

THE

# GEORGE FORMBY

## Newsletter 107

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They're doing  
me proud for  
my 100th  
Anniversary!  
Isn't it grand?

Specially Produced for George Formby Fans  
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# Welcome to Newsletter No. 107

And things are certainly warming up in George's 100th Anniversary Year, which is all leading up to a very busy May.

**STATUE FOR GEORGE**—Once again we've had a very busy month with lots of phone calls and Emails all supporting a statue for George. At the time of typing George was leading the field with 71% of the votes. Kerry McFadden has 21%, Bob The Builder has 2% and Sooty has 5%.

Warrington Guardian are in contact with Graham Hibbertson who sculpted Eric Morecambe's statue. He is a keen Formby fan and he tried to get a contract with Blackpool Council about 20 years ago for a George Formby statue. It has been his ambition to sculpt George.



The town of Morecambe have done Eric proud so why not a statue for George?

Personally I don't mind where the statue is sited: Warrington, Wigan or Blackpool, but unless we publicise the fact that George is worthy of a statue then we'll not get one for him. More news on this in the centre pages.

**STAIN GLASS GEORGE**—Brian Pearce, bless the lad, is a dedicated George Formby fan who, for George's Anniversary wishes to play his part in contributing something. He is a self employed Stained Glass Window maker and supplier, from Birmingham, so his thoughts are to fit a stain glass window in or around Formby Land. Good luck with it Brian.



Brian Pearce

**FRODSHAM CONCERT**—Cliff Royle has certainly been a busy boy getting the show together. In fact he's got more entertainers booked than expected and consequently he's had to cut most of the artists down to one song each. Anyway it looks like a brilliant cast so give Cliff a ring on 01928 731088 for tickets or details. Tickets cost: £3 each and all proceeds go to The Claire House Children's Hospice. Best of luck with your show Cliff.

## Three Cheers For Dennis Lee—I knew he'd do his

darnest to get to Wigan Pier. He's like the little ant that moved a rubber tree plant and once he gets a goal set in his sights he doesn't let go. Well I've just received a phone call from him to say that he's booked his flight and he'll be with us on the day.

Don't forget also the Wedding Anniversary at Leigh the following Sunday. It's a Marquee Do and the cost, including buffet, is £5 — proceeds to a charity fund. Looking forward to seeing you all Dennis.

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A RAFFLE PRIZE FOR WIGAN PIER EVENT WOULD BE APPRECIATED

# Another Vote for George in 2004, George's Anniversary Year.

Andy Eastwood Emails—Hello Stan, Good work with the Warrington statue vote - here's another opportunity to give George a centenary boost!



Radio 2 are running a poll called 'SOLD ON SONG' - they are asking listeners to vote for their favourite song, and they are going to compile the top 100 into a list for a radio programme. I heard the presenter Ken Bruce say the other day that he would jokingly enter **WHEN I'M CLEANING WINDOWS** by **GEORGE FORMBY**, because he didn't think anyone else would vote for it! Let's prove him wrong!

Of course there are half a dozen Formby songs that deserve to be in the top 100 but we must concentrate on just **ONE** to maximise the number of votes - so we need to get as many votes as possible for **WHEN I'M CLEANING WINDOWS** which is possibly the greatest comic song ever.

It will be a plug for George and also a message to the BBC that they are neglecting the music we want to hear!! **COME ON GEORGE! VOTE HERE:**

[www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/soldonsong/top100/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/soldonsong/top100/index.shtml)

Or send a card to "Sold on Song Top 100, BBC Radio 2, London W1A 4WW Simply write on it "When I'm Cleaning Windows" by George Formby. Or you can vote by phone on 08700 100200. All the best :-Andy. [www.andyeastwood.com](http://www.andyeastwood.com)

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**Walter Gee Emailed**—Stan, I am hoping to bring a group of about six to Wigan Pier but only four will fit in the car comfortably. How far is the Wigan Railway Station from Wigan Pier?

Thanks for your Email Walter. I am informed that there are two railway stations in Wigan and both are a five minute walk. Hope to see you on the day.  
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**Missing George Formby Uke.** Now here's a coincidence! I received an Email which originally came from the Northern Echo office. It didn't give any indication of who had lost a George Formby uke but it seems quite a coincidence that about 12 years ago, Alan Randall was touring the country with "Turned Out Nice Again" and he reported to the newspapers that his George Formby uke had either been lost or stolen.

I was editing the Vellum at the time and I spent hours ringing round trying to find this uke. Anyway it brought a lot of newspaper publicity for Alan, who didn't miss the opportunity to plug his show. Well, just when the publicity was dying down, guess what? He found the uke in the back of his car. Now, it so happens that Alan is holding an exhibition at North Pier Blackpool so I wonder if it's the same uke that's gone missing. If so, I suggest he looks in his car boot.

## Jim Robinson's Stage Debut After 62 Years

Ninety-four attended the March Crewe Concert that unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, over-ran considerably. Our apologies for this as on normal nights we do aim to finish as near to eleven o'clock as we possibly can. However as you will well appreciate we never know how many performers are going to turn up on the night. I sincerely thank everybody for bearing with us on this occasion and staying right until the end of the show.

Jonathan Baddeley and Pamela were MC and Concert Producer respectively and they both did a grand job in difficult circumstances. It was good to welcome Alan Chenery and Pat who travelled all the way from Fleetwood to be with us. Alan and Pat have been faithful members of our group for a number of years and even though they have moved away they still visit us regularly.



Our minds are now firmly set on Wednesday the 26th May at 7.30pm. when in the Wistaston Memorial Hall, Jonathan Baddeley will tell us in words and music, the George Formby Story entitled "*The Lancashire lad and His Uke.*" This is followed by one of George's most popular feature length films. For those who don't already know, the 26<sup>th</sup> May would have been George Formby's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The tickets for this event are £2 each and *must* be purchased in advance. So do be sure to get yours at the April meeting, failing which please telephone me on 01270-569836. Two days later on Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> May from 2pm -9pm we are holding an *Exhibition of G.F. Memorabilia* in the side room of the hall (admission free). There will be a wealth of interesting exhibits including one of George's ukuleles that was used in one of his early films. We want as many people as possible to see the Exhibition so please pass the word around, and bring somebody along if you can, light refreshments will be available to visitors to help make it a nice afternoon. So please do your best for us. In the evening we will be holding a Grand Concert and we have arranged for some artistes that you may not have seen before to come along to take part in the show. This is a very special night for us and the fact that a number of guest artistes will be coming I have to say, contrary to my opening remarks in this report, that there is a possibility that the show will go on beyond the usual finishing time.

Thanks to the Management and Staff of "*Cods Kitchen.*" Nantwich Road, Crewe, for their whip round for a bottle of gin for our raffle. So if you like Fish and Chips then do give them a call. Thanks too to Arthur Langdon for so kindly presenting Ashley Caldicott with a trophy engraved "*Ashley. The best Tambourine Player in the George Formby Society.*" I am told that Ashley thought the trophy was so wonderful that he wouldn't let it out of his possession even when it was time for bed! Thanks Arthur it was a very nice thought. Thanks also go to John Collier for so kindly responding to my request for a video player for use at our Exhibition. Thanks John.

It was great to see Jim Robinson's debut on stage, according to Jim it is 62 years since he got his uke. Jim makes his way to our concerts all the way from Wirral and after the show stays with his daughter in nearby Haslington. It was a good performance Jim. There will be no stopping him now!

Those performing (not in any order) were: Ensemble - Thrash. Steve Hassall - "Jazz Medley (Everybody loves my Baby accompanied by Jonathan (clarinet) and Alan Newton (trombone)" Cliff Royle - "Uncle Joes Mint Balls " and "Fifty percent of its mine."

Connie Edge – “Bless ‘em All.” And “Living in the middle of Trafalgar Square.” Brian Edge – “Fearless Fred the Fireman,” Pamela Baddeley – “Al Jolson Medley” & “Around the World” Alan Newton - “Springtime’s Here Again” and “Get me to the Church on Time” Our Jazz Band - “Some of These Days” and “You Can’t Stop Me from Dreaming.” Alison Nadin – “ I’m a Bird - I’m a Bird!” The Three Tenors “Strolling Medley” & Blackpool Belle” Stan Evans and Stan Watkinson – “Baby” and “The Fields of Athenry.” Ashley Caldicott and his friend Stan - “Knees up Mother Brown,” Alan Cheney and Colin Wood - “Windows,” Walter Kirkland “Aint she Sweet Medley” and a Bones Bash. Gareth Sumner – They Can’t Fool Me” and “Auntie Maggie’s Remedy.” Don Chalkley “I went all Hot and Cold” & “Pleasure Cruise. Colin Dean (Crewe debut-vocal) “Please Release Me ” & “The Green Green Grass of Home.” Jim Robinson (Stage Debut) “Leaning on a Lamp post.” Tom Meredith (vocal) “I’ve Got You Under My Skin” & “My Way.” Greg Simister “ Hindoo Man” and “The Home Guard Blues.” Alan Cheney - “When I Play My Ukulele” & “The Wigan Boat Express.” Vera Jones “Over My Shoulder” & “Sunny Side of the Street.” Jim Knight “You don’t need a Licence for That” and a bones medley. Jonathan Baddeley rounded off the show with two George Formby Numbers. Ensemble – Thrash. *Thanks Brian. Young Gareth Sumner has certainly progressed over the years. He’s a wonderful player.*

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## Not Every Warringtonian Agrees!

THOUGH I am impressed to see that the George Formby appreciation society managed to rally all six of their members in time for last week’s letter-writing campaign, I do feel that a voice of opposition is needed.

Someone needs to speak in favour of Mrs McFadden, who was so quickly and cursorily dismissed and outline the reasons why it is she who is the more deserving of having her bronze likeness plonked in the middle of a roundabout.

First there is the aesthetic argument: a statue is a work of art after all. So the more aesthetically-pleasing it is the better. Please take a look at photographs of Kerry McFadden and George Formby.

Secondly, I really have to question the argument that says Kerry is a flash-in-the-pan character while George Formby is a timeless artist comparable to Lonnie Donnegan.

The question is asked of whether Kerry will be remembered in 100 years’ time, but no-one is asking whether Formby will weather this any better.

I do not think that he has the gravitas to capture the imaginations of future genera-

tions, or at least those who have not experienced blackouts and rationing. Yes, young people might just about know who he is, but can any of them, any meaningful number of them, name a single Formby song or film? I know I can’t.

Kerry — already a household name in the town — has the advantage over George in that she is still alive and therefore capable of achieving further things. She has also dabbled in enough varied media to suggest that she is not going to suddenly vanish from our televisions or air-waves tomorrow. And even if she does, then her statue remains as a symbol to Warrington youth of what can be accomplished even when one comes from a small northern town.

Somehow I don’t think that George Formby would be such an inspirational figure...

I can’t say I’m convinced that Formby had strong enough connections with the town to warrant this honour.

The best argument so far seems to be that his family lived here — something that hardly compares with life-long Warringtonians like Kerry.

Indeed, not only is Kerry Warrington born and bred, but after her *I’m a Celebrity* victory she showed us that she still cares about the old town and is willing to come back here and donate money to local charities. Compare this to Formby, who lived in the general area and might have visited the town once or twice — while he was still breathing, I mean.

Of the three people who wrote in last week in favour of a Formby statue and left their addresses, not a single one was from Warrington. Are these the best people to judge who our town honours?

Finally, there is the symbolic question of what Warrington means to us and where our town is headed. Is Warrington a youthful, vibrant place where a young person is capable of going from a humble background to achieving national prominence?

So let’s build a statue for Warrington, and not just for a small group of George Formby fans. Unless they are willing to pay for it, of course.

RICHARD MAGRATH  
Cinnamon Brow

## News from N. Wales by Super Cliff



Spring was certainly in the air at this meeting, for the Reception Committee comprised two beautiful young ladies wearing fantastic Easter bonnets. Who were they? Yes our Lady Bouncers Myra and Margaret Ladies you looked wonderful and really brightened up our evening. We had a few less performers than normal, but still a good audience; some old faces, and a few new ones. Delighted to have John Frost and his Wife with us from Ewloe. Apparently they walked into a Centre in Cyprus where they heard ukes being played at one of Dennis Lee's practice sessions. They enjoyed it so much and were amazed when Dennis told them about our meetings which are not far from where they live. You just cannot get away from Dennis's influence.

There were a number of Birthdays to celebrate, too many to mention in detail, but in spite of being highlighted with a balloon Connie Edge's Happy day was almost overlooked. We do not know what is happening to our lady entertainers, but it transpired that three of them were a little under the weather, and so were unable to perform. It was left to Pamela Baddeley to fly the flag for them with firstly a Jazz Medley of old songs accompanied by Jonathan on the clarinet, and later in the evening with "When I Fall In Love". Is that the secret of being healthy? Anyway Ladies we hope you all recover soon, but thanks for your support anyway.

So what about the chaps? Alan Chenery started off the evening with "Window Cleaner" and "When I Play My Uke", and was followed by self with "Little Ukulele" and "Putting On The Style". Walter Kirkland was next with "Ain't She Sweet", then he was joined by the noisy gang playing the "Bones". There was then a change of tempo with Jonathan Baddeley playing "Spotting On The Top Of Blackpool Tower" and "Happy Go Lucky Me". We congratulate Jonathan on being accepted as a Member of EQUITY, the performers "Union". A good uplift for the North West. Tom Meredith mimed a couple of Al Jolson numbers which came over quite well, although Tom said he did not feel happy with his performance.

A chap came on in a yellow waistcoat and sang "Springtime's Here Again". It was Alan Newton. He seemed worried that he was going to miss his Fish and Chips which he could smell coming from the "Canteen" and his songs were accompanied by a bit of barracking about being a canary. Not to be outdone when he came to leave the stage he said "I'm going back to sit on my perch for a few minutes". Good for you Alan. Beat the barrackers!



Like a couple of Love Birds, Marje & Tony Elsdon

Sorry Alan in all the back-chat I missed the title of your second song. Humour continued with Brian Edge singing "Let's Have A Ride on Your Bike"; a really catchy song, and to finish the first half Gerald Jones (Jones the Uke) twiddled his way through "They Laughed When I Started to Play" and the unusual "My Wife Is Bingo Crazy". A great little song.

During the interval it was announced that George Formby had been voted as the winner

of the "competition" organised by the Warrington Guardian to have a statue of him erected on Brian Bevan Island in Warrington. No doubt Stan Evans will be writing more on this topic.

The second half commenced with the Three Tenors in gaudy rig out playing a "Medley Of Songs", and "Blackpool Belle" which always goes down well, and then young Daniel came on the stage to perform a Formby Medley. He probably got the best ovation of the night. Yes he has really come on well, and Granddad Phil must be really proud of him. Daniel probably did not realise that in the final THRASH it was noted that he knew many of the words and was doing very well with the chords. Well done Daniel. Oh to be young again! Here of course I should also mention our other up and coming star Ryan (Grandson of Eric Morris) who attends our practice sessions and is progressing very well. Keep it up lads. Jim Knight followed with "You Don't Need A Licence" and then accompanied by his fellow players did a Bones Session which had a couple of false finishes. Still it all makes for a bit of laughter.

Being a bit short of performers the unusual step was taken of giving the audience "two for the price of one". So everyone got a second chance. Jonathan played "Blackpool Rock"; Brian "Wigan Pier"; Pamela (already mentioned); Walter "Isle of Man", and accompanied by his Bones Ensemble "Tijuana Taxi" (this always goes down well; Alan Newton "Trailing Around In A Trailer" and "Find Yourself Somebody to Love"; Tom Meredith "Lancashire Toreador" and "War Medley"; Gerald Jones "We Are All George Formby Fans" and another of his unusual songs, and Alan Chenery with "Wigan Boat Express" and "Little back Room Upstairs". In both songs he was accompanied by Jonathan on his Clarinet and Walter on the Bones, and myself in "Little Back Room Upstairs". This stops us falling out about who should play this song, which was initially played by Alan. So came the Final THRASH to end another great evening.

*Thanks Cliff. Sounds like you had another great night.*

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## Late News from the Internet.

**George is an Easy Winner!** AFTER a full month of voting we can finally announce the winner of our web vote as to who should grace the roundabout where Brian Bevan once stood. Despite taking Padgate pop princess Kerry McFadden to our hearts during her jungle antics she could only manage second place in a contest that had Warrington Guardian readers voting from as far away as Russia.

Picking up just 21 per cent of the vote, Kerry was beaten handsomely by the former Stockton Heath resident and cheeky Lancashire lad George Formby, who took an impressive 72 per cent of the vote, while children's favourite Sooty notched up a respectable third place with four per cent. A life size sculpture of George including plinth, would cost



around £40,000 – it would have to be paid for by whoever commissioned the statue. But with 229 people casting their vote in favour of seeing a permanent tribute to George erected in the town that equates to just a £153 donation from each voter. Would you be willing to donate money to see the statue erected in Warrington?

Email [je Carroll@guardiangrp.co.uk](mailto:je Carroll@guardiangrp.co.uk) or alternatively ring Jenni Carroll on 01925 434 112 with your views. SO IF YOU'VE ANY IDEAS ON RAISING FUNDS LET'S HAVE EM.

# Trip To Digswell—by Stan Evans. For

years I've threatened to pay a visit to the village of Digswell, which is where the Ukulele Society of Great Britain holds their meetings. I've heard so much about them and their wonderful meetings so, along with Stan Watkinson and Bob Muirhead, we set off at 8am on Sunday the 4th of April. The journey is a round trip of 400 miles so we took flasks and sandwiches to save time stopping at cafes. The M6 and M1 Motorways are usually packed with vehicles, and road works but, being Sunday morning, the roads were completely clear.



Friendly M/C Ray Neal

Our first stop was at Janet Hawkin's house in Milton Keynes to collect Janet and Christine Booth (Wife of the late Jeffrey—George's nephew). After a quick cup of tea we set off again to the Digswell Village Hall, where Janet and Christine have attended on a number of occasions. The girls did a grand job in guiding us through the narrow country lanes and we eventually arrived at our venue for the day.

Walking into the village hall was like stepping into the past for me personally. There were many friendly faces all ready to greet us with a smile and several old GFS members that I hadn't seen for some years: Bill Denver, John Croft, Bob Hodson, Ray Neal, Fred Pearson, Geoff Osborne, Glad Geoghean, Paul Culkin, Peter Denmark, and Reg & Ruth Goldsmith and more.



Hard working Editor Bob Hodson

**RAY BERNARD**—John Croft informed the members that Ray Bernard was unable to attend due to having suffered a slight heart attack. They all wished him well for the future. The village hall was packed with every seat taken and the medium sized stage was filled with instruments, Bass, Drums, Piano, Guitars, Banjos, Mandolin, Mikes, Amps etc.

What a thoughtful bunch they are. After a £3 entry fee, we started with free sandwiches and tea, which lubricated the tonsils for the concert. Ray Neal, what a friendly chap, was the MC for the day and he soon made everyone feel welcome.

There was certainly no shortage of artistes and I was impressed when they invited on stage a variety of acts, ranging from a home made One-Man-Band, to George Formby. It appeared that there was no limit to what you performed as long as it was musically entertaining.

There was just one slight disappointment. Here in the N. West most of us rely entirely on pre-made Backing Discs, which enhance our performances considerably. Gladys Geoghean and Alan Evans both took along portable mini disc players but unfortunately they didn't link into the system. However, we paddled through and hopefully hit the right notes. Our little group is looking forward to the next meeting at Digswell. For details on Digswell ring Fred Pearson, Secretary, on 020 8960 0459.

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**N. WALES** are playing at the Llandudno Extravaganza on 1st 2nd and 3rd May, from about 11 a.m to 4 PM each day. Ticket sales for the Frodsham Centenary Concert on 15th May are going well. The hall seats 300, and so far over half are sold. So make sure of your tickets now (price £3). Ring me on 01928 731088. There will be a Bar.





**Busty Kerry McFadden's** home town shocked her yesterday by rejecting plans to put up her statue. Instead the townsfolk want to honour old time music hall comic George Formby. Kerry, 23, was thrilled to return from her "I'm A Celebrity telly triumph to learn she was going to be immortalised in bronze. But the plan caused outrage. Residents even threatened to leave rather than see her gigantic bust on the town's main roundabout.

Kerry's mum, Susan Katona, hit out at the move to dump her former Atomic Kitten daughter. She admitted: "There are a lot of old fuddy duddies in the town who have probably never heard of Kerry, let alone watched I'm A Celebrity, on the other hand there are a lot of youngsters who idolise Kerry and have never heard of George Formby. Everyone knows where Kerry is from and she's proud to be an ambassador for Warrington."

Kerry said, "To have a statue of me at the centre of Warrington would be the best gift I have ever received. I'm very humble but to be honest I find the idea a bit hilarious and embarrassing."

Ukulele strumming George Formby—catchphrase "Turned out nice again—who wowed fans with ditties such as *Leaning On A Lamp Post*, died in 1961 and is buried in Warrington.

Today the council stressed they had not officially decided who they are going to immortalise. But Coun Karen Mundry claimed a statue of Kerry would be a waste of money and in a few year's time nobody will have a clue who Kerry is. "A statue requires a great deal of money and it must be somebody who will be remembered for centuries. Kerry is not that person."

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A "UKES FOR SALE" TABLE WILL BE SET UP AT WIGAN PIER.

Overwhelming support for statue of screen legend Formby in the town



# Turned out nice again for George!

Words: JENNI CARROLL Picture: DAVE GILLESPIE

BY George we didn't expect this! Our readers overwhelmingly tell us they want screen legend George Formby's statue to grace Brian Bevan Island.

We've even got the support of renowned portrait sculptor Graham Ibbeson, best known for his life-sized bronze statue of Eric Morecambe. He has said he would be delighted to create a sculpture of George Formby in Warrington. The Eric Morecambe statue has single-handedly turned around the tourism fortunes of the Lancashire seaside town where the comedian was born.

Now hopes are high that a similar statue could do the same for Warrington.

Mr Ibbeson said: "I heard mention of a statue of George Formby and I nearly wet myself. "I've always wanted to do a statue of George Formby, even before I did the one of Eric. He is one of my all time heroes it would be one of my life's ambitions to do the statue."

And it seems the Brian Bevan Island location is ideal as

George's mum and brother once lived on Wilderspool Causeway.

George's nephew Jeff Formby Booth died earlier this month and his widow, Christine Booth, contacted the *Guardian*. She said: "Jeffrey would have been top of the list backing this campaign to get a statue erected in George's honour. He would have been over the moon."

And Penketh resident Stan Evans, editor of the George Formby newsletter, said: "George has got fans all over the world. A statue in his 100th anniversary year would be perfect."

A life-sized statue of George would cost around £35,000, not including the plinth. Mr Ibbeson is currently creating a statue of Laurel and Hardy for Ulverston and has also completed a statue of Cary Grant to be erected in Bristol.

New development on the roundabout would need permission from the borough council. A spokesman said: "Any new planning application would be looked at on its own individual merits."

## Always be remembered

WHO on the list will be remembered and worshipped as long as George Formby? If in doubt come to a George Formby convention held four times a year in the Winter Gardens, Blackpool. You will meet hundreds of followers all ages, from all over the world. This year is a special celebration. His statue will do Warrington proud  
MAC MCGEE  
Armley Grange Rise, Leeds

## Known the world over

THE voting for a statue on Brian Bevan Island is not really a fair selection as mostly young people use the net and will vote for current celebs.

In 10 years from now no one will remember who Kerry McFadden was, whereas George Formby is known the world over and there are still Formby societies in Australia, Holland, Cyprus and several in England, 43 years after his death.

D M HORTON  
By e-mail

## Attract more visitors

IF Gorge Formby is selected for the statue then maybe we can add a picture of it to our website which is visited ever day by hundreds of people from all over the world - [www.george-formby.co.uk](http://www.george-formby.co.uk). Take a look it may convince you of the popularity of George Formby.

The George Formby statue would definitely attract more visitors to your town.

NEVILLE ROE  
E Mail

## Late News

George has won the vote but where do we go to from here?

- Geoff Shryhane, Wigan news reporter isn't pleased

because for many years he has campaigned for statue of George in Wigan, George's birth town, and once again

Warrington has pipped them to the post.

Well, who knows, we might finish up with two

George Formby statues

Late News : - George Has Won!

# Warrington Guardian

FAN'S VOTES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

There has been a huge response to our poll asking who you thought should grace the roundabout at Wilderspool Causeway. We have had calls and Emails from fans from as far as Australia, Russia, Sweden and Cyprus who all wanted to have their say.

And it is the smiling Lancashire Lad and former Stockton Heath resident, George Formby who is leading the race with 59 per cent of the votes. His closest rival is Queen of the jungle, Kerry McFadden who has received 33 per cent.

We have set up a dedicated web site for people to cast their votes at: [www.thisiswarrington.co.uk](http://www.thisiswarrington.co.uk) or ring Jenni Carroll on 01925 434112 or write to: Warrington Guardian, Academy House, Warrington WA1 2RU When the poll was little over a week old we had received over 1,000 votes. Please keep on voting.



## Home for George

I WOULD like Warrington Borough Council to consider a statue of George Formby to be positioned on the roundabout at Wilderspool to replace the Brian Bevan statue.

George Formby won an OBE for his war service and starred in 22 films. He still has a music society which meets regularly in Blackpool and has members from all over the UK and abroad.

This Society was formed after his death in 1961 and is still going strong.

Hope that this request is considered favourably.  
THOMAS and PAT RALSTON  
Waterways, Great Sankey

## Given years of happiness

SURELY there is really no competition, the winner has to be George Formby. He has given years of happiness and fun to thousands of people, the rest are just flashes in the proverbial pan.

B CORDINGLEY  
Hazel Grove, Stockport

## Statue would be a fitting tribute to George Formby

THE principal choices for a statue at Brivan Bevan Island appear to be between George Formby and Kerry McFadden. Surely there is no contest. George Formby was such a popular star to millions of people in the 30s and 40s and his music, although no longer fashionable, brought people pleasure in such austere times.

George is remembered for his cheerful, cheeky songs and rather clumsy acting style. How many people know of his

## George Put Lancs on the map

GEORGE Formby is the only possible contender for a statue. He and his father George Formby senior put Lancashire on the map as far as entertainment is concerned.

Even today, in the centenary of George Formby, parties, shows and exhibitions are being held in his honour.

The OBE he received from the King tells us how much the country loved George. Warrington has now got a golden opportunity to show the world what they think of this great entertainer.

NEVILLE ROE  
By e-mail

## Best choice

I WOULD say that George Formby would be by far the best choice for the statue in Warrington. George would be 100 years old this year and he was loved by all the people in the UK. The Formby family did live in Warrington, so I say yes to a statue of good old George.

GEORGE TYRER  
By e-mail

war efforts travelling far and wide to entertain the troops and his unsung charity work? In the 100th year of the anniversary of his birth, a statue to his memory would be a very fitting tribute to one of Britain's most enduring characters.

I wonder, as charming though Mrs McFadden is, will she be so fondly remembered in 100 years time?

ROGER FRANCIS  
Wolverhampton

## Peter Worsley writes to the Warrington Guardian

I note your comments to erect a statue on Brian Bevan Island. Presumably you must have an image of that great rugby league winger but I have never heard of Kerry McFadden, Steven Broomhead or Pete Postlethwaite. I assume they must be media stars who appeal to a younger generation.

George Formby, on the other hand, was by far the biggest pre-war male film star that our country ever produced and was the first entertainer to follow troops into north Africa, Italy and the D Day landings in Europe.

Although banned from playing and singing at the front line (Because the enemy were within hearing distance) he nevertheless insisted in crawling along the trenches and encouraging everyone with his big toothy grin, which caused gasps of amazement from the soldiers when they saw him. Now that takes real courage and I humbly suggest that he is a far more deserving candidate than modern celebrities who are forgotten just as quickly as they arrive.

Harry Corbett of Sooty fame was a proud Yorkshireman, but George Formby is a true Lancastrian, which is how I still imagine Warrington to be. None of this silly boundary change nonsense.

I am a Mancunian, who was brought up in Lancashire, not Greater Manchester. I believe the only other statue of George is in the Isle Of Man so if you do erect one it will be a real poke in the eye for his birthplace, Wigan! Go on, I dare you. Peter Worsley  
*Our thanks go to Peter and to all who support this campaign to have George honoured with a statue.*

## Rules For Teachers in 1915—the year when George was 11.

Copied from an Australian notice board and sent in by George Tyrer

- You will NOT marry during the term of your contract
- You are NOT to keep the company of men
- You MUST be home between the hours of 8pm and 6am unless attending a school function
- You MAY NOT loiter downtown in ice cream stores
- You MAY NOT travel beyond the city limits without the permission of the chairman
- You MAY NOT travel in a carriage in the presence of a man unless he is your father or brother
- You MAY NOT smoke cigarettes
- You MAY NOT dress in bright colours
- You may UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES dye your hair
- You must wear AT LEAST two petticoats
- Your dresses must NOT be any shorter than two inches above the ankle
- To keep the schoolroom clean you must:
  - sweep the floor at least once daily
  - scrub the floor with hot soapy water at least once a week
  - clean the blackboard at least once a day
  - start the fire by 7am so that the room will be warm by 8am.

*Thanks George. I'll try some of these rules out on Eva and let you know how I go on.*

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HAVE YOU BOUGHT YOUR WIGAN PIER TICKET YET—£2 each.

## The Sale Meeting by Hilda & Vera

The evening commenced with Cyril reporting on the response to the appeal for a new Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. Jean Brannan had kindly offered to take over the role of Chairperson, Marjorie Travis would be the new Treasurer and Cyril would remain as Secretary and continue to take care of the sound equipment. Alice Cronshaw was thanked for all her hard work over the years and Cyril had prepared copies of the financial statement for the past year, which was very healthy indeed. He also said that he had sent a sympathy card to the family of Celia Petch, widow of Arthur Logan Petch, who had recently died. It was also interesting to note that there had been an announcement in the



Vera

Hilda

Manchester Evening News of George Formby's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The concert commenced with the usual Thrash, and with Brian White as M.C. for the first part of the evening, a very confident Eddie Bancroft opened the show with *Lancashire Toreador* and *Windows*, followed by Pam Baddeley with a delightful *Al Jolson Medley* and then, with Jonathan on the clarinet, *Around the World*. Jim Knight played *Get Cracking* and, accompanied by a trio of bones players, Walter Kirkland, Frank Humphries and Alan Chenery, *Twelfth Street Rag*. Alan Chenery



Marjorie is Treasurer



Jean's In The Chair

was in his *Little Back Room Upstairs* and, with Jon Baddeley, played *Windows*. Frank Humphries put away his bones and uke and sang *Bring Me Sunshine* and *The Wonder of You*. Next was Alison Nadin with her puppet show, this time it was Daisy, a very cheeky birdie. Alison's performances are always very well received and a gentle relief from the uke playing. Jack Valentine then performed *Margie* and *It's a Grand and Healthy Life*. Alice Cronshaw followed with *You Made Me Love You and Smile*.

Tea and biscuits were served by Alice during the interval and Jean, assisted by David Rhodes, drew the raffle. Les Pearson was the M.C. for the second part of the evening. Jon Baddeley opened the second half with *Running Round the Fountains in Trafalgar Square* and *I Wish I Was Back on The Farm* followed by Margaret Moran with the lovely *Homing Waltz* and, with Jonathan playing the clarinet, *I Only Have Eyes For You*. Walter Kirkland sang and played a *Medley*, followed by a *Bones Medley*. Next was Bryn Evans with *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* and *Wunga Bunga Boo*. The inimitable Ged Collins then played a 'penny whistle' to an *Irish Jig* and sang *Bianca*. Phil Jones followed that with *Change Partners and Dance* and *Cheek to Cheek*. Arthur Newton played *Hindoo Man* and *Nine O'clock* followed by Cyril Palmer who serenaded us with *Hula Heaven* and *I'll See You in My Dreams*. Stan Evans sang Issy Bonn's *Daddy's Little Girl* and, with Margaret Moran, *I Could Have Danced All Night* from *My Fair Lady*. Alan Southworth followed with, *Fanlight Fanny* and *Trailing Around in a Trailer*. David Rhodes very confidently sang *Our Sergeant Major* and *Wigan Boat Express*. Brian White, one of our Lancashire lads, performed *Wigan Pier* and *Auntie Maggie's Remedy*. Ged Collins rounded off the evening with the rousing *My Grannie's Got a Gun in Her Handbag*, a special request, followed by another Thrash. Thank you to all concerned in making this another very enjoyable and entertaining evening. *And thanks ladies for your report. Hee you do remind me of The Dolly Sisters.*

## Les Pearson has Just Phoned

At the Sale Meeting on May 21st they are holding a WAR THEME NIGHT in honour of George's 100th. So he rang to say, "Don't forget to come dressed in War Uniform or 1940s clothing (*some do already*): Starched Shirt, Loose Collar and Stud, Gas Mask, Tin Hat, Stirrup Pump, 20 foot Ladder etc.



Here's Bobby all dressed ready for the War Theme Night at Sale.

**BOBBY KING**—Now and then our old friend Bobby King pops into the Sale meeting. There's no doubt about it but Bobby is a great chap and a fine entertainer, and, apart from his spell in the forces it could be said that he's been in show business all his life. When Alan Randall toured with Turned Out Nice Again, Bobby played the part of George's valet, Harry Scott.

Bobby (83) is the sort of chap who lights up a room when he walks in. Always game for a laugh. He is a very keen George Formby fan who joined the society during 1961 when it was first formed.

He always enjoys a good chat, especially if it's anything to do with Music Hall, so here's his phone number 0161 740 0614.

## Billy Uke Scott

Earlier on we had a query on how many songs Billy has written so Alan Southworth has kindly searched the information out: -

Christopher Columbus - Down By The Old Turn Stile - Ginger - Give Me The Chance To Be Twenty Again - Good Looking Girl - Great Oaks From Little Acorns - One Of The Guests From The Guest House - Hero In The Family - I Do Like Sitting In The Window - I'm Giving Lessons - I've Got A Girlfriend - Learning To Play - Million Little Raindrops - Nice Prefabricated Home - Nice Young Man - Night Is Alive With Magic - No Wonder, Stay Young - Ragtime, They're Bringing Back - Susan - Ukulele Rumba - You Go On With Your Show - You Make Me So Sorry - Plus: The Bank Of Sunshine and Paradise Street which were written for the Max Bygraves radio series (Paradise Street). *Thanks for the information Alan.*



Billy Uke Scott

## Walter Langshaw

—Somebody was asking who Walter Langshaw was because his name is mentioned quite often at the Sale Meeting. Well this is dear Walter who, unfortunately, can't get down to the meetings now. Rob Davidson used to bring him each month but Bob has been out of circulation for the past two years due to illness.



Walter wrote some great songs which are often sung at the meetings: The Bowler Hat My Granddad Left To Me, - Fred The Fearless Fireman, - Robin Hood and His Merry Men, - The Lancashire Lad and His Uke, and Princess Lulu to name a few.

I've just phoned Rob and he hopes to bring Walter to the Wigan Pier event on May 23rd. We all send our best regards and look forward to seeing them both.

**From Anatoly Uvarov in Russia**—Dear Stan, I am very glad that George has won. Accept please my congratulations, I wish success to your Summer George's Festival. Very sincerely yours, Anatoly  
*That's kind of Anatoly to take interest in a statue for George.*

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## Bob Muirhead's Philosophy



- Never slap a man who's chewing tobacco.
- Never kick a cow pat on a hot day.
- Always drink upstream from the herd.
- If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.
- There are two theories to arguing with a woman...neither works.
- The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back in your pocket.
- Good judgment comes from experience and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
- Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back.
- After eating an entire bull, a mountain lion felt so good he started roaring. He kept it up until a hunter came along and shot him. The moral: When you're full of bull, keep your mouth shut

### ABOUT GROWING OLDER...

- First ~ Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.
- Second - The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.
- Third - When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to school, think of Algebra.
- Fourth -You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.
- Fifth - I'm over the hill but I don't remember getting to the top.
- Sixth - One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young.
- Seventh — Being young is beautiful but being old is comfortable.
- Eighth ~ Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks it was called witchcraft. Today it's called golf.
- And finally ~ If you don't learn to laugh at trouble, you won't have anything to laugh at when you are old.

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**And There's More from Bob.**—A dizzy blonde called 999 on her mobile phone to report that her car has been broken into. She is hysterical as she explains her situation to the operator: "They've stolen the stereo, the steering wheel, the brake pedal and even the accelerator!" she cried. The operator said, "Stay calm, an officer is on the way." A few minutes later, the officer radios in. "False alarm, she's sat in the back seat."

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An older couple were lying in bed one night. The husband was falling asleep but the wife was in a romantic mood and wanted to talk. She said: "You used to hold my hand when we were courting." Warily he reached across, held her hand for a second, and tried to get back to sleep. A few moments later she said: "Then you used to kiss me." Mildly irritated, he reached across, gave her a peck on the cheek and settled down to sleep. Thirty seconds later she said: "Then you used to bite my neck." Angrily, he threw back the bed clothes and got out of bed. "Where are you going?" she asked. "To get my teeth!"

## Disaster Duo at Blackpool by Alan Chenery - Hi Stan,

Another good night at Blackpool with Alan Middleton doing the MC's job.

It was a treat to see Des Redfern and John Taylor performing together on stage and anyone would think they had a comedy spot going. But, spending the first 10 minutes searching for the right disc, - and then the backing track, - to the heckles of the audience, is all genuine stuff. Anyone would think it was all rehearsed, but it wasn't. My goodness, I wouldn't like the job of managing them. It would be a nightmare!

First on the bill was The Pastits—Well & Truly: Stan Evans & Stan Watkinson, Alan Chenery, Steve Abbott, Des Redfern (aka Les Battersby), and our very own song bird Fran Collins, who has come a long way since she jumped up on stage as a child, some years back, and impersonated almost the whole cast of Coronation Street.

There were about 30 people who brought along a few new faces - some of the regulars must have been away. The buffet was up to its usual top standard, and manning the door with their cheerful smiling faces were Eve Stewart & Pat Chenery and a mention to our sound engineer Charles Stewart, Every body had a good night.

## Alan Evans sent in an article by Peter Melton from The British

Music Hall Society Magazine— I had noticed that when George Formby junior's name is mentioned, it was sometimes just Booth and at other times Hoy—Booth. When I was in the public records office looking up an ancestor, I decided to pull George's birth certificate. This revealed that his Christian names were George Hoy, obviously after his mother Eliza Hoy and his surname Booth.



Alan & Eunice

However this through up another enigma. It lists his father's occupation as "Small Ware Dealer". Now we know that his father, James Booth also had a stage name George Formby. According to my books he worked in a foundry at the age of 12 which ruined his health. But he worked as an entertainer from an early age and married in 1900. He was an established music hall star when George junior was born in 1904 so I would expect his occupation to be listed as "Entertainer" No one that I have spoken to knows what a small ware dealer was, can anyone help?

*Thanks Alan. It is a bit of a mystery why he registered as a dealer. The only guess I could come up with was that his in-laws were not happy at Eliza marrying an entertainer as they felt that it was an insecure job. However, they got on well when they discovered that he had an interest in racehorses. Maybe James (GF senior) played the entertainer role down a bit and told them that his main occupation was as a dealer. Anyone got a better answer?*

AND THERE'S MORE—Alan & Eunice went to see a show by The Ukulele Society Of Great Britain and recommend going to see it if it reaches your area. The only GF song they sang was "Lenin On A Lamp Post" depicting George as a Russian playing to a Soviet audience under the old regime. It was brilliant and the ukes sounded like balalaikas. It is a show full of brilliant playing. *Thanks A & E.*



## Brian Edge Wants to Know

1. Why does your gynaecologist leave the room when you get undressed?
2. Why is it called Alcoholics Anonymous when the first thing you do is stand up and say, 'My name is Bob, and I am an alcoholic'?
3. Why does bottled mineral water that 'has trickled through mountains for centuries' have a 'use by' date?
4. Why are they called stairs inside but steps outside?
5. Why is there a light in the fridge and not in the freezer?
6. What do people in China call their good plates?
7. What do you call male ballerinas?
8. If quizzes are quizzicals, what are tests?
9. How do the BBC know when I'm driving under a bridge?
10. If you lived in Coventry, where would they send you to?

### THREE FOR A POUND

From Hilda Southworth

The old man walked to the local press  
 To ask how much the cost  
 For placing an obituary  
 As his dear wife he had lost.

"Three words per pound is 'going rate'",  
 The clerk in one breath said.  
 "In that case", sighed the frail old man.  
 "I'll just say: 'Wife is dead'".

"Is that it, sir?" She spoke, surprised.  
 The old man looked around  
 And with a sigh, said in reply:  
 "Well, I only have one pound."

The clerk did pause to think a while  
 For pity she did feel;  
 So for his pound she offered him  
 A six-word special deal.

The old man stroked his chin and thought,  
 Then chewed his finger nail,  
 And with faith anew, he beamed, "Thank you".  
 "Doris dead, Ford Fiesta for sale!"

### No Stein Mug for John Shreeve

You remember George & Beryl's Stein Mug that was offered for auction on Ebay in last month's Newsletter. Well, John Shreeve was very disappointed when, after keeping the bidding going, he was pipped at the final post. It brought £67. I've just received a phone call from Martin Thomas who tells me that he was the bidder who nipped in at the end and finally bought it.

### From Jack & Ann Bolton Stan, A few one -liners for the Newsletter .

1, You know you're getting old when everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work.

2, Middle age is when anything new you feel is likely to be a symptom.

3, Middle age is when your age starts showing around your middle.

4, You stoop to tie your shoe laces and ask yourself..... "what else can I do while I'm down here."

5, Middle age is.....when you are warned to slow down by a doctor instead of a police officer.

**CREWE MEETING MAY 28th**  
 Jon Baddeley wishes to remind you that this particular meeting is for **Formby Songs only.**  
 How many different Formby songs can we sing on the night?  
 This doesn't effect vocal only artistes or special supporting acts.

## 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—A Tribute to Jack Jones 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.

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## News for Happy Trippers to Scotland

Chris Wood has just phoned to say that Insurance for the Scotland Trip is not compulsory as it is with foreign trips. So please pass it on to any of the trippers. It'll save postage.



Chris Wood



Well Chris, we are going to thoroughly enjoy this trip to Scotland and I hope we can have a run out to Glencoe while we are there. Anyone who's not been to Glencoe is missing an experience of a life time. It must have the most beautiful scenery in the world, without doubt. All the highlands are beautiful but I think Glencoe tops the lot. So eerie you can almost sense

the battles and massacres that went on in the mid 1600s between the Campbells and the MacDonald's.

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**Jazz Weekend**—Once again the South Cheshire Ukulele Society are appearing at the Crown Hotel, Crewe. The date is Sunday April 11th, from 1pm, and they always play to packed houses. All proceeds go to a chosen charity. More details from Brian Edge on 01270 569836.

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**MANY THANKS** to all who contributed to this very busy issue. Almost every day I receive mail, which is gratefully appreciated.

## 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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## Wintergardens George Formby Society Meetings:

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.

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**Web Site**—Two Lancashire Lads:

[www.stanevans.co.uk/formby](http://www.stanevans.co.uk/formby)

**E Mail:** [stan@stanevans.co.uk](mailto:stan@stanevans.co.uk)

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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.



QUERY:- If we are all here on earth to help others, what are the others here for?

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

AND:- If swimming is good for your figure, why do we have fat whales?