

THE

GEORGE FORMBY

Newsletter99

Vol. 9

No. 3

Sept 2003



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

Tel or Fax 01925 727102

Welcome To Newsletter No. 99 and

fortunately we have no sad news this month. However it has been an extremely busy month with loads of activities going on all around the area.

The FLEETWOOD Tram Extravaganza was a huge success with our players belting out George's songs to anything up to 300 people.

BACK TO GEORGE'S ROOTS—At the same time we were in Newton le Willows/ Earlestown with the groupies bands and holding our own, almost on the very spot where George made his debut in 1921.

CREWE had an excellent night when they sang with the 50 strong Crewe Male Voice Choir. Lamp Post never sounded so well.

WIGAN Brownies honoured George when they sang his songs at their special concert.

RHYL was alive with uke banjos when about 150 people descended on the home of Frankie Woods, and Jean & Alison Nadin for a garden party.

PRESTON—Ken Dodd opened the excellent "Grin Up North Comedy Exhibition.

TELFORD—Plus A Garden Party at the Home of Paul & Jill Woodhead—And more. . .

George's 100th—Lets think about it. We are busy

planning all sorts of events for George's 100th (See inside back cover) and it looks as if we are going to be extremely busy next May. Different groups are organising all sorts of activities: A trip to Cyprus might be organised, Charles & Eve Stewart are planning a grand George Formby Show on the Prom, Crewe and N. Wales have arranged two events, Anthony Mason & I are planning a GF Talk and a Song in Wigan etc. and all in May 2004.



But I don't think that we will be able to fit all these activities into and around May 26th. During the hot month of July we were flagged out after the first two or three concerts, and we are not getting any younger. So why should we try to cram all these events—plus more ideas to follow—into one month?

That's a good idea Stan. Keep the events going for 12 months.

HERE'S A SUGGESTION—George Formby was a big, big star! So we should be thinking big as George & Beryl did and make the Year 2004 the George Formby Year. Spread all our activities over the entire year and let people know that the year 2004 is George's Year. That way we will receive any media publicity over the whole 12 months.

Beginning Jan 1st 2004 we should be holding various GF events until December 31st. If you wish to comment on this give us a ring, Email or drop a line. I rest my uke case.

If You Intend Holding Any GF Event Let Us Know About It.

Fleetwood Tram Sunday by Alan Chenery—Colin

Wood, Charles Stewart and myself set up our gazebo and the sound system at 9.30am and there was another gazebo set alongside who were the "Fleetwood Beat," a group of young singers and dancers who worked half hour spots from 11am to 4pm. The area was packed and we attracted a large audience from the start.



The George Formby Merry Songsters—but
Do I see a bucket at the front? **SHAME!**

They all joined in to the sounds of Dickie Speake, Judith Townsend, Alan Southworth, Jonathan Baddeley, Mac McGee, Cliff Royle, Alison Nadin, Margaret Moran, Paul Kenny, Cyril Palmer, Don Houghton, Colin Wood, Frank Humphries, Deg Bruce, Phil Hughes, and not forgetting yours truly, Alan Chenery. Colin Wood slaved throughout the hot day with the sound system which gave us the satisfaction of being the most popular show.

The final session at 4pm still attracted a large audience, but the sky was becoming overcast and so we were ready to invade my home where Pat & I dished up a barbeque. We would like to thank Thelma, Christine, Eve, Nicola, and Steven—plus all the willing workers and anyone else we've forgotten. We had a great day.

Andy's October Bookings

Fri 3 & Sat 4 *Cabaret Time*, Winter Gardens Theatre, Margate
Tue 7 *South Downs Holiday Village*, Bracklesham Bay, Chichester
Thu 9 *Private Function*, Yardley Ex Services Club, Birmingham
Fri 10 *The Ken Dodd Happiness Show*, The Meres Theatre,
Grantham

Tue, 14, Wed, 15, Thur 16 *Those Were The Days*,
Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool

Fri 17, Sat 18 *The Good Olde Days*, City Varieties Music Hall,

Leeds

Tue 21, Wed 22, Thu 23, Tue 28, Wed 29 *Those Were The Days*, Pavilion Theatre,
Winter Gardens, Blackpool

Thu 30, Fri 31 *The Ken Dodd Happiness Show*, Hippodrome Theatre, Birmingham.



On the chest of a barmaid from Sale
Was the menu and prices of ale
And on her behind,

for the sake of the blind
Was the same information in Braille

A convict by the name of Finnigin
Broke out of jail just to sinnigin
He robbed and he stole

got himself in a hole
Now the jail he broke out of, he's innigin

Jon & Pam Baddeley Celebrate Silver Wedding and Shy Gloria Makes Her Debut at Crewe.

Crewe's July variety show was dedicated to Jonathan and Pamela Baddeley who were celebrating their Silver Wedding. Pam and Jon have been faithful supporters of the Crewe Society from the very first meeting and it was wonderful that they wanted to celebrate their special day with us. They sponsored a buffet supper and everyone had plenty of grub. Jonathan and Pam's guests were Mrs Margaret Baddeley (Jonathan's Mother) and Mr and Mrs Beryl and Ken Handley (Pam's Mother and Father).



Pam & Jon

Ninety turned up for the event that turned out to be an excellent four hours entertainment full of fun and laughter and even the great late Lonnie Donegan joined in the fun with his own unique version of that Formby "mixture" which we were told was concocted by dear old Auntie Maggie in her back kitchen. Variety is the Spice of Life as the saying goes and George Formby was always backed up when on stage by a variety of talented artistes and speciality acts. George would have soon killed his golden goose had he performed one man shows. So we follow George and Beryl's successful formula and let you have your fair share of George's famous songs along with a variety of music and fun from our

talented entertainers.

Steve Hassall opened the show with "Pardon Me" a love song from the film "Come on George" where George sang this song to a very plain and pretty Pat Kirkwood. So far as I can remember this song has only been sung at Crewe by Steve. In contrast, for his second number Steve gave us "Bunty's Such a Big Girl Now!" The Frodsham Nightingale aka Cliff Royle followed with "Somebody's Wedding Day" especially for Jonathan and Pam and as a second number "The Window Cleaner." Alice Cronshaw then sang "Love Letters" and "You made me Love You" delivered in her very own special style. (I love her "Slow Boat to China.") Alan Evan's contribution was "I'm a Lucky Son of a Gun" and "Don't tell I Tell Ee." Alan seems to favour these dialect songs as last time he was singing all Geordie like with "Keep your Feet Still Geordie Henny." He is building up a very big repertoire is Alan with lots of new material in the pipeline. Tom Meredith abandoned his uke in favour of two vocals one being "My Way" and Connie kept the lady's flag on the wag with the 1933 Formby song "Running round the Fountains in Trafalgar Square" and for her second number "The Seaside Medley" when everyone joined in. A very good performance by Connie. Young Greg Simister gave his best performance for a couple of months with "I Blew a Little Blast on My Whistle" and "T.T. Races" both with excellent solo performances. Eleven years old Greg has so many interests that he is having a job to keep up with them all. He is very keen on playing football and I think he would be happy to take any of us on at Chess. I am not offering him a challenge for sure, either on the chequered board or on the ukulele!

Jonathan Baddeley then gave us "Little Ukulele" and afterwards he and Pamela sang, "Count your Blessings and Smile." Jonathan then said how pleased they were to have their family with them on their special party, and then followed with the nice remark that he considered that our entire audience were part of his family - the "Formby Family." How right he was, what a lovely lot you all are, - all so friendly, happy and ever smiling. It is certainly great to get away, for just a while, from depressing news bulletins on the television and all our troubles

and lose ourselves in the fun of a Formby Show.

Cyril Palmer (that's him with the guitar like instrument which is in fact a baritone ukulele) sang for us "*Cecilia*" and "*She's funny that Way*." Cyril really had us worried when he told us that he had broken his neck. Actually it was the neck of his uke! The Penryffordders were next. What more can I say about this trio, they have worked so hard together and have really come up with the goods. I felt their performance of "*Blackpool Belle*" was really outstanding. The also gave us "*Its in the Air*." Keep up the good work fellers! Our MC for the evening told us before the interval that he could confirm that "Gloria" the speciality act, had actually arrived and would be performing in the second half. If you remember she promised to come last month but failed to turn up. "Gloria" is Bosnian and speaks no English.

The second half started with Lonnie Donegan and this was followed by our Jazz Band's favourite number "*Dr Jazz*." Wrexham's Jim Knight then gave us "*Get Cracking*" followed by the bones band. (Rattling good that!) Vera Jones put on one of her best performances to date with "*On the Sunny Side of the Street*" and "*If I had my Life to Live Over*." Fleetwood's Alan Chenery gave us two new songs the first a Stan Evans composition "*I want to play the ukelele - like the way George Formby used to do*" followed by, and I bet I will spell in wrongly, "*Mississippi*."

Walter Kirkland made a very good job of the "*Isle of Man*" - he had to - his sister was in the audience. Walter is always so happy on stage and is Grand Master of the bones. Bill Turner put on one of his best performances to date with "*Its no use Looking at Me!*" For his second number Bill produced his home made Hawaiian guitar and gave a wonderful performance of "*Far Away Places*"

Gerald Beadle then took the stage and thanked the members for all their good wishes that he had received whilst in hospital having a heart bypass operation. Whilst there Gerald sang without any backing "*Scarlet Ribbons*" Gareth Sumner paid us a very welcome visit. Gareth has been coming since he was just a young boy but has found it more difficult since he started work as a motor mechanic. Gareth is an excellent uke performer with superb timing and whilst on stage he sang "*Guarding the Home of the Home Guard*," "*You don't need a Licence for That*" and "*Mr Wu's a Window Cleaner Now*" as an encore.

Arthur Newton's musical contribution to the show was "*Turned Out Nice Again*" and specially for Ashley, "*Alexander's Ragtime Band*." Arthur was the shows Concert Producer and he achieved an excellent balanced show. A difficult job and Arthur came up with the goods for us all. At last the moment came for the appearance of the lady from Bosnia, "Gloria." It has never been seen on a Formby stage anywhere in the country before and no doubt a few fuddy duddies will have something to say about it, but we promised variety, in all its forms. Gloria had the audience entranced with the grace and artistry that she displayed in the everyday action of taking clothes off. It was truly poetry in motion and the audience really loved her. It was so nicely done, nothing crude just pure artistry. Yours truly's contribution for the night was for Brian Allen who loves Walter Langshaw's "*Grandad's Bowler Hat*." The show was concluded by the M.C. Alan Newton with "*Where did Robinson Crusoe go with Friday on Saturday Night*."

What a good night it was for Jonathan and Pam and indeed for the entire audience. Thanks have to go to everybody who helped in any way to make Jonathan and Pam's party a success. There were so many contributors I dare not mention them by name except for to say that they all worked so very hard. A big round of applause to them all.

Thanks Brian. Sorry "*The Past Its*" couldn't make it. *We were completely spent (Past It) after doing two shows. However it sounds as if you had a great time.*

Super Cliff reports on Penyffordd

The audience was a bit lower in numbers than usual no doubt due to the holidays, but we still had plenty of players even though some usual faces were absent. We were particularly pleased to welcome Gordon Markendale; the maker of so many excellent ukes, and hope he will join us again in the near future.



Part of the evening was spent in Celebrating the Silver Wedding of Jonathan and Pam Baddeley, to whom a lovely presentation was made of a bouquet of flowers by Phil's lovely 3 year old Granddaughter Sophie. We were duly treated to some anniversary cake. Also celebrated were two Birthdays; Jim Knight and Frank Humphries two of our senior members. It was proudly announced that the Party recently held at Marine Drive, Rhyl and attended by about 150, had raised some £680 for our Charity Fund which now stands, for this year, at over £1200. From this a donation has been made to a Memorial Fund set up by Fallibroombe High School, Macclesfield, in respect of Oliver Purisio a young lad who always gave jovial and kind help at the Nadin's parties, and who died recently as a result of a tragic accident. Money will be donated at the end of the year to the Hope House Hospice for Sick Children to pay for an item which will be a Memorial to our very own Leslie Lee. To Jean Nadin, Alison and Frankie may we say how thankful we are for the tremendous amount of input and hard work they and their helpers put in over and around that weekend. You were praised by everyone; even for the weather.

Oh yes! What about the concert? So the items which were a little different were;- A duet by Greg Simister and his Dad who after a little friendly banter accompanied Greg on the trumpet by playing "Lamp Post". It brought the house down, for it was not appreciated that Dad too was so musically talented. Phil's Grandson Daniel, aged eight, took the stage as a soloist for the first time and played and sang "Down by the seaside" accompanied by his tiny sister Sophie. He did exceptionally well; his trainer (who?) must be very proud. Charlie Morrison our recent addition as a Keyboard enthusiast played some sing-a-longs to the delight of the audience, and even got young Cliff up to attempt some Jolson sing-a-longs.

A gentleman who came to the last meeting as somewhat of an outsider, turned up complete with a backing track and song sheet and put on a good singing performance. He was one of the "men in black"; his name Dan Lewis. The other man in black was of course Alan Chenery who sang a couple of rousing songs and helped out a little with a query about the sound equipment. Did anyone notice our somewhat unusual Uke Mikes? Very clever indeed. Organised by Alison Nadin with a clever adapter which fixes to the Mike Stand; copied from a design of Jim Knight's and manufactured by our very own railway enthusiast Frank Humphries. Apparently a successful and cheap "invention". Frank of course caused a bit of a stir. The Three Tenors thought he may be leaving them when he decided to do a solo act by singing (no uke) "Bring me sunshine" and "I don't know why I'm lonely". Excellent Frank, you have a lovely voice and I am sure there are now some young ladies in the audience queuing to meet you.

Other entertainers were Jonathan and Pam Baddeley, Walter Kirkland, Connie and Brian Edge, Tom Meredith, The Past-its, The Three Tenors, Jim Knight and his Bones players, Vera Jones and Alice Cronshaw who sang "Slow Boat to China" for the benefit of Margaret and myself.

NEXT PAGE

This was the tune played when we first met and danced together some fifty four years ago. Golly is it that long? Nearly forgot Alison Nadin who came on with her ventriloquist stooge Alf. Alison is very quick witted for when she made a mistake Alf the dummy quickly took her to task. Must have been the joke about the fisher man that put her off. My apologies if I've left anyone out. Thanks to all who took part, were in the audience, and helped in any way. Always appreciated.

**JON & PAM BADDELEY SEND THEIR THANKS FOR
ANOTHER SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY NIGHT**



Daniel & Sophie in harmony

Back to George's Roots—Sunday

July 20th and a small group: Neil Forshaw, Mike Turner and The Past Its (Well & Truly) performed at the Music Festival which was held in Earles-town—Newton Le Willows. This is where George made his first performance in 1921 soon after his father's death.

Our show however, was an outside event so we were pleased with the brilliant sunshine and a crowd of about 200 (sat on the grass) to perform to.

At first we were doubtful if our 30 minute spot would go down well with the youngish crowd. All the other acts were modern pop groups. However, the crowd stayed until the end and we received hearty applause after each song. When we announced that George made his debut locally they replied with "Yes we know," followed by a big cheer.

A Few Items From Brian Edge—

CYNTHIA BASFORD—The following message has just been received from Carl's widow Cynthia. "Please accept my apologies for not having sent this card before. I am sure you will understand why. I would like to say a big "Thank You" to all members of the Ukulele Society for their condolences, cards, letters, generous donations and the beautiful flowers sent to me after my sad losses. They have been a great comfort to myself and my family. Carl always looked forward to concert nights at Wistaston Memorial Hall and any other event that took place. He met some lovely people during his years with you and made some really good friends. Once again, thank you all for your thoughts and support during this difficult time." Love from Cynthia and family."

JACK CRIMES—Wistaston members were sorry to hear that Jack had had a stroke on the night before the show. They all send him their best wishes for a quick and complete recovery and look forward to seeing him again at our shows before very long.

CHRIS METCALF—Chris Metcalf has been in hospital for an operation and all at Crewe send him their best wishes.

BARBARA ALLAN.—Brian Allan, brother of the late Barbara Allan, has donated £100 to the South Cheshire "George Formby" Ukulele Society in memory of Barbara. Brian said that Barbara loved coming to the Wistaston shows so much that he was happy to make the donation. The society wishes to sincerely thank Brian for this special gift.
Thanks Brian.

What a Grand Day for meeting up with Formby Fans.

It was Saturday July 12th and what a great day we had. The sun was blazing down throughout the whole day and everybody caught a sun tan. Approximately 120 turned up at Paul & Jill Woodhead's Garden Party which was in aid of their local Telford Hospice. A total of £820 was raised and Paul & Jill wish to thank all who contributed.

If ever you get an invitation to visit Paul & Jill, go by helicopter otherwise you'll never find it. And don't, for goodness sake, get instructions on how to get there from Paul. He sent us on a journey that was 24 miles further than the journey home. Even Tom & Nora Meredith got lost—now that's a surprise!



"Who'll give a pound" says Paul.

But how's this for confusion: *"Turn left on the A442 for Kidderminster etc. Stay on this road, ignore the turning off for A442 as the road you are on changes its name and becomes the A4169 for Much Wenlock."*

This resulted in us going round and round the same roundabout about 4 times and we couldn't get off. Eventually, by a process of elimination, we were back on course again and we almost ran over Alan Chenery & Colin Wood who were perched at the side of the country lane diverting lost traffic into the well hidden Woodhead Ponderosa. And what a grand place they have. Excellent!!!

Paul & Jill, along with friends, relations, neighbours, etc. had put in a lot of hard work preparing, planning, erecting marquees, cooking, building a stage, setting up sound equipment etc. and the weather was perfect for a grand day.

The object was to raise funds for The Shropshire & Mid Wales Hospice (Telford) and Paul's son, Simon and his business partner, Alex, generously donated hundreds of pounds worth of garden equipment to be auctioned off. Paul did a grand job as auctioneer and Jill lost about two stone in weight running round collecting the money. "Hold on" shouted Jill, "You are selling faster than I can run round."



Colin showing his skills at the music desk and also a fine pair of knees.

The entertainment began with Jon Baddeley taking on the job of M/C and Pam losing another two stone in weight running round collecting names. Colin Wood took over the job of Sound Director and after a series of whistles and feedbacks the sound came over perfect. In fact all of Telford must have heard us belting out George's songs on the day.

UNFORTUNATELY, DUE TO THE TREES BLOCKING THE LIGHT THE MAJORITY OF PHOTOS TAKEN DIDN'T TURN OUT NICE AGAIN. However, it was nice to meet again old friends from the past and especially the members of the Stourbridge George Formby Society. Malcolm Palmer and Glynis were there to greet us and so was Tony Dean who did a number of excellent George Formby spots. He came over very well and received the biggest cheer of the day from the crowd.

MORE ON THE NEXT PAGE

Now it was Des Redfern's turn to get up on stage and, - oh dear. ("Right" said Des, "Give us No. 17 Colin. - Wrong song, try No. 16—Wrong song, try No. 18—Wrong again, - I'll sing one without backing, - oh dear I've forgotten the words." The saga went on and on.



Happy Birthday to Des

However, there's one song that we didn't get wrong because it was Des's Birthday and we all joined in with Happy Birthday to Des.

Time to go home and, unlike the journey there, we just pointed our nose towards the north and hoped for the best. Surprisingly, or was it luck, we hit the A49 and clung to it for the rest of the way. In just over an hour we were back home in Warrington, having enjoyed an excellent day and looking forward to next year. Thanks Paul & Jill for a great day and, in future, don't send a map.

THE BREADPUDDING MYSTERY by Stan Evans.

I've told the story before of the disaster Eva & I had about 50 years ago when I asked her if she could make a bread-pudding like mother used to make. But instead of making one large tray full, about 4 inches thick, she made a load of little balls that tasted like hard rock. So as not to offend her I secretly threw them over the back fence where two healthy horses were grazing.

The following morning one of the horses was found dead by the farmer and it was a village mystery that they never solved. Naturally we kept quiet about the bread-pudding.

Well, at the Paul & Jill Woodhead Garden Party, I was queuing up in the marquee for a plate of sandwiches etc. when Dolwyn Shone presented me with a large tray full of bread-pudding, which had been cut up into cake size pieces. I asked what it was all about and she said, "Oh I've got it wrong," and walked away with the bread-pudding. Now I assumed that the bread-pudding was meant to be set out on the buffet table along with the rest of the food, however, I noticed that there was a silver paper parcel under Eva's chair, but never asked what it was.

On arrival home I found that we'd brought the bread-pudding home with us and nobody appears to know who it belongs to. So, if you are a bread-pudding missing will you please let me know because the mystery is haunting us. Incidentally, it tastes just like mother used to make, so it is now down to half a tray. Whoops, another piece gone.

Big Day at Sale—September 19th Anniversary

Alice Cronshaw informed me that Sale are holding a Bumper Concert on Sept 19th and you are requested to come along at 4pm—YES, 4pm—to celebrate their 30th Anniversary. The show will start with a chat and some food (so don't eat before you arrive) and then an extra long concert.

Great idea Alice. But I've got a suggestion. Most of us older ones usually have a kip in the afternoon so that we can keep up with the young uns at night. If we bring sleeping bags can we kip down on the floor for an hour?

SO DON'T FORGET. SEPTEMBER 19th at SALE

Lancashire Evening Post from Hilda Southworth— GRIN UP NORTH EXHIBITION

Museum goers were tickled pink when comedy king Ken Dodd turned up in Preston. Doddy was brought in to do the honours at the opening of a special exhibition honouring Northern comic heritage. The veteran comedian was the star attraction at the Museum of Lancashire's new exhibition, entitled Grin Up North. And brandishing his famous tickling sticks, he mingled with crowds, admired the exhibits on display and made a speech which had guests and sightseers in stitches.



As he opened the exhibition, he asked one bearded onlooker: "When you eat Shredded Wheat, how do you know when you've finished?" More seriously, he added: "This is an exhibition celebrating the laughter makers of the North and all the people who love laughter. "There's something about the North and the North West particularly, something that makes people love laughter because laughter and love are very similar. "It's a wonderful, wonderful exhibition and it's a delight to get up early to be here.

As long as you are from the North West, you must use your chuckle muscle every day." Ken admired exhibits including the first banjo ukulele ever played by George Formby and the last panto costume worn by Les Dawson before the comic's death in 1993. He also saw playbills and memorabilia featuring music hall greats such as Frank Randle, Jimmy Clitheroe and Hylda Baker, many of whom he starred alongside in his early days.

He said: "I'm highly tickled because I love humour. The sound of laughter is the most beautiful thing in the world. "As soon as they said they were going to have an exhibition on comedy, I said I want to be there. When they said, 'Will you open it?' I said, 'You try and stop me!'

"When you think of museums, people think it's just dead fish and stuffed rabbits and things like that. But this is a living museum because laughter is a living thing." He added: "I love Preston. I've seen two Preston Guilds – although, at the first one, I had my car stolen. I was playing Emmanuel Street Labour Club and when I came out, there it was gone!"



Roly Poly Mo Mowland with Tracy Dawson who loaned Les's memorabilia to the exhibition.

Also among the guests was former Roly Poly Mo Mowland and Les Dawson's widow, Tracey. She said: "It's wonderful. I've donated quite a lot of Les's memorabilia and I'm absolutely thrilled. "His memory is kept alive because he wrote a lot of books, and there's the TV shows which are still shown. "But something like this, especially being in the North, is just fantastic."

Wherever you walk you are aware of the huge photos of George Formby, Les Dawson and Hylda Baker peering down on you.



Cyril the clown came to add some Punch



Over the garden wall comic
Norman Evans

HYLDA BAKER—Ann Turner, niece of Hylda Baker, helped to nurse her during her last days. When Ann speaks she waves her arms about just like Hylda. She told us that Hylda was very musical and played Piano, Banjo, Ukulele, Guitar, Accordion and Harp.



Ann Turner, niece of Hylda
Baker

There must have been about 300 people waiting for Ken to arrive to open the show. At least 200 of them waited at the far end of the building hoping to have first glimpse of him when he arrived. They waited and waited—at

least two hours—thinking that maybe he wasn't turning up.

But what they didn't know was that Ken had been directed through a different door and he was half way round the exhibition when they found out.

Quick witted Ken had an answer to every comment. I said to him, "Do you know Ken? When you've gone, entertainment will be finished!" He replied, "Well if you leave me the key and I'll lock up." With one joke after another he was at his very best. But he was far from pleased when mobile phones rang, stopping his flow. One woman, who stood close by, reached inside her coat when her mobile phone was playing a tune. He said to her, "I didn't know you had a musical bra missus."

Ken studied George's Will Van Allen uke banjo (Right) and said, "Yes, we have a young man in our show who owns one of George's ukes, Andy Eastwood." "That's right," I said, "We know him well."



George's Will Van Allen was the first banjo uke he played in his films. In "Off The Dole" he sang "If You Don't Want the Goods Don't Maul Em."



Morecambe & Wise mimics
impersonators, Harris & Ford.

As Ken walked round the exhibits he stopped to watch the various TV screens and on one of them Roy Hudd—an expert in theatre knowledge—was talking about the great stars of music hall. Jokingly Ken said, "Shurrup Roy, yer don't know what you're talking about." They couldn't have found a better show opener than Ken. He fitted the part perfectly.

Well Preston certainly put on a great Opening Day for the exhibition. As we walked in we were handed a large bag of goodies: a Tickling Stick, a Jotter, a Paper Hat and a Little Stick of Doddies Rock.

It really is worth the trip to Preston to see the show. They have worked extremely hard at preparing it. The exhibition runs until April 24 next year. Museum admission is £2 for adults, £1 concession, children under 18 with an adult, free. Tel. 01772 534061. Email: judith.dornan@lep.co.uk

THIS EXHIBITION IS JUST RIGHT FOR LEADING UP TO GEORGE'S 100th

Pat Confirms: Beryl Formby Really Was An Angel

BY BRIAN EDGE— I recently met a lady with a very interesting story. Her name is Patricia Louth (see photo) and she told me that she was born on the 1st November 1935. Her parents were both in the theatre business, and at the time she was born her mother, a dancer, was appearing at the Opera House Manchester, her name being Edith Patrick. Her father was appearing at the same time at the Argyle Theatre* in Birkenhead. His name was Tom O'Halloren, but his stage name was Alveretti. He was a whistler and an animal mimic. Pat's arrival was not expected until February 1936 but her mother had just come off the stage and Pat was born in the dressing room.



On the same bill as Pat's mother was the Henderson Twins (Dickie Henderson's act before he went solo) and Dickie sent a telegram to the Argyle Theatre in Birkenhead to inform Tom of Pat's premature arrival. George Formby was top of the bill at the Argyle and when the telegram arrived Tom was waiting in the wings to go on stage and do his performance, but before he could make his entrance George Formby walked on stage and read out the telegram to the audience before introducing a very shocked Alveretti.

NAT JACKLEY—Pat went on to tell me that her Godfather was no other than the rubber man, and master of the funny walk, NAT JACKLEY. Nat is best remembered as a slapstick music-hall performer who got his start as a child as part of the travelling comedy troupe the "Eight Lancashire Lads," the same group where Charlie Chaplin got his start. Much later in life he became a character actor and played in a number of films.

As Pat was premature she needed very special care, and Beryl Formby made sure that she had every advantage that money could buy. She was an angel so far as Pat's family was concerned. Her kindness was never showy, always done very quietly and discretely. Pat thanks Beryl with all her heart.

Pat originally lived in London and her parents travelled all over the place as one could imagine following their occupation. They eventually chose to move to Crewe so to live at a central point on the railway system. Pat often went to Crewe Station on a Sunday night to get a glimpse of her father travelling from one show to another. She told me that she had one ambition in life and that was to marry an ordinary factory man, in an ordinary town, and she confirmed that she achieved her wish.

The Argyle in Argyle Street was the most famous theatre in Birkenhead. It was opened in 1868, but it was not until after 1891, when Dennis J. Clarke took over as manager, that the Argyle became noted as a Music Hall. Many well known stars appeared there before achieving fame; such names as Harry Lauder, Charlie Chaplin, George Formby, Flanagan and Allen, (who first sang *Underneath the arches* there), Stan Laurel, and many others. On the 21st September 1940, the theatre received a direct hit from a German bomb. Today the car park of Beattie's Store occupies the site.

QUOTATION FROM PATRICIA "Entertainment is to bring joy to the lives of people."

Very interesting article Brian. I've always stressed that, misunderstood, Beryl deserved more credit than she got. Some years back I appeared to be the only Beryl supporter but now quite a number are agreeing with me. However she was her own worst enemy because she thrived on being a martyr in her determined effort to promote George.

Rhyl Garden Party—What a

grand day we had on Sunday 27th July at the home of Frankie Woods, and Jean & Alison Nadin. It was just like last year when we had visions of having to dash from the rain for cover. But, once again, George was shining down on us and not a drop fell on our well organised garden concert.

Eva & I turned up about 1.30pm to find that the hosts and organisers had been extra busy setting up chairs, tables, a gazebo for the sound system, amp and speakers, mikes etc. and the atmosphere was great.



All tucked up in me little bottom drawer

Now there's one good thing I like about our musical members: Although there was a load of alcohol available, not one person got anywhere near slightly tipsy. Which is common with some other organisations. But nobody took advantage. In fact very few had a alcoholic drink at all. Tea yes!

QUERY: - Alison, on the right, mimes to Gracie Fields singing "All Tucked Up In Me Little Bottom Drawer." So why is she introduced as "Ethel?"



Alison

Alison replies:- Ethel is doing an impression of Gracie Fields. This really goes back to when Frank did his introductions for the large string puppets, he never used the singers name, I think it has something to do with copyright laws. Thanks

"Special Thanks From The Hosts: To Margaret Royle, Myra Knight and Pauline on the raffle table. Jim Knight and Alan Chenery who did a brilliant job M.C.ing. Our friends and family Joan, Thelma, Margorie and Paul who were brewing-up, washing up and serving food and drink all afternoon. To everyone who contributed raffle prizes and those who bought raffle tickets and made donations to our charity appeal which helped us raise the wonderful total of £620.00 on the day. Also thanks to Fred Fielder, a presenter on GMR radio for coming along, he also donated a family ticket for Chester Zoo which was auctioned. In total about 150 turned up. We were so lucky with the weather - it hasn't stopped raining since Sunday. Best wishes to all from Jean, Alison and Frankie."

Joe Taylor writes—Dear Stan, Congratulations on the Newsletter. Always a good read! The other day I travelled by train to visit an old friend in Chichester, when I became aware that everyone seemed to be leaving the train, as indeed they were, the train having arrived at the terminus. I was so engrossed in the Newsletter that I had overshot my destination by one stop, - could have been worse.

I bought a George Formby audio tape "Turned Out Nice Again" and usually the reverse side of the cover is left blank, but in this case there is a potted biography of George. There is no doubt that George needed looking after by someone with a strong personality like Beryl. Like George, she was a "one off." *Thanks Joe. Another Beryl fan.*

Sale Meeting by Hilda & Vera

We had a wonderful meeting on a hot summer evening on 18th July with 60 people in attendance including a host of entertainers. Cyril had a few announcements to make - George Cheetham will be 82 years of age on 6th August, Cyril and Sheila will celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary at the next meeting on 15th August (the actual date of their anniversary is 22nd August) and they invited everyone to come and join them. There will be another celebration at the September meeting, which will be the 30th Anniversary of the Sale



New reporters Vera Eaves & Hilda Southworth

branch. The meeting will begin at 4.00 p.m. with food and a chat and at 7.30 p.m. the entertainment will commence. Again it is hoped many people will help us to celebrate.



Eddie Bancroft

It was a great pleasure to see our old friend Jim Bramwell again (with his new puppy, which seemed to be quite happy to listen to the ukuleles) but we were sorry to hear that Joan was in hospital. We all send our best wishes to her for a speedy recovery. In the absence of Les Pearson, our host for the evening was Dick Eaves who did a sterling job as Master of Ceremonies.

The first entertainer of the evening was a local man, Eddie Bancroft, who gave us Mr. Wu's a Window Cleaner Now and Blackpool Rock. Eddie is certainly improving and gaining confidence. This was followed by Alan Chenery singing heartily The Lancashire Lad and His Uke and Wigan Boat Express. Then we had smiling Walter Kirkland with Isle of Man and a Bones Medley with Alan Chenery and Alan Newton with his castanets. This was followed by Alan Southworth singing the ever popular Horoscope and Lamp Post. Next was Brian White with Blackpool Rock and Wunga Bunga Boo. Brian is also gaining in confidence and giving a good performance. Arthur Newton was next with The Barmaid at the Rose and Crown and Chinese Laundry Blues and, to round off the first half of the programme Jack Valentine gave us Dinah and I Wonder Who's Under Her Balcony Now.



Joker Jim Bramwell after a long absence.

The second half commenced with a Thrash and then Brian Edge sang Let's Have a Ride on Your Bicycle. Alison Nadin gave us a wonderful performance with her exquisitely dressed puppets 'singing' Tie a Yellow Ribbon, You're a Lady (with a hen laying eggs as she sang), If You Were the Only Girl in the World and Dry Bones. Cliff Royle sang a Dickie Speake number The Formby Fans are Meeting Tonight and The Blue-eyed Blonde Next Door. Alan Newton also sang a Dickie Speake song Grab Your Ukulele and Sing, then Buona Sera with Walter Kirkland on the bones. Connie Edge, the only female player of the evening, was Running Round the Fountains in Trafalgar Square and then played and sang a medley. After some gentle persuasion Jim Bramwell (sonny Jim) took to the stage and had us rolling with laughter with his jokes and I Wish I Was Back on the Farm, followed by a rousing medley.

Then it was the turn of our youngest player, Greg Simister who gave a wonderful rendition

of When the Lads of the Village Get Cracking and Out in the Middle East. Next was our friend from the other side of the Pennines (we won't say 'over the hill') Mac Magee with Daring Young Man and Some of These Days Medley with Walter playing the bones. Tom Meredith sang the great Sinatra numbers (complete with hat) You Make Me Feel So Young and My Way. Stan Evans (not quite past it) sang his own composition, which was a parody on Val-de-ree and Stay in Your Own Back Yard. Paul Kenny followed that with a great favourite Rhythm in the Alphabet and Smile all the Time with Alan Newton. Then Brian Edge rounded off the evening with Mr. Wu's a Traffic Warden Now.

A new arrangement of the sound system was tried which seemed to be a big improvement and Cyril is still working on it, hoping to improve it still further. What a wonderful evening's entertainment - here's to the next one! (Hilda and Vera).

And thanks to both Hilda & Vera for stepping in as regular reporters. You've done a grand job. It's about time we had some beauties on the editorial staff.

When I'm Cleaning Stained Glass Windows

BY BRIAN EDGE—Saturday the 19th July provided a unique experience for members of the Crewe concert party as they shared the stage with the 50 strong Crewe Male Voice Choir in a Charity Show entitled "*Leaning on a Lamppost*." The show was held before a large audience in St. Peter's Church, Crewe, the proceeds from the show going to the church for badly needed repairs to the roof and organ. A total of £538 was raised for the church.

A strange combination you might think, but choir and show organiser, Bernard Ashmore, was convinced that we were the ideal group to complement the choir. It was certainly strange setting up all our sound equipment in a large church and the performance was probably unique in the history of the G.F.S.

After the usual introductions we opened the show with 20 minutes of George Formby favourites. The applause was deafening! The choir then showed us what they could do and we all marvelled at their performance. Fifty men singing without amplification to the accompaniment of a lady on a grand piano, it was really magic. After an interval we both did another 20 minutes each and as a Grand Finale the choir and the audience joined us singing "*Leaning on a Lamppost*."

Those taking part were Arthur Newton, Alan Newton (trombone), Jonathan Baddeley (clarinet), Steve Hassall (drums), Cliff Royle, Pamela Baddeley, Brian and Connie Edge, Walter Kirkland, Colin Wood and Angela Caldicott (sound).

Email From Paul Large

Hi there, my three year old daughter currently sings a song at playgroup in south Wales that is known by all there as "The Jee Jah Tree". It has been suggested that this may have been an old George Formby track. Does it ring any bells with you? Your help will be appreciated. Paul Large.

Hello Paul. Thanks for your mail. "The Joo Jah Tree" is one of George's songs written by Box, Cox, Roberts and Butler and recorded on April 3rd 1938 by Regal Zonophone. On the other side is "Springtime's Here Again." We often find that children love these George Formby songs simply because, unlike today's pop stuff, they tell a story in song with a beginning, a middle and a finish. Something rarely heard today.

If your daughter's teacher is looking for more George's songs we will be pleased to send them. Cheers, Stan.

Wigan Brownies Honour George

Well it was a most unusual night. Stan & I—The Past Its (Well & Truly) - were invited to M/C and do a spot to support the Wigan Brownies Concert. They were raising funds to help to send a young child on holiday.

It was Wednesday 9th July, which must have been the hottest day of the year, and Stan & I set out in good time to get there. The instructions to find the place were very vague and we soon discovered that Well & Truly were Well & Truly lost!

We stopped to ask a young woman who was posing as she walked along the pavement. In fact she looked like a model as she strolled along. She was very smart, dressed to the nines, high heeled shoes, short skirt, blonde hair etc. This woman had the lot.

"Do you know where Kingsdown School is?" said Stan to the woman. "Ee lad" she said in very broad Wiganese, "Thas gorra go up ter top ot till and thal see it on reet seed. We couldn't believe it. I thought, "If she is a model lets hope they don't ask her any questions".

We parked the car, headed for the hall, and the sun was still blazing down on us. When we arrived in the hall we found that it was quite a large room, packed with people, mums, dads, grannies, granddads etc. but the walls and ceiling had been painted black throughout, which attracted more heat. Everybody in the room was sweating buckets and, understandably, not in a mood to laugh.

Although wet with sweat the young brownies worked very hard with their songs. They honoured George with "Leaning On A Lamp Post" and "Cleaning Windows." Their other songs were: "She's A Lassie From Lancashire" - "Lancashire Leads The Way" - "Wigan Pier" - "Uncle Joe's Mint Balls" - "Oh I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside" - "Poverty Knock" - "Coal Hole Cavalry" and "Wish Me Luck As You Wave Me Good-bye."

Other performers were Alice who sang "Sally" and Joan who sang a number of songs accompanied by her guitar. Margaret played the accordion. A great but hot day.

GEORGE'S 100th—The organiser, Mavis of Wigan, is considering staging a show next May to commemorate the Memory of Wigan Lad, George Formby. More news on this later.



Joan is a singer with a lovely strong voice. One of old school who doesn't need a mike or backing

Someone Must Be Mad!

- I noticed on the Internet (Ebay) that someone is offering 3 GF 78s records which are in immaculate condition; - Cleaning Windows & Keep Your Seats Please—You're a Li-aty & Feather Your Nest—My Plus Fours & I Don't Like, all in cardboard sleeves. They are advertised as "Very Rare—Never Played."

But guess what the Starting Price is? You'll never believe it. £150. 00. for the three records. But you'll be pleased to know that the seller is willing to split the collection. Up to the last day of the auction there wasn't one bid offered. Well I'm not in the least surprised. Usually you are lucky if you get £3 or £4 each for George's 78s.

Olwen Gale writes—

Dear Stan, Here is the account for The George Formby Newsletter of the showing of "Hotel Getaway". The episode, which involved the members of the society who attended the Hotel in Mere, near Knutsford, Cheshire was screened on Monday night/ Tuesday morning June 23rd. It finished at 12.40am when a lot of people are tucked up in bed. Also it is almost 4 years since it was produced and only now is it being shown.

How I got to hear about it was through my cousin who lives in Caernarfon in N. Wales. She had arrived home late at night after choir practise and went to re-wind her video. Suddenly she had a "fit" when she looked at the screen and saw my late husband DENIS GALE all dressed up and George Formby music being played in the background.

My cousin says Denis looked marvellous on it just like she remembers him, smiling nicely—but she was really bothered about it and couldn't understand why he should be on the TV at that time. Anyway it all caused her to have a bad night of NO SLEEP.

My plea to you all is: Did anyone video the episode? If so, I would very much like to have a copy. Please could you make a copy for me since, as you may recall, my husband died a very sudden and untimely death just after he had taken part in the filming. If you can help would you please pass it on to Stan. Many thanks to you.

Thanks Olwen. When we attended the Review Night, Denis popped up on screen at the opening shot and every one of our gang gave a loud sigh. I contacted Granada soon after for a copy but they were not interested. I've now contacted them again in the hope that there is a Good Samaritan out there.

Confused!!! Just

received a newspaper article from Tom Bailey which is headed: "Hundreds Wait for their Pier Plaques" and goes on to say that The Pier Trust (Southport) have collected £103,400 in donations from 2,068 people who paid £50 each to sign up for a name plate and will receive a decorative bronze plaque. Some haven't received theirs.



Our Happy Band of George Formby Players entertain in Southport to raise funds to buy a Plank for the Pier.

Now a couple of years ago we got involved in this project when we entertained in Southport centre, but we were informed that we were helping to raise money to buy a PLANK for the Pier—not a PLAQUE. So what's gone wrong? We must contact Lawrence Jones, who was Southport candidate at the time, and ask him the whereabouts of our Plank.

Alan & Pat Chenery Email—

Pat & I went to see Andy Eastwood in the good old days at the Winter Gardens he was Absolutely Great playing his uke & Violin, I recommend that if anyone can get to see him they would enjoy the show.

A message was broadcast at Kings Cross Railway Station: - Will the person who lost 12 bottles of whisky this morning please call at the Lost Property Office where the man who found them has been handed in.

What A Barmy Lot!!! - Well

we've always regarded Wiganers as shy and reserved but the lot we, - The Past Its, Well & Truly, entertained on Thurs & Fri 24th & 25th July were far from shy. They were the best bunch ever! And the barmiest! A reet load of fruitcakes.

We received a phone call from Kath at the Central Day Care Centre, - half a stone's throw from the spot where George was born (3 Westminster St) - "Stan, we've decided that our day centre visitors are getting a little too old for the annual trip to Blackpool so we've decided to bring Blackpool to them. Can you come and entertain them? No problem!



Thumbs Up From Kath

We arrived at the Day Centre and was met at the door by a host of dressed up clowns, happy slapstickers, comics with plastic bums and red noses, kiss me quickers, a reet jolly bunch.

Inside the hall we saw Blackpool posters offering Fish & Chips, Sticks of Rock, This Way to the Beach, Anyone For Sailing etc. they'd really gone to town with their imagination.



Climbing Up a Lamp Post

We set up stall with our equipment and within seconds the floor was full of happy dancers. All the old songs were played: Side by side, Show me the way to go home, Five foot two, Sweet Georgia Brown, and many more and they sung their hearts out. Stan (Truly Past It) sang The War Medley and all the union jacks were handed out by the staff to suit the occasion. Great atmosphere.

But we noticed one thing! All the happy funsters were women! The men were almost hiding in the background. They didn't intend letting their hair down. In fact, when we played "Happy Birthday" for Anthony, he did a runner out of the building. Anyway it didn't matter, we had plenty of fun makers.

Thanks from Jon & Pam Baddeley Dear Stan,

Through the Newsletter, we would wish to say a very big thank you to everyone at the Wistaston Meeting on the 25th July. It was a great way to celebrate our forthcoming Silver Wedding Anniversary. We were overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity. Thank you very much for all the cards and presents. You know, the George Formby Society is like a big family and it is great to share the occasion with so many people.

The Meetings at Wistaston are a joy and so well organised. We are very grateful to everyone who contributes to this; in particular, to Connie and Brian for all their hard work. Once again, thank you to everyone for making it such a memorable occasion, and everyone is invited to a similar event to celebrate our Golden Wedding. However, between now and then, there will be another 300 meetings at Wistaston, Penyffordd, Sale etc.

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

Until Sun 7th Sept 2003—In The Mood Exhibition at The Imperial War Museum North, The Quays, Trafford Wharf Rd, Trafford Park, Manchester M17 1TZ. Open 7 days a week and admission free.

Sat July 19th—"Grin Up North" Exhibition at Museum of Lancashire, Stanley St, Preston. The show, which will run until April 2004, will feature Northern comedians. Well worth a visit.

May 2004—Ideas are on the table for a George Formby Talk and a Song by Anthony Mason and Stan Evans in George's Home Town of Wigan.

May 1st, 2nd and 3rd 2004—Llandudno Extravaganza. Ring Alison Nadin

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

May 2004—Date and venue not yet decided—Children's George Formby Concert to be held in Wigan when the Brownies will sing George Formby songs, plus others.

Wed 26th May 2004—George's 100th Birthday—Wistaston Memorial Hall 7.45pm
Jonathan Baddeley presents the "GEORGE FORMBY STORY" possibly followed by a film show.

Fri 28th May 2004—Exhibition of George Formby Memorabilia in Wistaston Memorial Hall followed by A GEORGE FORMBY CONCERT.

IMPORTANT—Have a go at holding an event leading up to George's 100th Anniversary? If you do, please send details in. As soon as we have sufficient dates we will notify the media: TV, Radio, Press. Let's make it an Anniversary to be remembered.

Email from Jon & Pam Baddeley —Hello Stan,

Fleetwood Tram Sunday - Thanks should mainly go to Pat and Alan Chenery for the success of the event. We were very pleased for them both as they have put it a tremendous lot of hard work on the day itself as well as in the months prior to the event. It's great to go out to the masses to publicise about our hero. The landlord at the Boarding House where we stay in Blackpool was also there and he said that, for all the musical acts, we had the biggest audience. This just goes to prove that the name and the music of George Formby are still alive and well.

Here's to the next time.

Thanks J & P. We are in a situation whereby if we don't keep on pushing George's songs they will simply die away. It is now 12 years since we received all the publicity surrounding the Warrington exhibition and another generation of kids have been born. Maybe these kids never hear good old fashioned songs that are like musical stories. "Mr Wu" songs are a typical example. So keep it up. The more exhibitions, concerts, talks we do the better.

Trip To Dublin—Has Anyone Lost These Items? -Someone left

behind on the coach a bag containing: 2 lipsticks, 3 cotton hankies, 1 pop sock, tablets, small blue hand towel, toilet bag, raffle tickets for Donna's Dream House. If they are yours please contact Eunice (dem bones) Evans on 01527 3494.

Alan & Pat Chenery Email—Pat & I went to see Andy Eastwood

in The Good Old Days at the Winter Gardens he was Absolutely Great playing his uke & Violin, I recommend that if anyone can get to see him they would enjoy the show.

George Formby Meetings

North Wales Branch - British Legion, Penyffordd (10 miles from Chester) Every first Friday in the month. Tel Jim Knight 01978 358472 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

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.

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

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

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

Wintergardens George Formby Society Meetings:

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.

Web Site—Two Lancashire Lads:

www.thehollies.u-net.com/formby.

E Mail: George.Formby@stanevans.co.uk

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



Overheard at the bus stop:-

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