

THE
GEORGE FORMBY

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Newsletter 105



Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
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Welcome to Newsletter No. 104

And once again all of the N. West meetings have gone extremely well with first class atmosphere: N. Wales, Great! - Liverpool: One of the best! - Sale: Wonderful & very lively! - Crewe: Very warm & friendly! - Blackpool: Small in number due to bad weather, but another good night. - There was no Christmas meeting at Westhoughton.

FRODSHAM and WISTASTON—Things are certainly beginning to warm up for George's 100th Anniversary. Cliff Royle has got a full programme for his concert at Frodsham Institute, on May 15th, and Brian Edge is full steam ahead with his two Anniversary events on the 26th and 28th of May.

WIGAN PIER—Over the past month I've spent considerable time attempting to ring up all the old Formby friends from years ago. Friends we haven't seen for years. Sadly, some have died, some have divorced, and some have moved house. However, I did manage to contact quite a number including Charles Peacock, who was once the GFS Treasurer

Andrew Barnes of Warrington was delighted to hear from us and will be pleased to come along. Geoff Shryhane is handling the publicity and Mal Scott Taggart will be filming on the day.



Andrew Barnes with his son Luke

I rang Ray and Rita Marshall of Runcorn who informed me that Keiran is at a Bangor College



Keiran on Irish TV with Alan Randall, Yours Truly, Little & Large and host, Kelly

studying music, but they hope to make the event.

Keiran, a brilliant player, was an eight year old star back in the late nineties when he stole all the TV shows. In summing up, George Melly and the panel all agreed that he had enough talent and personality to host his own show. Let's hope he can be with us at Wigan Pier.

It's great knowing that these youngsters are making the grade and we've played a part.



Keiran today



Email from Heather—Hello Stan.

I only popped in at the Legion for a few minutes and you kindly gave me a lovely red rose. My friend and I wondered what the occasion was. Fortunately I bought a



It worked out fine Ashley

Newsletter so we were able to email you.

Thanks Heather. Well it was a plan that went wrong. I actually took a box of red roses along to Crewe for our friend Ashley (who is a Crewe regular) to give to the ladies for Christmas. But the plan went wrong because Ashley, due to having a heavy cold, didn't turn up. So, we handed out the roses and, like yourself left people wondering what the occasion was.



George's
Lancashire
Red Rose

GEORGE'S 100th—However, a few days later Brian & Connie said that they appreciated the flowers and could we do it again when Ashley is well? "No problem" says I, "Stan Past It and I are always pleased to get Ashley involved."

So, at the following Crewe meeting we turned up with a box of red carnations for Ashley to hand out to the ladies. This was for the New Year 2004, George's Anniversary Year, and Ashley did a grand job in handing them round. Thanks Ashley.

Des is Giving Up!

As you know, Des is a very good entertainer whose heart and soul is in getting up on stage and playing to the crowd. And he's got a repertoire bigger than George Formby. But there's one thing holding him back at the moment. Due to smoking he's getting too short of breath to sing the fast tempo songs.



Les Battersby look alike

GIVING UP! - So he's going to fight the battle to give up the dreaded poison once and for all and he needs us all to encourage him.

So, if you see Des taking a sly drag anywhere just give him a nudge and remind him that smoking will put an end to his singing. We don't want to lose him.



Collin

Alan

Alan Complains—Hey!

Says Alan Chenery, "My mate, Colin Wood does an awful lot of work keeping the meetings going but never gets a mention in the Newsletter."

So here he is on the left and the two lads have volunteered to handle the sound system at Wigan Pier. You'll have to slim down a bit lads because the system is up in the attic with a very narrow opening.

Stan Evans in Deep Trouble by Brian Edge

As usual we had a great get-together at the Crewe January Show. However, I am sure that you will be tired of reading a similar opening line in every report, but what else can a write? I don't need to stare at a blank white piece of paper and wonder what to say when we have just had another great night together. If I were to be asked to explain why we *always* have great night at Crewe I would immediately say that it is all because of our supporters in particular their genuine friendliness to each other. Great nights cannot be manufactured. Careful planning certainly helps, and the artistes, vocalists and the ukuleles play a big part, but the icing on the cake of a great night is *you*, our very special band of faithful supporters who we know will come along and support us wind, hail or snow.



Eighty-two were at the show and amongst them were a number who were there for the first time. They included David White and John Higham and also Colin and Sandra, guests of Wyn and Fred Stevenson. We were delighted to welcome Bernard Ashmore and his wife and we were pleased to hear that Bernard is hoping to acquire a uke so he too can join in our fun. We all look forward to that Bernard. Unfortunately Connie was unable to be present due to illness but she sent her best wishes to all her friends and hopes to see them all again soon.

Ashley Caldicott, accompanied by his friend Stan, presented all our ladies with a red carnation with the compliments of the Society wishing them and theirs a very happy and healthy New Year. The National George Formby Society very kindly sent us a parcel of back numbers of their coloured glossy magazine "The Vellum." These were distributed during the evening. The idea was to tell our supporters a little more about the George Formby Society with the hope that perhaps some of you will like the publication and subscribe to it. The GFS issue four of these magazines each year each issue coming out about a fortnight before each Blackpool Weekend Congress in the Winter Gardens. Those who subscribe to the magazine get membership of the Society and with it free admission to the society's four Congresses and Film Shows throughout the year. Should anyone require an application form then please let me know the next time you see me.

The M.C. for the January show was that livewire Alan Newton and his Concert Producer was Arthur Newton (no relation at all but no doubt both distantly related to Isaac!) Our excellent drummer Steve Hassall opened the show with two great Formby numbers "I'd like a Dream Like that When I'm Awake" and "She Can't say No!" A great start to any show. Alice Cronshaw followed with "When you're Smiling," "You'll Never know how much I Love You," and the sex change version of "I've got a Girl Friend." Yours truly performed the "Chinese Fish and Chip Shop called the Chopsticks Takeaway" (complete with a portion of Fu yung) and "I'm the King of the Swingers." Our friend Jim Knight from Penyffordd gave us "Get Cracking," "You Can't Stop Me from Dreaming" and "Has Anybody Seen my Gal" (a bones medley). Vera Jones sang, "Who's taking you Home Tonight" and "It had to be You." Arthur Newton "Hindoo Man" and "Riding in the T.T. Races." Colin Wood and Alan Newton sang a duet "I'm Saving up for Sally." Cliff Royle gave an excellent performance of "Blackpool Rock" and "Little Ukulele." Pamela Baddeley sang a great First World War medley that included "Pack up Your Troubles," "It's a Long way to Tipperary," and "My Old Man." The Old Man himself



Christine Wood does a fine job organising trips and keeping Colin under control

served up "When the Waterworks Caught Fire," "Our Fanny's Gone all Yankee," and "Fanlight Fanny" in his usual faultless style. Bill Turner played tribute to our dear departed friend Carl Basford who sadly passed away 12 months ago to the day. Bill sang one of Carl's songs "You Belong To Me." Carl was a faithful member of our society and of our Concert Party and we all miss him very much. It was a lovely gesture of Bill remembering him in that way.

Stan Evans was next to perform and due to the magic of the mobile phone, Connie was able to hear all he said about him having an agreement with her to tell stories using medical terms, for such things as appendages being inserted into the jaws of crocodiles and the like, which he knew was a porky. Woe betides him when they meet at our next meeting I can promise you! Sooner him than me I can tell you! So get there early"! Stan did however sing a rather nice song, "Daddy's Little Girl" even though it was one of the forbidden sad varieties. He concluded his act with the "Spaniard that Blighted my Life." You can bet that his next performance at Crewe will be a rendition of "The Woman who Blighted my Life." Tra La La! Ashley Caldicott was next to have a spot and he performed "Playing on my Uke Banjo" accompanied by his friend Stan.

John Higham was the next artiste and it was his debut on the Crewe stage. John sang a comic song that suggested that to venture Under the Bridges of Bury all our Dreams would come true! Must try it! John accompanied himself on a rather swish piano accordion. Well-done John - nice to meet you. The Jazz Band performed "The Dark Town Strutter's Ball" and our old favourite "Doctor Jazz." The final artiste was this month's Master of Ceremonies - Alan Newton. Wasn't he fun? Apart from a very entertaining presentation of the Formby song "You Can't Love Two girls at the Same Time," Alan had the audience on their feet looking for bits of paper with a cross on! I can assure you that that wasn't in the script. Then Alan gave an impersonation of Al Jolson followed by an impersonation of Tom Meredith doing an impersonation of Al Jolson, singing, "Rock a Bye my Baby With a Dixie Melody." Great Stuff Alan! Big thanks must go to Concert Producer Arthur Newton for putting on such a good show.

Thanks go to everyone contributed to the success of the evening, our drummer Steve, Colin Wood and Angela our Sound Engineers, Chris Metcalf on the door, Harry Jones for his hard work on the Stage, all the ladies who looked after the refreshments and to everyone who helped, in any little way, to clear the room at the end of the show. Keep talking Formby!

Thanks Brian. I didn't know Connie was listening. Have I been Bugged at Crewe?

Bernard Manning—Did anyone see the Bernard Manning biography on Channel Five TV? It immediately followed the Two Ronnies Comedy Show. But what a contrast. The Two Ronnies show was clever, clean and witty, while Manning was extremely vulgar, coarse and loud-mouthed. I'm surprised the Channel 5 directors allowed it to be shown without the bleeps. Throughout the show he insulted anyone, and on Parkinson he made Esther Rantzen cringe. Both her and Fanny Craddock hated the man. However, there one consolation for Esther: She looks extremely well, while Manning looked a mess, suffering from just about every ailment going.

TICKETS NOW ON SALE FOR WIGAN PIER

N Wales Report from Super Cliff

Good Morning Stan, Firstly I have to make an apology to Stan Evans for not mentioning in the report of the January Meeting about his lovely gesture in presenting a posy to all the Ladies present. A nice thought Stan, and the Ladies really appreciated it.



Well we attained another century this evening with over a hundred in attendance which included about a score of people from a local club in Buckley who apparently were so keen they arrived almost before the doors were open, and believe it or not some of us are always there at least an hour in advance.

There was a very packed programme which comprised:- Alan Chenery (Wigan Boat Express and Putting on the Style; good rousing numbers to get us going); Walter Kirkland (Isle of Man and Tijuana Taxi as a "Bones" event accompanied by his usual half dozen accomplices including Alan Newton with his castanets and Charlie Penman on the Bodhran); Jonathan Baddeley (Running Round the Fountains in Trafalgar Square and Our Sergeant Major); Alice Cronshaw (I'm a Little on the Lonely Side Tonight and All of Me); Myself (Blackpool Rock and Little Ukulele). I was followed by one of our young stars Greg Simister (Home Guard Blues and You Can't Stop Me from Dreaming). A great performance. Alan Newton gave us (Yankee Doodle Dandy Medley and You'll be far Better off in a Home); Brian Edge nearly always with something of a different flavour (Robin Hood and his Merry Men and Another Fellows Job Right Now); The Three Tenors or "Fifty pence's" (An Old Time Medley and Mr Wu's a Window Cleaner Now).

And so we came to young Daniel aged 8, accompanied in the background by Grandfather Phill Hughes, stunned us all by playing "Back on the Farm". He was great. Played without any words or music in front of him; no stage fright, and never missed a chord. Great stuff. It looks as if we may be having a few youngsters to follow in the footsteps of Gregg. Daniel got a really big cheer as did Alison Nadin who did the concluding part of the first half. Alison did her Living Marionette performance of "The Sailor with the Navy Blue Eyes", and "In my little bottom drawer".

During the interval the raffle was drawn by jovial Frank Humphries assisted by his bevy of young beauties from North Wales The raffle was followed by another star from the same area, Gerald Jones (Jones the Uke) who played Ring a Little Bell Ting-a-ling, and a slightly different version of In a Little Wigan Garden. Vera Jones then sang an Old time medley as a Sing-a-long; The Pastits (Stan Evans and Stan Watkinson) did If I Had My Life to Live Over Again and Fields of Athenry; and Tom Meredith sang a couple of Frank Sinatra songs I Did It My Way and You Make Me Feel So Young.

New and welcome additions to our concert nights are Carol Brassey and Annette Jones who are very able players of the mandolin. It was great to hear them play Over the Sea to Skye, and Edelweiss. Hope I have spelled it right Stan!! Yes they do put a bit of variety into our evenings as did some rather unexpected guests who turned up from various spots in the North and we were delighted to have then visit us. Having come from the Manchester direction they arrived via Rhyl. They would not divulge whether they had been lost or just crossed the Sands of Dee. So who were these Travellers? Jed Collins from Manchester who did a one man band act with a tin whistle, the Yip Ee I Oh song with numerous grunts and squeals, and a somewhat different version of My Eyes are Dim I Cannot See". What a

character. There were also Phil Jones from Salford who performed a couple of Beatles songs, followed by T.T. Races, and Bryn Evans from Lancaster with Devil and the Deep Blue Sea and Hitting the High Spots. All three of them played without backing music. Anyway chaps it was great to have you with us. You are sure of a great welcome anytime at Penyffordd. To close the evening Jim Knight sang You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming and followed this with an accompanied Bones Medley.

We were ready to finish at 11.30 when someone shouted. "You can't finish yet; Des hasn't arrived". Regrettably we could not continue any longer so another wonderful evening came to a close.

Tickets will be available shortly for the Frodsham Centenary Event. It will be a great show; the most important thing to happen in Frodsham since the opening of the Railway. A sell out is expected so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Thanks Cliff. I counted 120 people at your meeting. Great Night.

Words of Wisdom from Jon Baddeley

Hello Stan, Another great night at Wistaston. On stage, the standard is getting higher all the time. I think that if there was an award for the most improved player, then it would go to Cliff Royle. His timing and delivery of a song is great and he certainly is an inspiration to us all.

Yes I agree Jon. And we all remember when his timing was so bad that he always finished two minutes before the tape. In fact, we had a cartoon drawing made by Joe McCaffrey to embarrass him into improving his timing. But he's mastered it now, bah gum. And he's still our ace reporter!



We're Having a War at Sale Alice Cronshaw has just informed me that the May Meeting at Sale will be a WAR NIGHT, which is part of our George Formby 100th Anniversary Celebrations.

So come prepared in battledress, with tin hat, rifle, medals, etc. and join in the fun. It's back to the 40s night so you might turn up dressed as an Air Raid Warden with buckets of sand and water, carrying a fire extinguisher and a 20 foot ladder. Have you still got your gas mask? and has anyone got a stirrup pump? It's all fun!

George In "I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here"

It must be the most boring show on TV but George livened it up with "She's Got Two Of Everything." Sounded really great. He seems to be popping up at least 4 or 5 times a day on TV and Radio lately.

Brian is interested in learning the song, "Lady of Spain" in Melody form. Has anyone got a copy to loan? If so, please ring Brian on 01270 569836.

Wigan Pier—Tickets are now available £2 each or pay £2.50 on the door. If ordering by post please add 25p postage or a stamp addressed envelope. Stan.

Letter from Pamela Terretta—Morris

George Formby was a great fan of Motor Cycles, and my father, Henry Terretta was exactly the same. Dad purchased his first motor cycle at 14 years old, with money that had been put in a Trust Fund, as a result of him having been left as an orphan at 11 years old.

His father, my grandfather, was Captain of a ship named the S.S. Sutton, which sank off Cardigan Bay, with all hands, in 1925. Dad also lost his mother, sister, brother, brother and brother-in-law on that fateful day. Little wonder he turned to motor cycles to help him overcome his unbearable loss and anger.

In the 40s and 50s he became a Grass Track Champion, winning many trophies. It was at a Lancashire event that dad was approached by a lady in the crowd. It turned out to be George Formby's mother. She asked dad if George could have a ride on his motor cycle. Without hesitation dad agreed to the request, and he fastened the crash helmet on to George's head. George went round the track three or four times in his own theatrical style.



George's mother, Eliza

In those days grass track racing attracted many thousands of spectators. The crowd cheered and clapped as George went past with that broad grin, chuckling with delight. Dad always rode number "8" and that was George's lucky number too as mentioned in "I Can Tell It By My Horoscope". "Lucky 8 will always pull him through" Dad said that George's mother's face was a picture as George was her pride and joy.

My father died two years ago and I inherited his motor cycle. It now has pride of place in my lounge, no less, together with his vest bearing lucky number "8", his goggles, and that very same crash helmet. Perhaps your readers would like this photo for their "Little Snapshot Album" A true story for "Letting The New Year In." Pamela Terretta-Morris (Sentimental Lou)

The above was handed to me at Penyffordd but I'm not sure who gave it to me. Many thanks to whoever it was.

Jon Baddeley Emails— Hello Stan, Good to hear about the event at Wigan on 23rd May 2004. I feel that it is important at local, regional and national level to promote the Centenary, not only to the converted but also to the public at large. Let's hope that even more such events are planned.

TWO CREWE ANNIVERSARY EVENTS—Having discussed the details with Brian Edge, just to let you know that the event on Wednesday 26th May 2004 will now begin at 7.30 p.m. The Exhibition on the 28th May 2004 will be open to the public from 2 p.m.

THEY REMEMBERED GEORGE—Whilst searching the BBC Website, I noticed that on 14th September 2003, Radio Solent played "I Parted My Hair In The Middle" by George Formby on the Paul Miller Music Club.

Thanks Jon, Who knows, the Wigan Pier event might lead to a regular birthday bash for George, and maybe Wigan might begin to realise that they've ignored a great talented artist.

WIGAN PIER TICKETS £2.00 (£2.50 on the door) - If by post please add postage.

Blackpool Night—by Alan Chenery

Hi Stan. Another good night at Blackpool Around 28 turned out on a freezing cold night, however we had nine artists to keep us warm, I started with The Wigan Boat Express and later did Nicotine girl (one of Alan Smethurst's (singing postman), Followed by one of our very own up and comers who will not put himself in the spot light Steve Abbott with "Wigan Pier" and later did "Forget Me Not Lane" and George and Beryl's "Baby"

Stan Watkinson & Stan Evans (The Pastits Well & Truly) Gave us three Medleys including "Side by Side" and "You'll Never Find Another Fool Like Me." followed later by "If I had my Life To Live Over" and the lovely Irish song, "Athenrye." John Mason gave us George's "The Barmaid at the Rose & Crown," and "Lamp Post," followed later by "Lancashire Toreador" and "The Pub With No Beer."

Amidst all the heckling to sing "Ferret Down Your Trousers" Alan Middleton sang two country Songs, followed "The Bowler Hat My Granddad Left To Me." Margaret Moran sang "Crazy" for Frank Bennett, whose blushes kept us warm for the night. This was followed by Al Jolson's "I Only Have Eyes For You" & "With A Song in My Heart" and "Yours" medley.

Well it was grand to see Morecambe's John Taylor with us again after a long break. He sang George's "With My Little Ukulele in My Hand" - "Blackpool Rock" "Mr Wu" and "Riding In The TT Races." 85 year young Frank Bennett gave us two of his own songs and then "Bill Bailey." The evening was finished with John Taylor singing "Lamp Post."

We would like to thank all who turned up on such a cold and freezing night to give support and those who helped with the many jobs. Don't forget your tickets for Wigan Pier 23rd May 2004. Cheers Stan love to Eva.

Nicky Martyn—Just had a letter in from Nicky. He has just returned from entertaining on a Caribbean, Christmas and New Year cruise, and is currently having a break before setting off again in March.

Nicky has been booked by PBS Television (The biggest US TV company) to Co-write and perform in a documentary about cruising. It will be recorded at sea in April. He will be in Barbados up till then before meeting the ship Dawn Princess in Bermuda. After that he will be recording 5 shows during the following two weeks.

UKE FOR SALE—Nicky also has a Dulcetta Uke Banjo for sale: Base plate, eleven tension rods, good sound. Price £100 or near offer. Ring Nicky on 01925 264676 but he is away all of March and April.

Sounds OK. I have known Nicky for some years and know that he will not sell a faulty instrument.

It's easy enough to be pleasant when the world rolls along like a song
But a man's worthwhile, if he can smile, when everything's going wrong
Adolf Hitler 1944

HAVE YOU AN ARTICLE FOR THE NEWSLETTER?

Take a Seat—By Courtesy of Jean Nadin

What a grand idea to install a seat at the front of Jean's house for the benefit of the older folk. That's what Alison and Frankie Woods have done and on the right we have a party of uke players testing it out.



From the left we have Cliff Royle, Jim Knight, Margaret Royle and Myra Knight.

Alison Emails: This is the memorial bench, that was bought with the generous donations given in memory of my mum, Jean Nadin, and is now in place on the sea-front directly opposite our house in Rhyl. The plaque on the bench reads "JEAN NADIN 1937-2003 TOO SPECIAL TO BE FORGOTTEN". The remainder of the donations have been given to East Cheshire Hospice in Macclesfield, this was a charity that she always supported.

Thank you all so much for the generosity and support you have shown us over the past four months, we are very lucky to have such special friends. Alison & Frankie

Walter Dean Emails—Hello Stan, Just arrived back home from America. I like a bargain, and when I saw this sign in San Diego "*Haircut one Dollar. This week half price*" I went in. The place was empty, so I waited. From behind a curtain a voice said "I'll be there in a minute, sit down in the chair". I sat down, and after about 20 minutes, the curtain moved and a old man of about 85 stumbled in on stiff legs. I thought, well maybe he's a good hairdresser. I mean we all get old someday.

I noticed that half his dinner was still sliding down the front of his unwashed overalls. He picked up the scissors and his hands were shaking so much I thought that he must have been a bartender that spent half his life shaking cocktails, or maybe he used to play the ukulele banjo. Well it was too late to run.

Now I had a wart on the back of my neck, and I was just about to tell him to be careful when I received a most terrible sharp pain from the area. *I don't have it anymore.* He nicked me in the scalp about 4 or 5 times and put something on it to stop the bleeding. Well I survived, and paid him 50 cents. He looked at it and said "*It is one Dollar*". I said "*What about the sign?*". He said "*That offer is only for pensioners*".

I didn't want to argue and walked out of his shop looking like a wounded soldier. I told all the guests in the hotel to go there. I said, "*I'll be an experience you'll never forget.*"

RICHARD & JUDY played a clip of George and then introduced The Ukulele Orchestra—a group of about 8 players who play melody on wooden ukes. I'll bet Richard didn't know that they take exception to being classed with "Chords Only" George.

Great Entertainment



The two Ronnies as Coronation Street's Minnie & Ena

Comedy Night on Channel 5

George was mentioned no less than four or five times during this hour of fun. Great stuff!!! I could have watched it all night. It was filled with many top comedy stars like Laurel & Hardy, Max Wall, Victor Borg, Wilson Kepple & Betty, and many more. The show is part of a series asking top stars who their favourite comics are.

But what a smashing job The Two Ronnies did of impersonating Minnie & Ena singing with their ukes. Great timing and backing. They were perfect with :-

Sung to Chinese Laundry Blues

Oh me and you, what can we do? We've been stuck in this bar since 1962
I simply leaner and sup ribena I've supped so much my tongue is turning blue
Where's Annie's lad? He's taken Bette Lynch to the flickers
I hope she's got her handbag cos she'll need it for her— ticket
Oh deary me, it's plain to see . . .



George's spot opened with a scene from "Let George Do It" when he sang "Mr Wu's A Window Cleaner Now" and was followed by Ross Noble, - a keen Formby fan and comedian, who told the tale of when he and a friend drove their open topped car through the busy streets of London with a Formby CD blasting out at top volume. He then impersonated George singing Windows.



Max Wall



Ross Noble impersonating George singing Windows

Frank Carson joked: - This chap had a plastic hip fitted and asked the nurse if he could have the bone for the dog. And; Paddy had a leg transplant and his wellies rejected it.

Ronnie Barker went on to explain that when it became illegal to joke about the Irish, Scottish, Jewish etc. he came up with the idea of dressing as a country yokel. It didn't cause offence because nobody came forward claiming to be a yokel. Clever stuff!



Wilson & Kepple

Let's hope that we get more of these old time comedy shows on TV instead of the dreadful modern rubbish. This "I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here" is trash in comparison.

George's 100th Concert in Frodsham

Ahm reet proud of young Cliff



Arrangements are well in hand for the tribute by the North Wales Branch to George on Saturday May 15th. It will be held in the Frodsham Community Centre on Fluin Lane; a superb venue which can seat 300. We hope to fill the Hall for which there will be one admission charge of £3. All profits will go to a Charity; "The Claire House Hospice for Children" in Clatterbridge. It caters for North Wales; West Cheshire, The Wirral and the Isle of Man.

Show will start at 7 pm and end at 10.30 p.m. There will be a Raffle in the interval. The Bar will be open from 6.30 pm (when interval drinks should be ordered), and after the show until 11 pm. Posters and tickets will be available in the near future. Tickets available through me on (01928) 731088. Routes to the venue can be provided on request.

Two top class M.C's have been booked and we already have many provisional offers of support from GFS entertainers. The Concert will be based on a prepared list of acts once we are in a position to finalise details.

P.S. The Pastits are already booked. That should bring them in. I have not said anything about needing more entertainers. Currently it looks as if we could possibly have enough. See how thing go

Thanks Cliff. You are doing a fine job for the Children's Hospice. It's a very worthy cause.

Paul Woodhead is off to Cyprus

Paul has just Emailed. He has booked to go out to Cyprus to coincide with Dennis's meeting. If anyone has a spare week & would like to come out as well the details are as follows:

DIRECT HOLIDAYS—Page 314, Holiday ref 6261—Staying at

KEFALOS BEACH VILLAGE—Cost (depending which airport)

Circa £400 pp (we fly from B'ham at 0755)

Date of departure Wednesday May 5th, 2004. Return, Wednesday,

May 11th. I don't know anyone else's eMail so please pass it on.



Lucky Booking

—Paul has landed a summer booking for SAGA holidays. He plays one, sometimes two evenings a week from April through September for holidaymakers in Shropshire. The booking came from a private function he did in a pub in Bridgnorth. He's still very busy & playing most days but this is a real coup for him.

Good for you Paul. I'm sure that Dennis and his merry gang will make you very welcome.

All the old SAGA folk will enjoy your "Cat In A Bag" song. It would go down well with Alan Middleton's "Ferret Down Yer Trousers" song which goes down well at Blackpool Cricket Club every last Monday in the month.

WE ARE IN GEORGE'S ANNIVERSARY YEAR



Alan with a ferret down his trousers

Miles from Germany Emails

These are entries to a competition asking for a rhyme with the most romantic first line but least romantic second line:

1. I thought that I could love no other Until, that is, I met your brother
2. The roses are wilting, the violets are dead, the sugar bowl's empty and so's your head
3. Of loving beauty you float with grace If only you could hide your face
4. Kind, intelligent, loving and hot This describes everything you are not
5. My darling, my lover, my beautiful wife: Marrying you screwed up my life.
6. I see your face when I am dreaming That's why I always wake up screaming
7. My love, you take my breath away What have you stepped in to smell this way
8. What has inspired this amorous rhyme? Two parts vodka, one part lime
9. You'll be dancing in my heart tonight So please take off your clogs.

Jonathan Baddeley on the Wireless.

On the 25th Jan. the voices of George Formby and Crewe's Jonathan Baddeley echoed over the airwaves during an interview with GMR presenter Fred Fielder. Fred dedicated the interview to our dear departed friend Jean Nadin of Rhyl and the Penyffordd Branch. It was an excellent ten minutes and Jonathan did not miss a trick. We at Crewe are extremely lucky to have someone with his knowledge, confidence and ability to make the most of opportunities like these that may come along in order to keep George's name in the public eye. Jonathan publicised all our usual meetings at Penyffordd, Sale, and Crewe and he also highlighted all the special events that we, in this area, have planned for next May, to commemorate 100 years since George was born.

These are the Grand Show at Frodsham on Saturday the 15th May, the Special Centenary Concert and Exhibition at Wigan Pier (1pm-11pm) on Sunday 23rd May, Jonathan Baddeley's presentation of the "George Formby Story" plus a film show in the Wistaston Memorial Hall on Wednesday the 26th May (admission to members £2) and starts at 7.30pm. Finally the Grand Exhibition of Formby Memorabilia (from 2pm) and the Centenary Concert at Wistaston Memorial Hall, Crewe on Friday the 28th May (7.40pm). Jonathan had another card up his sleeve when he said that he handed a list of the events to the radio presenter just in case anyone rang up for information. So Jonathan deserves our special thanks for spreading the word so well and also thanks to Fred Fielder, another Formby fan, for allowing Jonathan the airtime. Brian.

Brian Edge Emails—George Bush goes to a primary school to talk about the war. After his talk he offers question time. One little boy puts up his hand and George asks him what his name is. "Bob". "And what is your question, Bob?" "I have 3 questions. First, why did the USA invade Iraq without the support of the UN? Second, why are you President when Al Gore got more votes? And third, what happened to Osama Bin Laden? Just then the bell rings for recess. George Bush informs the kiddies that they will continue after recess.

When they resume George says, "OK, where were we? Oh that's right, question time. Who has a question?" A different little boy puts up his hand. George points him out and asks him what his name is. "Steve" "And what is your question, Steve?" "I have 5 questions. First, why did the USA invade Iraq without the support of the UN? Second, why are you President when Al Gore got more votes? Third, what happened to Osama Bin Laden? Fourth, why did the recess bell go 20 minutes early? And Fifth, where is Bob?"

Grand Atmosphere at Sale by Hilda & Vera.

The New Year got off to a good start at the January meeting, when a happy throng of Formby fans filled the Timperley Taverners Club for 4 hours of non-stop entertainment. Although there were some absent friends, mainly due to illness, it was good to have Elaine Kenny back with us, looking much better. Cyril welcomed Brian and Beryl Fisher from the Liverpool branch, who were attending their first meeting at Sale.



Brian White, who was the M.C. for the first part of the evening, introduced Eddie Bancroft who opened the proceedings with *Mr. Wu* and *Blackpool Rock* and David Rhodes followed with *Wigan Boat Express* and a George Harrison number *Any Road* (published posthumously). Then Alan Southworth played the *Formby Medley* and *There's Nothing Proud About Me*. Brian Edge *Let's Have a Ride on Your Bike* and *Wigan Pier* was followed by Arthur Newton *The Barmaid at the Rose and Crown* and *It's Turned Out Nice Again*. Next was Alan Chenery with *The Lancashire Lad and His Uke* and *The Little Back Room Upstairs*. Margaret Moran delighted us with *We'll Gather Lilacs* and *Sailor* and Jonathan Baddeley performed *When the Waterworks Caught Fire* and *Our Fanny's Gone all Yankee*. Then Cliff Royle, despite having a sprained wrist, managed to play *You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming* and his own composition *My Maggie* which had us close to tears until the final punch line! Then Cyril, with his velvet voice, sang *I'll See You in My Dreams* and *She's Funny That Way*.

A Thrash was followed by the raffle, which is always well supported, and Dick Eaves was the M.C. for the second half. First was Walter Kirkland, as himself, with *Ain't She Sweet Medley* and (with Alan Chenery) a bones medley played to a *Tijuana Brass* backing tape. Then it was the turn of Alison Nadin who amazed us with a wonderful puppet show with 'Alf and Millie' - extremely entertaining and very professional. Frank Bennett followed with *Bill Bailey*, *Bye Bye Blues* and *Railroad Bum*. Phil Jones, with his new ukulele (a Christmas present from his wife) did *T.T. Races* and *Take Good Care of My Baby Medley*. Phil's friend, Bryan Evans, (playing Phil's new uke!) played *Madame Moskovic* and *Hitting the High Spots Now*. The next artists were Paul Kenny *Spotting on the Top of Blackpool Tower* and *Give Me the Chance to be Twenty Again*, Brian White *Wunga Bunga Boo* and *Uncle Joe's Minthalls*, Stan Watkinson *Picture of You* and, with Stan Evans, *There's No Pleasing You*. Stan tried the impossible, a duet with himself, *The Spaniard That Blighted My Life*, with Dick Eaves doing a Flamenco dance - we really must buy him some castanets! Alan Southworth rounded off the evening with *Fifty Per Cent of It's Mine* before the final Thrash.



Jean's a busy helper

It was a very enjoyable evening. We never cease to wonder at the number of different songs which are performed and the very clever and amusing lyrics are a delight to listen to. Hilda and Vera.

(By the way, Stan, who were Elsie and Doris, you mentioned in the last issue? A lot of WATER's gone under the bridge since then!)

Thanks girls. Hee, you do remind me of Gert & Daisy. But you're too young to know em

Brian White Gives em Stick. At the Sale meeting Brian White sported his latest purchase: a three foot long, highly polished walking stick which he'd just bought off the Internet.

He showed it to one or two ladies asking them to fondle the stick and then guess what it was. The only answer they came up with was: "It's a walking stick!" - "You're right" said Brian, "But what was it originally?"

The ladies looked bemused until Brian gave them the answer. "It's a Pizzle!" said Brian. "A what?" Replied Alice Cronshaw, "A pizzle? - what on earth's a pizzle." - "It's the male organ of a buffalo" said Brian.

Well this triggered off a roar of hearty laughter from Alice, which echoed round the room like a Ken Dodd joke. She then paraded the stick round the room, asking, "Do you know what this is, - it's a pizzle." After an explanation there came more roars of laughter. Alice was enjoying every minute, which set the scene for a good enjoyable evening with a wonderful atmosphere.



Cinema Pathe News 1943/4

Location of events unclear, possibly Liverpool.

M/S wounded being carried off ship. M/S officials waiting on dock. Various shots as more are carried off, others with missing limbs walk down on crutches. Various shots of disembarkation. M/S soldiers / airmen drinking tea leaning out of train window. L/S crowds waiting for ship.



Various shots as soldiers get paid. Various shots of disembarkation. M/S as Red Cross ambulance drives through. Various shots of wounded boarding train with others. M/S soldier doing George Formby act and playing ukulele. M/S nurses handing tea to men in train.

S.O.S - Brian Edge says—Can Anyone Help with These Please?

I am looking for the words and music for the "Old Time Movie Show," and also wonder if anyone can supply the chords for the uke solo to the popular part of the "William Tell Overture?" Contact me on 01270-569836 or by E-mail parauke@supanet.com

Well Brian, John Shreeve is the ideal person to give you the chords to the William Tell Overture. He plays it at Liverpool every month. The Old Time Movie Show was written and performed by Dennis O'Connell, and there's a copy on the way to you via Alan Southworth. We must do an article on dear old Dennis (now passed on) He was a brilliant pianist, and accompanist, who knew all the Formby numbers. It was a contest every 3 months at the Imperial Hotel, trying to catch him out. He always won! ANYONE GOT A PHOTO?

Latest News from Bob Muirhead

The Ferrari Formula 1 Team fired their entire pit crew yesterday. The announcement followed Ferrari's decision to take advantage of the British government's 'Work for the Dole' scheme and employ scousers. The decision to hire them was brought on by a recent documentary on how unemployed Liverpool youths were able to remove a set of wheels in less than 6 seconds without proper equipment, whereas Ferrari's existing crew can only do it in 8 seconds with millions of pounds worth of high tech gear.

This was thought to be an excellent, yet bold move, by Ferrari Management. As most races are won and lost in the pits, Ferrari would have an advantage over every team. However, Ferrari got more than they bargained for at the crew's first practice session, not only were the Scousers Pit Crew able to change the tyres in under 6 seconds but within 12 seconds they had re-sprayed, rebadged and sold the vehicle over to the MacLaren Team for four bottles of Stella, a gram of speed and a quick shifty at Coulthard's bird in the shower.

Having Problems with Computer Junk Mail?

As soon as you get set up on the Internet you can guarantee you'll get swamped with loads of Junk Mail, - it's called Spam Mail. They are pests who offer all sorts of stuff ranging from "Improving your manhood" to "Look at my sexy pictures and give me a ring." I reported these to Broadband and the police but they've done nothing about it.

And then there are the con merchants—usually the daughter of an African Prince who has £6000,000,00 stashed away in an English bank, and if you help them to get it out they'll give you half of it. Well some fools must fall for the trick. Trouble is, they won't go away.

Well, Martin Thomas has just Emailed me details of a system called "Mailwasher" that intercepts junk mail, grades it out and bounces the rubbish back to the offenders. It is a free service but they ask you to send a contribution to help further development

The email address is feedback@mailwasher.net and can also be found in the software under help-about. An email address for support will be supplied if you register the software. Thanks Martin. I'll give it a whirl.

Jonas & Janet hope to be

over for Wigan Pier—Hello Stan, thanks for your Email. Hope you are all OK over there. I will certainly pass the message to those interested in George-related happenings. As it looks now, we will not be coming over at all this year, but you never know, things may change with short notice.

At the moment, I have started planning for a possible stage show to coincide with next year's ukulele festival, hopefully it will be something jazzy. We are also in the process of recording another CD with the Ukulele Club in Göteborg, so we keep ourselves busy, one way or the other. Take care, and please convey my greetings to new and old friends.

Jonas & Janet.

HOPE THEY CAN MAKE IT



Phill Hughes of the 3 Tenors reports

GEORGE CLEANING WINDOWS ON PLAYSTATION

Hi Stan, I've just been shown something rather incredible by my young grandson Daniel. He's received a Playstation2 as a Christmas present, this includes a c.c.t.v. camera which sits on top of your T.V. set and allows you to interact with the game that you are playing.



The game that he showed me is called Wishi Washy, this is a series of "sudsy" windows superimposed over the c.c.t.v. image of the player. You then, by hand movements in front of the screen, have to clean the suds off the windows, cleaning as many windows as you can within the time allowed. Whilst you are doing this, the accompanying soundtrack is our George singing and playing WINDOWS!

Who could have imagined that youngsters from all over the world would be introduced to our George in this way!!! Cheers, Phill Hughes (Three Tenors)

Thanks Phill I'd actually heard of this before but I thought they were pulling my leg. George will be singing Windows all over the world? That's Great News!



Query from Chris Webster

Hi Stan, Happy New Year to you ! I'm just looking at your articles about George's ukes from the Autumn and Winter 2000 Vel-lums.

Two questions—1) Can these two articles be 'tied together' so that, for example, we'd know which of the baby or concert Gibson's he used in the films. Eg. for Daring Young Man, did he use lot 448, 455a or 457. Also do we know what "UB" numbers the various Gibson's were and how they relate to the Friday Show and any other surviving pieces of film or TV?

2) Have you an updated version of the ownership history of George's ukes? I know that at least one has changed hands since 2000? And have any of the 'lost' instrument now come to light, particularly the good ukes owned by Bill Logan. Also, out of curiosity, forgetting the extortionate £35k that the Ludwig is now rumoured to be worth, what sort of value can now be put on the Abbott and Gibsons if they were to come up for sale now?

So if there's any George's Ukes experts there, please write in. Does anyone know what happened to Bill Logan's GF ukes after Bill died

Do You See Jeff Gray?

Jeff is a keen Formby player and was a member of our happy gang who kept us laughing during the disaster coach trip to Holland.

He lives somewhere in St Helens so if you are in contact with him please ask him to ring me as we'd like to see him on May 23rd at Wigan Pier.

I can picture him now sat on the back row of the coach with a crate of beer, churning out song after song. Jeff is a great chap. Keith Smith is wheelchair bound so Jeff volunteered to push him around—



Wigan Pier needs you Jeff

Olwen Gale Writes— On page 8 of Newsletter No. 103 there was an extract of a letter written by George Formby in Bristol to a lady living in Shepherd's Cross Street, Bolton. Well that jogged my memory because when I was at Grammar School I won the Shepherd Cross Scholarship whilst there. George was a great benefactor of Bolton and gave a large sum of money to endow a scholarship at the school for worthy and hard working pupils. Shepherd's Cross Street is a row of small houses and lies at the lower end of Chorley Old Road.



Next is about Julie Walters, the actress who has recently appeared in the film, "Calendar Girls" about Rylstone W. L. Well, from a relatively working class background her parents wanted her to succeed and she was brought up by her Father. She played a small ukulele and started putting on little concerts using the bay window of their house as a stage.

I just thought that these interesting items would be ideal for your Newsletter. Happy New Year to you and Eva.

Thanks Olwen. It so happens that Julie Walters is a favourite of Eva and I. We think she is absolutely great, and a wonderful actress.

But what a disappointment when we both sat and watched the film, "Billy Elliott." It was utter rubbish and full of foul language. It's so sad that these really great performers have to sink to the level of appearing in cheap, trashy films. Anyway Olwen. Keeping sending em in.

Email from Ernie Jones— Just looked at your George Formby and Father's website and found it very interesting. Now this is not a George Formby song, - well I don't think it is—but I'm looking for the words to a song that starts "*We've been together now for 40 years*" and I'm afraid that's all I know. I can't find it on the internet because I don't know the title. Can you help because I'm hoping to sing it at our Anniversary Party next week.

Thanks for your Email Ernie. I'm assuming you mean "My Old Dutch" which was a song my dad sang very often. I was born and breast fed listening to it.

VERSE

I've got a pal, a regular out an' outer.
She's a dear old gal, an' I'll tell you
 all about 'er;
It's forty years since fust we met,
Her hair was then as black as jet.
It's whiter now, but she don't fret
Not my old gal.

CHORUS

We've been together now for forty years
An' it don't seem a day too much
There ain't a lady living in the land
As I'd swap for me dear old Dutch
No, there ain't a lady living in the land
As I'd swap for me dear old Dutch/

Although a Cockney song, the music was composed by a Frenchman: Albert Chevalier.
Hope it's the song you are looking for and good luck with your party.

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE FOR WIGAN PIER £2, OR PAY ON THE DOOR £2.50

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

Until April 2004—"Grin Up North" Exhibition at Museum of Lancashire, Stanley St, Preston. Ends April 2004, will feature Northern comedians. Good show.

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

Sun 23rd May—Grand Gathering and re-union of Formby Fans to be held at WIGAN
PIER. 1pm to around 11pm. Ring Stan Evans on 01925 727102.

Wed 26th May 2004—George's 100th Birthday—Wistaston Memorial Hall 7.30pm
Jonathan Baddeley presents "A Lancashire Lad and His Uke" the George
Formby Story, followed by the showing of a popular George Formby film.

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

Fri 11th June 2004—Jack Jones and George Formby Tribute in George's Anniversary
Year. To be held at ROOSTERS, Warrington.

Sat July 17th 2004—Blackpool Prom—Charles Stewart on 01253 768097

Sun July 18th—Fleetwood Festival—Tram Sunday

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.

Two Newspaper Items—It's official: Max Bygraves and Des O'Connor are a waste of space Oct 18, 2003

On the deletion list is GEORGE FORMBY, the chirpy northerner who did for the ukulele what Kylie Minogue has done for micro hotpants. In a confidential memo leaked to The Independent on Sunday, Steve Kincaid, Virgin's commercial director, has informed his staff: "Currently we're compiling a new deletions list based on artists who just don't sell at mega-stores because frankly we don't want them taking up space that could be given over to someone more deserving. "However, this list does include some household names like Des O'Connor, Max Bygraves, GEORGE FORMBY and Richard Clayderman, for example (Independent, UK).

DOWNLOADED FROM THE INTERNET

Wigan (rugby league) Warriors are starting to lose battle in divided Wigan Oct 08, 2003.

Things to remember about Wigan: they still love George Formby but they can't stand George Orwell.

With regards to the second item I am hoping that the gathering of Formby fans at Wigan Pier on May 23rd is so successful that we are invited to organise a Birthday Concert every May. Who knows? Maybe we can persuade the Wigan Council to change the name of The Orwell Pub to "The George Formby." That would be great!!!!

Newspaper Cutting dated 3rd March 1961—George Formby is making very good progress and is "in great form," it was reported today at St Joseph's Hospital, Preston, where the 56 year-old comedian is recovering from a heart attack.

Sadly George died three days later.

RAFFLE PRIZES WILL BE APPRECIATED AT WIGAN PIER

George Formby Meetings

North Wales Branch - British Legion, Penyffordd (10 miles from Chester) Every 1st Friday in the month. Tel Jim Knight 01978 358472 Adm 50p.

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:

2004—6th and 7th March Following Penyffordd

26th and 27th June following Crewe

11th and 12th September following Liverpool

13th and 14th November following Liverpool

Concerts usually start around 1.30pm each day.

Ring the Secretary, Andrew Gatherer on 01455 890214 for details on the GFS or Wintergarden meetings.

Web Site —Two Lancashire Lads:

www.stanevans.co.uk/formby

E Mail: stan@stanevans.co.uk

For George Formby Newsletters by post please send a cheque for £2.25 for 3 months - (£9 for the year) payable to S. Evans - Address Front Cover.



Why do uke players stand at the door? They can't find the key and don't know when to come in.

Judge: Have I seen you before. Defendant: Yes, I gave your son uke lessons.

Judge: Ah, yes, I remember. 20 years for disturbing the peace.

George's 100th Anniversary Year 2004

Born 26th May 1904

2004 will be the last opportunity many of us will have of honouring George Formby in a special way.

The town of Wigan have never, really accepted, or honoured George & Beryl for their dedication to the entertainment business, or for their war effort. Other stars have been recognised for far less.

In the hope that we can finally put the record straight, all fans of George Formby are invited to a one-day

Concert and Exhibition of Memorabilia

at

WIGAN PIER THEATRE

on Sunday 23rd May 2004 from 1pm to 11pm

when we also look forward to a re-union of old

Formby Friends from the past.

With songs from the era of both George and his father, we intend to give Wigan a sample of the legacy that the two Georges, & Beryl, left behind.

More details from Stan Evans on 01925 727102

Email: stan@stanevans.co.uk

Tickets £2 or £2.50 on the door