

THE
GEORGE FORMBY
Newsletter 106

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*I'll be one hundred
on May 26th*

Specially Produced for George Formby Fans
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Welcome to Newsletter No. 106

Did you notice the error? Well we might not have the best entertainers at the Liverpool meeting but they are certainly "On The Ball" when it comes to "Errors in the Newsletter."

"Hey Stan" they shouted, "There's another mistake here! On the front page you've printed Issue 105, but on page 2 it says 104." Nobody else has noticed it so it's top marks to Liverpool.

I'm pleased to report that all our meetings are well attended, which is possibly due to the 100th Anniversary publicity we are getting in the press. There is also an aura of excitement in the air as we get nearer to the big month. Fortunately it won't die after May as we have other events through 2004.

Dennis Lee has just phoned from Cyprus to say that a merry band of about seven Uke Players and their wives will be with us at Wigan Pier. Dennis is making every effort to come himself but has to sort out a complication before he is sure.



Dennis

Well, we will certainly be pleased to meet them all and they can be sure of a great welcome from us all. Since Dennis moved over to Cyprus he has organised and given tuition to his merry band of players, and now they are keen to come over to join in our Wigan Pier event on Sunday May 23rd.

ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY—On the following Sunday they are holding a Wedding Anniversary get together, at Leigh, and all—especially players—are invited to come along. There is a charge of £5 which includes a meal, and the proceeds will go to an Alzheimer's Fund.

Well, what a happy bunch of troubadours they look as they strut their stuff in sunny Cyprus. We look forward to meeting em all.



UKES—They are usually looking for beginners ukes, reasonably priced to take back to Cyprus, so if you've any to sell, bring them along.

CYPRUS SUNBURNT SONGSTERS

Vote For George

A big debate is going on in the Warrington Council.

Since 1991, a statue of Brian Bevin, a world renowned rugby league player who broke all records when he played for Warrington, has graced the Wilderspool Causeway roundabout, close to the rugby ground. Wilderspool Causeway also leads to the Formby house in Stockton Heath, and is also a stone's throw from the house where George's mother Eliza, and sister Louie lived in later years. Warrington have now built a new sports stadium in the town centre and Brian's statue has been moved to the new ground, - so the roundabout island now looks bare.



The council are now debating on who should be honoured with a statue to fill that position and these are in the running:

(1) **KERRY McFADDEN** (Winning with 47% votes) who ate maggots and won that silly "Celebrities Get Me Out Of Here" TV show.

(2) **PETE POSTLETHWAITE**, a Warrington actor and TV star.

(3) **SOOTY**, who's former owner, Matthew Corbett, lives in Lymm, near Warrington.

(4) **BOB THE BUILDER**, who's creator lives here in Penketh.

(5) Or, **GEORGE FORMBY** (Now lying second with 36% votes) who starred in 22 films, won the OBE for war service, produced up to 400 records, attracted around 44,000 visitors to his Warrington Museum Exhibition, entertained many millions of fans during his 40 years service to show business, and is still remembered 43 years after his death - the accolades to George go on and on.



If they choose Kerry, In a few years time the youngsters will be asking who the statue of the young girl is that stands in the centre of the roundabout and mother will say, "Her name is Kerry and she was a five minute wonder who ate maggots in the backwoods of Australia."



The council invite you to vote on www.thisiswarrington.co.uk Or drop a line to Warrington Guardian, Academy House, Warrington, Cheshire.

So "COME ON GEORGE" we are voting for you in your Anniversary Year.

Quite honestly I'll be surprised if the council do anything with the site. A lot of hot air might come out but little action.

Due to mindless and selfish interference by a well known, so called Formby Fan, the council destroyed all the Formby family display boards, posters, photos, cartoons etc. costing anything up to £20,000 and I've not forgiven them for that. And never will!



Come on George

Bad Language on Eve of Crewe Show

I must tell you about an incident that occurred even before our February show began. It was in the afternoon in fact, just after our faithful band of roadies had finished setting up the room and had departed to have tea and get ready for the show. I was the last to leave and I had drawn all the curtains and all was locked up.



My final job was to switch off the stage lights. This I did and I was just going through the door when suddenly I heard "What the %%% %!!@@ **@@ @### ! I must say I was astounded. With my sheltered upbringing, I have never heard language like it. It was real Crewe Works stuff! In fact I have checked the dictionary for suitable medical terms to give readers a faithful interpretation of what I heard, in a manner of course that would not offend our official Censor, but alas there was none! Who was it then that was creating such a kafuffle? There I was, stood standing, in the dark with this tirade going on! I can tell you it was very scary. I switched the stage lights back on and very cautiously looked behind the flash curtains in fear of what I might see there. It was a horrible sight, for right before my very eyes was Harry Jones, 70 something, with umpteen bypasses, standing on the top of a six foot high set of steps, holding on to the back of the stage for grim death. He had been busy repairing the curtains. "###'#@**%" Said Harry (again unrepeatable) "It was a %+&£\$ good job you heard me, as I would have been up here for ages before you lot got back! What can I say Harry, other than please, please "don't do it again, you frightened me to %\$(+### death!"

Stan Evans was this month's MC who is always able to create fun out of nothing at all! He commenced proceedings welcoming three people who apparently hadn't arrived, which ended up with a good laugh. It was Alan Newton and also Jean Harris's birthday (you will know Jean and her party as they all wear ukulele badges) so we all sang "Happy Birthday." Now you might laugh, but that was a daring thing for us to do - and I will tell you why. A year or two back a number of us performed in a Granada TV series hosted by Matthew Kelly called "Hotel Getaway." We had to sing a couple of numbers and the producer said, "You can sing anything but not "Happy Birthday." It seems the rights to this song are owned by two sisters in the U.S. who employ listeners all over the world on the lookout for performances of the song. They then chase around claiming their royalties. Must be a lucrative business for them when birthdays go on forever.

Alan Newton thanked everyone for their support and announced that he had brought everyone a birthday cake. A very nice gesture Alan, so thanks from us all. Thanks to everyone for registering your membership. Those who intend coming to the "The Lancashire Lad and his Uke" (the Formby life story) and feature film show on the 26th May please get your tickets right away as they are limited and will be sold to members only. You cannot pay on the door. Tickets just £2 - it will be a great night and part of our Formby Centenary Celebrations. Dare we sing Happy Birthday? Highlight of the night for me was Connie's appearance on stage after being so poorly for the last three months. I must say I was quite amazed when she told me she was going to perform. Mind you the performer who told a risqué joke during the evening was also amazed when Connie appeared from the kitchen saying "hey you can't do that there 'ere!" that really got the big laugh! Bryn Evans made his debut on our stage with "The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" what a pleasant singer he is and a good uke player too.



Alan Newton is "Saving Up For Sally."

Bryn had come all the way from Lancaster to be with us. Also I am pleased to say that our only left handed player Dave Clews is progressing well and taking his place in the Jazz Band. Dave is very keen to do well with his ukulele. Finally Ashley had another good night showing us some of his tricks with his pal Stan. Thanks to everyone for their support and we look forward to meeting you all again very soon.

Those performing were: Ensemble - Thrash. Steve Hassall - "Goody Goody Medley" and "Hard Hearted Hannah." Cliff Royle - "Swimmin with the Wimmen" and "Putting on the Style" (dedicated by Cliff to the memory of our pal Peter Cain who produced the backing music). Walter Kirkland - "In my Little Toolshed in the Garden" followed by a bones medley (assisted by Walter, Alan, Frank). Alice Cronsaw - vocal "I'm a Little on the Lonely Side" and "I Wonder who's Kissing her Now." Jonathan Baddeley - "Running Round the

Fountains in Trafalgar Square." Connie Edge - "Lambeth Walk." Brian Edge - "Talking to the Moon About You," Pamela Baddeley - "Bye Bye Blues Medley." Cyril Palmer - "Don't Blame Me" and "Music Maestro Please." Alan Newton - "Far Better Off in a Home" and "Ordinary People" (solo duet!) Our Jazz Band - "Some of These Days" and "You Can't Stop Me from Dreaming." Bill Turner - "Its no Use Looking at Me" and "Its a Crazy World Were Living In." Phil Jones - " A Beatles Medley" and "Whispering." Alison Nadin - " Her Living Marionettes." Vera Jones "Heart of My heart etc. Medley." The Three Tenors (The Stars and Stripes of Penyffordd) - "We wish we were Back on the Farm!" and "Blackpool Rock." Bryn Evans "The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" and "Madam Moscovitch." Stan Evans - "You Made Me Love You" and "Kiss Me Goodnight Sergeant Major." Ashley Caldicott - "Some Magic Tricks with his pal Stan. " Brian Edge and Colin Wood - "Wigin Pier." Arthur Newton - "Its Turned Out Nice Again" and Sitting on the Top of Blackpool Tower. Ensemble - Thrash. Thanks to Alan Newton for stepping in as show producer for the night in place of Stan Watkinson who was suffering from car problems. *Thanks Brian, it was another great night and an excellent audience.*

Wigan Pier— Anthony Mason and I have always been great fans of GF Senior, so for the Wigan Pier event Anthony has made backing tracks of some of GF Senior's songs, and the way he has jazzed them up sounds really great.

Old George sang (or spoke) his songs in a very droll fashion which suited the audiences of the late 1800s, and early 1900s, but they are certainly not for today's crowd. They'd soon be walking out.

However, Anthony has done an excellent job with a medley of his songs including "Standing At The Corner Of The Street, - We All Came Marching In, - John Willie's Ragtime Band, - John Willie's Jazz Band, - Grandfather's Clock.

He has also made tracks for the songs that we assume George's grandmother would sing when she performed in the local pub for glasses of wine. Believe me, finding popular songs from the late 1800s took to some searching. But worth it!



N. Wales by Super (On The Ball) Cliff



Hi Stan, This was an unusual night for to start the evening we had a visit from the Press who took details about the Branch and some of its "members" together with photographs. Hopefully we should get a big spread in the Evening Leader papers in the Wrexham, Flintshire and Chester areas. Additionally there were about half a dozen Birthdays to celebrate as well as one Wedding Anniversary.

Numbers were a little down on the usual attendance due to the Blackpool Convention being on the same weekend, but to counter this we were blessed with the attendance of George and Pat Forrest from Sunderland, Alan and Eunice Evans from Redditch, Janette Hawkins and Christine (daughter of Geoffrey Formby) from Milton Keynes, and Paul and Gill Woodhead from Telford. Paul is a very talented musician and now spends most of his time preparing and doing "gigs" for many different types of audience. In addition during the Summer Months he will be entertaining people on Saga Holidays. We wish him well. The George Formby lads seem to be doing quite well in this direction for Jonathan Baddeley is putting his musical talents to good use since retiring rather early from work.

In so far as the concert was concerned it started off well with a THRASH followed by Alan Newton with a funny version of Chinese Laundry Blues, and then Song Song Blues. The following entertainers took us to the interval. Alice Cronshaw (Give Me Your Hands, and Making Memories); Alan Evans (I'm Saying Up For Sally and Blanket On The Ground); Myself (Uncle Joe's Mint Balls and I Wish I Could Play Me Ukulele); Paul Woodhead (Coming Round The Mountain and You Are My Sunshine); Vera Jones sang Strolling and I Know We'll Meet Again Some Sunny Day); Greg Simister, our Star who shows us how to really play the Uke, (Licence and Sitting On The Top Of Blackpool Tower); Gerald Jones (Good Old Uncle George; a very witty composition presumably of his own, and Wigan Boat Express); Walter "Smiler" Kirkland (You Can't Keep A Growing Lad Down. He was then accompanied by the usual group of Bones players complimented by Alan Newton with the Castanets and Paul Woodhead playing the Spoons to Tijuana Taxi. Paul's performance was different; we guess some parts of his anatomy must now be bruised quite a bit. Connie Edge sang Double Dare You, and was followed by husband Brian who roused us with Somebody's Baby, and Put Your Arms Around Me Baby. This was not followed by a rush of Ladies from the audience. And so to the interval.

To start off the second session two of the Three Tenors took to the stage. Frank Humphries was unfortunately not too well so was unable to be present. Hope you get better soon Frank. After a bit of confusion Phill and Deg, smartly presented as usual, soon got underway with Back on the Farm and an Old Time Medley. Then Phill's Grandson, Daniel Smith, came on to sing Lamp Post, and what a great job he made of it; sang all the words and played all the chords without requiring the words and dots in front of him. You were great Daniel, and you need to thank your Granddad for the great tuition he is giving you. Tom Meredith beat the M.C. on to the stage when he came to his turn and then pressed the point home by singing You Can't Fool Me. He followed this with Cleaning Windows. Anyway Tom we are glad you are feeling a good deal better.

Alison Nadin came on with her Wild Animal Ventriloquist Act; a bird that could not do magic but could sing. The song was "Let's All Sing like The Birdies Sing" and I never saw her lips move. Just another of her many talents. Alan Evans was called back to per-

form for a second time when he gave us Love Is A Burning Thing. I wonder if this has anything to do with his tandem riding? Then Jim Knight came on in his tin hat and strummed away with that war-time song When The Lads Of The Village Get Cracking, following this with his Bones Ensemble playing Twelfth Street Rag. Although Jim said it was easy to play they were sweating when they finished. Following a short break while Stan Watkinson got dressed the Pastits or the Two Stans or the Two Lancashire Lads came on next. They sang Baby, Baby and Oh Darling There's No Pleasing You. Alas Eva was not present, but she heard it on her Mobile. Censored!!

All the Players and Bones People joined in the War Medley, and then we were treated to a very pleasant and unusual musical event. Paul Woodhead played the theme tune from "The Last Of The Summer Wine" accompanied by Gerald Jones, both playing Mouth Organs. It was nice to hear such instruments played so well. Apparently Gerald met Paul in the gent's toilet where they discovered they had the same musical talents, and within minutes they were on the stage together. Then followed the final item of the evening; the THRASH.

We have been having some good success of late in getting learners to our Practice Evenings, and it was pleasing to see two of them joining in the Thrashes. They were young Ryan (Grandson of Eric Morris), and Colin Winstanley of Hawarden. They are obviously trying hard, and certainly not afraid of having a go. Daniel of course also joined in. Well done. Ten out of ten for trying.

So look out for our "Photo's in the Press".

AND CLIFF IS HERE AGAIN— Good Morning Stan, Can you put please an advert in as follows for one of our prospective learners. "Wanted for learner: Ukulele Banjo in reasonable condition. Say around £100. Ring Colin Winstanley 01244 538558".

Re photograph on page 10 of Newsletter 105. Although it says this seat was installed for the benefit of the "older" folk I am pleased to note that both Jim Knight and myself are standing. You may however still get a comment from the two "young ladies" who are seated. Joking of course!! The seat is of course a great memorial to Jean Nadin who was one of our staunchest supporters. Cheers. Cliff.

George's Houses—Just received a phone call from Gerald Rickards, the excellent artist who did research into George's houses—starting with No. 3 Westminster Street, Wigan—and painted portraits of them for the 1991 Warrington exhibition. "Stan," he said, "I've just read about the Wigan Pier event in the newspaper and I'll be pleased to loan you some of the Formby painting to exhibit." Great Stuff, Gerald. We'll be pleased to display them.

JUST HEARD that George's house at Mere Corner, Knutsford, has been demolished by the owner who moved in about 7 years ago. I'm surprised at this because for the housewarming party he hired Anthony Mason to sing Formby songs.



George's house at Mere Corner

Formby Car on Ebay—Thanks To MARTIN THOMAS

FOR SALE BY EBAY AUCTION—
FORD MERCURY 1939 Sir Malcolm
Campbell's Land Speed Record Team
Car ORIGIN - Bluebird. This vehicle
was purchased new in the middle of 1939
from Town Hall Garage Ltd, Lancaster,
by the late Sir Malcolm Campbell, as a
factory production four door saloon. He
commissioned Windovers, the
coachbuilders to re-body it for use as a
personnel carrier to accompany the team
on speed trial attempts. The seating ar-
rangements to carry six technicians, was designed so that the rear five seats fold to form a
sleeping area in the rear.



Starting Bid
£29,999.99
Reserve not
met

WAR HISTORY - Unfortunately war intervened by the time Windovers had completed the new coachwork. When completed Sir Malcolm used the car, and had it modified for war use. However, in 1941 he met George Formby at a wartime charity affair at the Royal Albert Hall. Formby was on the eve of an entertainment tour of Desert Troops, and bought the car from Sir Malcolm as an ideal car for his use in desert conditions. The car was handed over to R.E.M.E. who carried out modifications to run the car on 900 x 13 sand tyres, more suited to desert use and the glass area was reduced by painting over. Formby had a collapsible lean-to tent awning arrangement made on the offside to sleep his pianist and glamour girl, while he and his wife Beryl slept inside. The car was fully fitted up with internal window blinds. The car did three desert tours in all, entertaining mainly eighth army troops. After the war the car was shipped back to the UK, Formby used it around his home town of Garstang near Blackpool, before selling it to Earl Peel of Hyning Hall, Lancaster in 1946.

POST-WAR HISTORY - From 1946 until his death in 1969, Earl Peel used the car 2-3 weeks only, for transporting grouse shooting parties. In July 1970 the car passed to a Mr. Deakin of Leeming House Hotel, Ullswater for transporting hotel guests. In 1977 it passed into the collection of Bobby McIntyre, Lord Sorn's son, and it resided at Sorn castle until his death in 1986. It was sold at auction to Keith Schellenberg (of Bentley fame), and was purchased by myself from him in 1995. In view of its lack of use over the years the mileage recorded of 21,000 seems likely to be genuine. Since we have owned it we have taken it to Norway, Guernsey and France on several occasions. It always draws a crowd as it is a one off vehicle. The car has always carried the name BLUEBIRD. In view of its eight army connections the car carried this insignia throughout its war use. It is now presented in a condition in which it would have been used by Formby during the war years. This vehicle is in "ready to drive anywhere" condition. Shipping world-wide at buyers expense. Engine - Rebuilt V8 3.9 litre Ford Mercury unit. Brakes - Full hydraulic Gearbox - 3 Speed Ford Suspension - Transverse leaf Length - 16 ft 8 inches Rear Axle - Special to Mercury Height - 6 ft 10 inches (Model has high 3.54/1) Width - 6 ft 6 inches Tyres - 9.00 x 13 Sand Pattern Weight - 1 ton 19 1/2 cwt Top Speed - 95 mph. Reg No - GVM 926 Cruising Speed - 70 mph Year - 1939 Coachwork - Special Estate Car Model - Mercury Estate (UNIQUE) by Windovers (only example built to special order) Present owner since 1995. Road Tax Category - Historic Chassis No - 89AF98810 Would be pleased to hear from private/specialist collector's and/or museums. G Greenwell Broomhouse Farm, Ashcombe, Devon EX7 0QB. *Thanks Martin. Wonderful article.*



THIS week's edition of You Couldn't Make It Up comes from Bury St Edmunds, where Suffolk County Council has banned floral displays in hanging baskets.

The health and safety gestapo say someone might get hurt.

For the past 17 years, the annual Bury In Bloom festival has passed off without any hanging basket-related injuries.

The Royal Horticultural Society has records going back 40 years, covering 1,400 places where hanging baskets are suspended from lamp posts. There has not been a single incident involving a killer hanging basket.

I put this to Councillor Julian Swainson, the man responsible, on the TV the other night.

He said it was nothing to do with hanging baskets, but with the safety of "lighting columns".



Eh?

Lighting columns? That's council speak for lamp posts.

How do you reason with someone who calls a lamp post a lighting column?

The only way to get through to him is for the organisers of Bury In Bloom to take down one of their baskets and string up Councillor Swainson from the nearest lighting column.

This Chinaman was sat in a restaurant, when a Jew poured a bowl of soup over his head. "What's that for?" he shouted. "That's for Pearl Harbour" replied the Jew. "But I'm Chinese" - Chinese, Siamese, Japanese, you all the same." With that the Chinaman picked up a plate of sweet and sour chicken and threw it at him. "What's that for" he asked. "That's for sinking the Titanic." "But the Titanic was sunk by an iceberg." - Goldberg, Greenberg, iceberg, you are all the same.

Blackpool Gazette And Reply



BLACKPOOL LEGEND: Our correspondent would like to see the resort pay tribute to George Formby

Entertainer deserves to be honoured

PAULINE Allday (Letters, January 20) reminisces about her Blackpool heritage and pride for its comedy reputation. I quote: "Comedians always topped the bill at as many as 10 or more variety outlets".

One comedian must have been a proper regular. He promoted Blackpool in his work as if he and the town went together like fish and chips.

The film I like best is when he gets lost and ends up in Bergen and keeps going on about him being "a Blackpool dinky-do".

For years George Formby sang about his little stick of Blackpool Rock and many more songs embracing Lancashire life in the glory days of Blackpool. His Mr Wu, Cleaning Windows and Leaning on a Lamp-post were in the top 10 for years.

He shook hands with royalty and sang his way around the world to afford a dozen homes, a cabin cruiser on the Norfolk Broads, a motor launch, a Rolls Royce and a Bentley.

That was over 40 years ago. He died in 1961 and left a wealth of memories. And yet, in the Gazette's pull-out guide to What's On in the Fylde over the next 12 months, it shows a blank for May 26 which would have been George Formby's 100th birthday.

On a street in Douglas on the Isle of Man stands a magnificent statue of George sporting motorbike gear of the 1940s fashion: A tribute to a film he made on the island about the TT races (No Limit).

Why can't there be a statue of George with his ukelele on the Prom facing the Tower? Or a line-up of the great comedians in bronze on the South Promenade as a mark of appreciation for what Pauline Allday regards as "Britain's greatest assets"?

MRS WINNIFRED INNES
Northfield Avenue
North Shore

CREWE NOTICE—May 28th—It has been decided that our uke programme for this night only will be confined to Formby numbers. We will see how many different songs we can pack into the evening's entertainment. So "Get Cracking" preparing for this show. This does not affect our vocalists or speciality supporting acts. Special guest artistes are invited so it is going to be a great show.



GEORGE FORMBY:
Concert tributes

Formby fans' get-together

I WAS pleased to see that you'd printed Winifred Innes's letter in The Gazette ("Entertainer deserves to be honoured", January 26).

George Formby, who worked hard at promoting Blackpool and other Lancashire towns, deserves to be honoured in the town where he lived.

Unfortunately, a statue for him will never materialise, simply because Blackpool is a star-filled town and many have forgotten a man who died some 43 years ago.

However, I'm pleased to report that George is far from forgotten in the North West area.

In Blackpool, North Wales, Liverpool, Sale, Westhoughton and Crewe we hold six Formby concerts each month, when we attempt to perform just

MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ISSUE. WITHOUT YOUR HELP YOU WOULD NOW BE READING BLANK PAGES.

ALL ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED—KEEP SENDING EM IN. STAN.

COMEDIAN George Formby returned to the Mayor's Parlour to sign the visitors' book because he forgot to leave his signature five months earlier when he switched on Blackpool Illuminations.

like George did.

These are light-hearted meetings with an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment.

At Wigan Pier on Sunday, May 23, we will be celebrating George's 100th anniversary.

It will consist of Formby concerts which will run from 1pm to late night, with up to as many as 40 ukulele players and singers on stage. People are invited to go along to listen to almost every song in George's repertoire, and stay as long as they wish.

More information can be obtained from Stan Evans, Editor, George Formby Newsletter, The Hollies, 19 Hall Nook, Penketh, Warrington WA5 2HN.

STAN EVANS
Via e-mail

CREWE GRAND CONCERT & EXHIBITION
May 28th

This will be a long day for our small band of helpers who will be on duty setting up and manning the exhibition from about 11am and then looking after visitors and providing light refreshments during the day. At 4pm we have to set up the hall for the evening's Grand Concert at the same time as manning the exhibition so you will see that there are lots for us to do. We really do need some extra help on this occasion so if any of our supporters are free to help us out on the day we would be really delighted. Please ring Connie on 01270-569836.

Swimmin With The Wimmin—by Cliff Royle.



All in the swim

Hi Stan. Some members from Sale, Crewe and North Wales take regular Leisure Breaks at Warner Holiday Hotels, and over the years have played as guests to other Residents. This year fourteen stayed at Alvaston Hall near Nantwich. Of these Walter Kirkland, Cyril Palmer, Jim Knight and Cliff Royle

were players, and they were accompanied by wives, partners and friends; Alice, Sheila, Myra, Margaret, Pauline, Val and Dot (North Wales), and Alice, Marjorie and Gerald from Sale. A good time was had by all. This included a trip to a large antique centre, a visit to Sandbach market (both highly recommended), and much merriment in the Pool where Jim won the high diving competition, and Walter swam through most women's legs. There was a ladies Roly Poly Competition which ended in a quadruple draw.

Following arrangements previously made by Alice we were invited to play to the Guests at Lunch Time on the Tuesday, and the four players in residence were joined by Brian Edge, Alan Newton, Alan Chenery and Arthur Newton. The latter two brought along their wives Pat and Mary. Alan Newton did a great job as M.C. and in all we performed for about an hour doing some fifteen songs including individual turns and ensembles.

Many thanks go to our Guest Players. Regrettably Connie Edge was indisposed and could not be with us. About one hundred watched our show following which, over the next day or so, we received many compliments from people who had come from various parts of the country. Many raved about our Formby Tribute and one person actually said he enjoyed it better than the hotels own high class shows which they put on each night.



Is this the man you are looking for?

KNICKERS NICKED—However the break was spoiled when it was reported that a lady (not one of our party) had had her knickers and bra pinched from the changing room at the Pool by a man. Investigations were made and these were tracked down to the room occupied by a couple of our members. The ensuing saga is too long to tell so this is but a very brief report of the goings on. The male member was sent back with them to their rightful owner but it transpired that only the bra was hers. She is possibly still without her underwear. On going back to his room he found out that the knickers were the property of his good lady who usually wore white ones but had forgotten she had recently bought some with flowers printed on them. Yes folks; it's true!

The Police are now searching for a **KNICKER NICKER** who plays the bones and the uke, has an interest in motor bikes, and lives in Crewe. Please contact the Police if you know such a man. I dare not split on him.

Any interested in our next Warner Break at Thoresby Hall (Nottinghamshire) August 9th, please ring Alice Cronshaw on 0161 727 9829. *Thanks Cliff, sounds like a great time.*

Jon & Pam Baddeley by Malcolm Rigby

Brown Edge is a village on the edge of the Staffordshire Moorlands, about 5 miles to the east of the mother town of Leek. It has a very substantial and pleasant village hall, which was the venue for tonight's entertainment.

Jon introduced himself and Pam to an audience of about 130, and then went on to introduce George Formby with a performance of "The Lancashire Lad and his Uke" a song which neatly summarises the life and career of George, and how George gave up his early career as a jockey to follow the footsteps of his famous father onto the stage.



After a mediocre start, George's luck started to change when he met and married Beryl, and discovered the ukulele, the two great props in his life. He progressed to become one of Britain's most well known entertainers on the stage, and later at the cinema. Jon pointed out that the premier of George's first film, "Boots Boots", took place at the Palladium cinema in Burslem, about 5 miles away from tonight's meeting place. Throughout his life, George's fortune was influenced by various people, not the least of these being the entirely fictional but notable gentleman called Mr Wu. Jonathan treated his audience to a medley of songs telling of Mr Wu's comical adventures in his various occupations. This was followed with a series of a dozen or so of his songs.

During the interval, we enjoyed an excellent pie and peas supper, and by various conversations overheard in the supper queue, it was evident that Jon's performance had been very well received. In the second half of the evening we were entertained with George Formby on film. First was "It's In The Air." The audience laughed heartily at George's attempts to become an airman.

One of my own favourite sequences in this film shows the slumbering Sergeant Major and George in adjacent beds, rhythmically blowing the airborne feather alternatively to one and another. In these far off days long before computer imaging, I really wonder how such tricks were contrived. Likewise, early in the film we see the dog putting on his gas mask after the explosion. I find this both hilarious and remarkable.

After the enthusiastic applause which followed this film, Jon showed us the final 6 minutes or so of "The Friday Show." We saw George playing the three songs which he himself said his audiences always demanded, "The Window Cleaner", "Chinese laundry blues", and of course the song by which is best known and which he made his own, "Leaning on a Lamp-post." In this excerpt, the lovable clown of the previous film was seen 22 years later as the middle aged entertainer, who, although his cheery spirit still shone through, his careworn face clearly showed that he was a man with problems. This was to be George's last appearance on film in the final few months of his life. A most entertaining evening ended with appreciative applause from the audience, and a vote of thanks to Jon for his presentation, and to Pam for her able assistance and support. It turned out nice yet again.

Dis—Harmony—You'd think that a night club that has been running every Saturday for the past 10 years would improve musically week by week. But not the one I went to last week. After a 6 month break I visited it and found that the organ backing was, in fact, more dreadful than it was 10 years ago. And the crowd was oblivious to the din.

Report from Sale by Hilda & Vera

On a cold February evening 40 stalwarts and 4 guests attended the Sale meeting. A new rota for the MCs has been arranged to take some of the load off Cyril. In future there will be three MCs, Dick Eaves, Les Pearson and Brian White, two will share the MCs duties each month and the third will be concert secretary for the evening. Ann Ratcliffe celebrated a 'special' birthday and she and Ken very kindly laid on a buffet for this event.



Vera

Hilda

The proceedings started as usual with a thrash and the M.C. for the first part of the evening was Dick Eaves and brave Eddie Bancroft opened the show with *Licence* and *When I'm Cleaning Windows*, followed by Jack Valentine with *T.T.Races* and *I Wonder Whose Under Her Balcony Now*. David Rhodes did *Blackpool Rock* and *Chinese Laundry Blues*. The only lady entertainer of the evening, Alice Cronshaw, sang the beautiful song *Making Memories* and, after the buffet, the raffle was drawn by Dick in his own inimitable way, helped by Jean.

The second part of the evening commenced with Bobby King, raconteur and entertainer, who gave us an amusing account of his latest T.V. appearances together with a few jokes. Then Alison Nadin performed her wonderful live puppet show, *The Sailor With the Navy Blue Eyes* and Gracie Field's *Little Bottom Drawer*, it's so hard to believe that she is miming – a hard act to follow indeed, but Walter Kirkland stepped into the breach and followed that with *Isle of Man* and a *Bones Medley*. Then Alan Southworth gave us *Broadway Medley* and *Pleasure Cruise*. Next was Cliff Royle with *Little Ukulele in His Hand* and *Swinmin' With The Winnin*, and Brian Edge had us close to tears with *Nobody's Baby* and *Talking to the Moon About You*. Alan Chenery performed Walter Langshaw's *Princess Lulu* and one of his favourites *Wigan Boat Express*. Our crooner, Stan Evans, sang *Anytime You're Feeling Lonely* and *Side by Side*. Another dazzling performance was given by Alan Newton with *Far Better Off in a Home* and the great Neil Diamond number, *Song Sung Blue*. Frank Bennett's *Lonesome Blues* (with Walter playing the bones) was well received.

Cyril Palmer, in his usual dulcet tones, sang *What More Can I Say* and, changing the mood a little, the rousing *Delilah* (with backing group). A lovely rendition of *Whispering*, including the rarely heard verses was given by Alf Caldwell followed by the Lonnie Donegan favourite *Putting on the Style*, Brian White performed *Rawtenstall Annual Fair* with true ukulele accompaniment.



Phil Jones, Ken Ratcliffe and Bryn Evans

Bryn Evans was next with George Harrison's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* and *Hitting the High Spots Now*. Phil Jones hung on until the very last to play his new song *Got a Date With an Angel* and a *Beatle's medley*.

This was a great evening's entertainment and thanks are due to all involved and to all those who travelled many miles to be with us. Cyril announced that for health reasons Alice Cronshaw, the Chairperson, has decided to step down, also Cyril felt that it was time for someone younger to take over his positions of Secretary and Treasurer which he has held for many years. He asked for volunteers to come forward to fill these vacancies in order that the Sale George Formby Society can look forward to continued success in the future. *Thanks Girls. Hee, you do remind me of Minnie and Ena—much before your time.*

Blackpool Monthly Meeting by Alan Chenery

Hi Stan, The roving reporter from Blackpool here. Bar Gum it was a freezing cold night and you wouldn't expect many to brave the frost like they did. However, about 30 turned up and we had another great night. Sheila & Cyril Palmer travelled a distance of at least 140 miles (there and back) to be with us, and it was nice to see Don Horton and his wife again, who have missed a couple of meetings.

On entering the Cricket Club we are always sure of at least three smiling faces greeting us on arrival, - paying our subs and buying raffle tickets.



Eileen on refreshments and Steve's a new M/C

NEW M/C RECRUIT—The evening's first half was fronted by Steve Abbott for the first time and he did a great job of it. Our performers were Charles Stewart, John Mason, Rob Brissett, Cyril Palmer, Alan Middleton, Steve Abbott, Brendan St. John, Paul Kenny, Frank Bennett with 2 of his own monologues, half of The Past Its: Stan Evans & yours truly.

Please jot down on your calendars: 17th July Blackpool Prom 10am - 4pm & 18th July Fleetwood Lord Street 11am - 4.30pm. Regards Stan, love to Eva. *Thanks Alan.*

Tony Bunnel writes—Seeing the name Terretta in issue 105 of the Newsletter brought back happy memories to me. Many moons ago, when I was about seven or eight years of age, I remember attending a Grass Track Meeting. In those days young boys knew it as Daring Men or Special Motor Bikes riding round open fields.

I lived in a village just outside Chester called Huntington and just once there was a Grass Track Meeting.

The motor bike rider who domineered the meeting was called Terretta, an unusual man to me, but it has stuck in my memory ever since that day. I'm now 65. Thanks for the memory. See you at Penyffordd

P.S—A joke for you: "My hotel room was so cold, I opened the wardrobe door and my suit was wearing an overcoat." *Thanks Tony. Keep sending em in.*

JON BADDELEY Emails—I am regularly booked to be at a Residential Home by the name of Richmond Village in Nantwich. Besides other music of the 1930s and 1940s, the residents as well as the staff are really keen on our George.

I will be there in May to present the George Formby Story and the staff say that as it is the Centenary they will be having a George Formby Week with quizzes and film shows—apparently they have their own mini cinema for 15 people and are able to show videos on to the big screen. It's great to know that other organisations will be marking the Centenary in there own way. Do you know of any other similar events that are planned?

'A Night At The Music Hall'

Starring the legendary Danny La Rue

with Multi-instrumentalist Andy Eastwood

Virtuoso harmonica act The Conways

Vocalist Lorrie Brown

Compere Spencer K Gibbins

Plus The David Carter Duo



Isn't it great?

Andy and his uke are 2nd on the bill

- 5 March Camberley Theatre, Camberley
- 6 March Millfield Theatre, London
- 11 March Ferneham Hall Fareham
- 12 March Corn Exchange Theatre, Bedford
- 14 March Palace Theatre, Westcliff-on-Sea
- 19 & 20 March Assembly Rooms, Tamworth
- 31 March Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury
- 1 April Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks
- 7 April Embassy Centre, Skegness
- 9 April Pavilion Theatre, Rhyl
- 10 April Opera House, Buxton
- 11 April Gala Theatre, Durham
- 16 April Coliseum Theatre, Aberdare
- 17 April Civic Hall, Winsford
- 22 April Winter Gardens Theatre, Margate
- 23 April Pavilion Theatre, Worthing
- 24 April Harlequin Theatre, Redhill
- 29th, 30 Apr, 1st May Kenneth More Theatre, Ilford
- 2 May King's Hall Theatre, Herne Bay
- 5 May Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon
- 8 May Garrick Theatre, Lichfield

Searching for songs

from the 1800s for Wigan Pier I was amazed when I read the age of some songs. Here's a few:

- Skip To My Lou 1844 - Shoo Fly 1869
- Blue Tailed Fly 1846 - Kathleen 1876
- Jimmy Cracked Corn 1800
- Camp Town Races 1850
- Down By The Riverside 1865
- John Brown's Body 1861
- Johnny Is My Darling 1865

But the two that top the lot are: - "Bobby Shaftoe" and "Maggie" which were written 254 years ago in 1750. And they are still played today. In fact "Maggie" is a favourite and both are part of medleys that I sing. But I'll bet today's tuneless and lyric-less rubbish won't stand the same test of time.

Alan Randall—It was announced

at Blackpool that he intends holding an exhibition and would welcome anyone to come along to the North Pier and play. It is understood that he intends selling his collection of George Formby memorabilia by auction. Perhaps he feels that he is reaching the end of the road and that this will be his last real opportunity to realise on his GF collection.

Alan's collection mainly consists of items given to him by Pat Howson soon after George's death. She even gave him George's OBE, which might support my theory that there was no love between George and Pat and it was to be a marriage of convenience for both of them.

This is a great opportunity for any GF collectors out there as Alan owns quite a large amount of items: records, photos, Beryl's scrap books, ornaments etc. More news later.

So who's off to Bonny Scotland in July?

Colin and Chris Wood—Alan and Pat Chenery—Stan and Eva Evans—Walter and Alice Alan and Eunice Evans—Jim and Myra Knight—Jack and Margaret Davies—Tony and Marj Elsdén—Derek and Gill Platt—Eve Stewart, Joan Pilkington—Thelma Cartwright Pauline Sparkes—Cliffe and Margaret Royle—Brian and Beryl Fisher—Kay Walsh and Jackie Mullock—Tom and Norah Meredith—Chris and Margaret Volp—Ted and Ruth Kennedy—Paul and Jill Woodhead—Des Redfern—Val and Dorothy Wood—Chrissie Bussingham—Charlie Penman—Peter and Cynthia Whittaker—Bill and Sheila Found Mike and Margaret Sharp.

And what a wonderful crew they are. Our grateful thanks to Christine & Colin Wood and Alan & Pat Chenery for organising the trip.

A Few of Life's Queries by Brian Edge.

- Why the sun lightens our hair, but darkens our skin?
- Why women can't put on mascara with their mouth closed?
- Why "abbreviated" is such a long word?
- Why Doctors call what they do "practice"?
- Why lemon juice is made with artificial flavour,
while dishwashing liquid is made with real lemons?
- Why the man who invests all your money is called a "Broker"?
- Why there isn't mouse flavoured cat food?
- Who tastes dog food when it has a "new & improved" flavour?
- Why they don't make the whole plane out of the material used
for the indestructible black box?
- Why they call the airport "the terminal" if flying is so safe?

Son: *Can I borrow the car dad?*

Dad: *Only if you study your bible and get your hair cut.*

Son: *But Jesus, Noah, Moses and Samson didn't have their hair cut.*

Dad: *That's right, and that's why they walked everywhere*

Here are some actual label instructions on consumer goods.

On a bag of Crisps: You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside.

(The shoplifter special?)

On a bar of Palmolive soap: "Directions: Use like regular soap". *(And that would be how???)*

On Marks & Spencer Bread Pudding: "Product will be hot after heating". *(And you thought????...)*

On Boot's Children Cough Medicine: "Do not drive a car or operate machinery after taking this medication". *(We could do a lot to reduce the rate of construction accidents if we could just get those 5 year olds with head colds off those forklifts.)*

On most brands of Christmas lights: "For indoor or outdoor use only". *(As opposed to... what?)*

On a Japanese food processor: "Not to be used for the other use". *(Now, somebody out there, help me on this. I'm a bit curious.)*

We all need to smile every once in a while.

Les Pearson rang to say that he's just been to The Blackburn Empire and thoroughly enjoyed watching Bobby King and Steve King in Old Mother Riley's Music Hall Show. A good night for only £5.

Winifred Innes Reports from Blackpool

Dear Stan, saw your letter in the Gazette, I've cut it out for you. Only the other day a promotional packet was delivered to Blackpool folk on "What's Happening During 2004" It's nice to see a bit of Honour for George on North Pier from May to November.

There's plenty of Formby lovers around here. I got a surprise phone call from Ala Chenery after him seeing my George Formby letter in the Gazette. He sounds an enthusiastic fan—says he is putting on a show with others at the Lowther Pavilion. It's so good how one man—George Formby—can generate so much love, warmth and inspiration going into years and years after his glory days on earth. Now that's what you call GENIOUS! Take care, keep warm and happy.

Thanks Winifred. Look forward to seeing you at Blackpool

Olwen Gale writes—

Hello Stan, I was watching "Antiques Roadshow" on TV (Sunday Feb 28th) as it came from Wigan and they put a good opening to the programme by introducing "George Formby as a past entertainer who had his roots in the town and how he had vast audiences to listen to him. Also they showed him singing one of his songs and playing his uke. Well Done. *Thanks Olwen. We are getting more George every day in the media. Great Stuff!!!! Hope you are coming to Wigan Pier. Not seen you for months.*



YOUNG CLIFF ROYLE Emails—

Hi Stan, I was intrigued by your comment about the letter from Pamela Terretta-Morris. The letter was provided by one of our Penyffordd supporters Mrs. Pauline Spark (My next door neighbour) who knows the Husband of Pamela; he is a Taxi Driver for District Taxis in Frodsham, although he lives in Wales. Apparently she had talked to Alan Chenery about the matter, and he had been given a typed copy of the original. I assume it was Alan who gave you a copy. There were also photographs of the bike. Understood he was passing this information to the Vellum so perhaps the photo is also there. It is hoped to get this Lady to one of our meetings at Penyffordd. And I thought it was only me with a bad memory. Cliff.

Nay lad, I'm not so bad. The problem is that: I turn up at a meeting with my uke case, carrying bunches of Newsletters, and loads of other stuff, and while I am trying to pay my entrance fee, eager hands are thrusting articles at me. It's great to have so much stuff for the Newsletter but often I don't have chance to remember who handed the articles in.

A Father's Rule—

As you stand in my front hallway, waiting for my daughter to appear, and more than an hour goes by, do not sigh and fidget. If you want to be on time for a film, you should not be dating. My daughter is putting on her make up, a process that can take longer than painting Tower Bridge. Instead of just standing there, why don't you do something useful, like changing the oil in my car.

JON BADDELEY Emails—

For a change, it was nice to sit back at the February Meeting at Wistaston and appreciate all the artists on stage. One of the unsung heroes, no pun intended, is Steve Hassell. His sympathetic drumming enhanced everyone's performance and it certainly adds to the delivery of each song. So, whether he's ON THE BEAT or on the off beat, long may he continue to be an integral part at Wistaston. *Thanks for your Emails Jon.*

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

Fri 21st May 2004—It's Back to the 40s Night at Sale. Bring your Tin Hat, a long rope and a twenty foot ladder. Ring Alice on 0161 727 9829

Sun 23rd May 2004—Grand show to be held at WIGAN PIER - All are invited to George's home town to celebrate George's 100th. Doors open at 1pm and tickets are £2 each (£2.50 on the door) from Stan Evans 01925 727102.

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.

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

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. An Anniversary to be remembered.

Haydock Park Races—As

another tribute to George on his 100th Anniversary, Neil Forshaw has done a fine job in persuading the Haydock Park bosses to name a race day—Friday May 21st—after George Formby. Also for the occasion they have offered a special concession of "Two For The Price of One" £12.

Ebay Auctions—Ebay on the Internet,

is very popular for buying all sorts of stuff from a light bulb to the Tower Bridge, and there's often GF lots for sale. Currently there is a run of Ukulele Chord Mugs which are bringing between £6 and £10 each. (I used to sell Formby Mugs for £1.50)



GEORGE'S STEIN POT—They've just sold a Stein Pot (right) which was presented to George & Beryl by a Unicyclist Juggler. Engraved on the pewter lid it reads: "To Mr & Mrs Formby from Freddy Zay." It was later sold at the 1961 Lytham auction after George's death. Ebay top bid, £67.00
Thanks to Martin Thomas for searching the internet.



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.

Please Ring the Secretary, Sylvia Roe on 01142 846245

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.



LATE NEWS—I signed a TV contract last week.
After paying 36 instalments I keep the set.