, Years ago my parents had a cylinder player with several cylinder records. One of the records had a comic song entitled "The Little Shirt me Mother Made for Me." My father insists the song was sung by George Formby Senior. My mother is not so sure. Could you please enlighten me? Many thanks, Leonie Pipe.

*Thanks Leonie for your Email. Well your mother is nearest. George Formby senior never recorded Little Shirt. It was written and recorded by Tom Wootwell who had a very similar voice to GF senior. Send me your address and I'll send you a copy of Tom singing his song.*

*And what a coincidence that you asked for Little Shirt. Brian Edge & I have just added another two verses to this great little comedy song . . . . .*

One day me mother put it in the wash It shrunk a mile I murmured "Oh my gosh"  
No longer did it cover what it should So with my hands I covered what I could  
Yes I stood there looking all embarrassed And all the girls were laughing eagerly  
So I tried to stretch it out a little longer The little shirt me mother made for me

Now I'm grown up and have a little lad He's full of cheer exactly like his dad  
Hand in hand we stroll down by the sea In my little shirt he's happy as can be  
But some day when my life is over When I kick the bucket, you will see  
I've told him that I must be buried In the little shirt me mother made for me

*Leonie took up the offer and in an hour or two the tape was winging its way to NZ. It was filled up with "The GF Senior Story" and loads of GF junior recordings, so dad will be chuffed.*

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LET ME KNOW OF ANY GEORGE FORMBY EVENTS COMING UP

# George Formby 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?

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**Liverpool** - Broadgreen Conservative Club, Every 2nd Friday in the month - Ring Tom Bailey on 0151 289 1711 - Bring Your Uke

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**Sale** —Timperley Liberal Club, 43 Park Road, Timperley. Every 3rd Friday in the month - Ring Cyril Palmer 0161 748 6550 Adm £1. Inc. Tea & Biscuits.

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**Crewe Branch** - Wistaston Memorial Hall - Every 4th Friday in the month - Brian Edge on 01270 569836.

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**Westhoughton** - The Red Lion Pub (Opp. Police Station) Ring Gerry Mawdsley on 01942 817346 - Every last Wednesday in the month. Uke Tuition.

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**Blackpool.** SOUTH SHORE CRICKET GROUND, Common Edge Rd, Blackpool. Every last Monday in the month -Tel Eve & Charles Stewart on 01253 768097. Wonderful Buffet—Always in need of players.

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## Wintergardens George Formby Society Meetings:

Sat & Sun 28th & 29th June 2003

Sat & Sun 13th & 14th Sept 2003

Sat & Sun 15th & 16th Nov 2003

Concerts usually start around 1.30pm each day.

Please Ring the Secretary, Sylvia Roe on 01142 846245 for details on the GFS or Wintergarden meetings.

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**Web Site** —Two Lancashire Lads:

[www.thehollies.u-net.com/formby](http://www.thehollies.u-net.com/formby).

**E Mail:** [stan@thehollies.u-net.com](mailto:stan@thehollies.u-net.com)

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For George Formby 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.

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He was a terrible chap! He stole the wheels off his wife's miscarriage

