NO LIMIT

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WAKEFIELD OFF WITH A BANG

The Combined Services Club on the Doncaster Road at Wakefield was the place to be at the beginning of April for the first meeting at that venue of the Yorkshire Ukulele Circle on their new night, the first Tuesday of each and every month.

My first thoughts on entering the club was that it may prove to lack atmosphere because of the size of the room, I was however basing this on the previous recent attendances at our old venue The Grove where the number present had steadily declined over the last 6-8 months. On the last meeting at the Grove in February, we had a pathetic half a dozen spectators in the audience to support the playing members, by the time of the thrash at the end of the evening we were playing to an empty house.

Contrast this then with the first night at the C.S. Club where at the height of the evening I counted between sixty and seventy people all having a great time watching the many friends who showed up to support us.

There are always initial problems on any first night and of course this one was no exception, little things like the lighting not been just right and perhaps the audience could have been seated nearer to the stage but all in all a total success.

Good friends who we don't see too often at the Wakefield venue were George Formby Society Sale branch President Wally Cronshaw and his family including of course the lovely Jenny. With the same party was famed 'Bones' player George Cheetham who was on duty most of the evening accompanying the artists on stage. Other distinguished guests were Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the G.F.S. Mandy and Steve Bottom who were in the company of the President of the George Formby Society Dennis Taylor with his charming wife Pat, Dennis and Pat whilst being fully committed supporters of the Yorkshire Ukulele Circle were finding the first Thursday in the month extremely difficult to get to so it is an added bonus that El Presidente can now be with us for all the Wakefield get together's.

Another familiar face who we don't see enough of was long standing George Formby Society member, Bob Flynn who can always be relied upon to do the business and is never allowed to leave the stage without is unique interpretation of the theme tune to "The Jungle Book".

One little fly in the ointment was when in the latter half of the evening, George Cheetham decided that Dennis Mitchell's jacket suited George better that it's owner and disappeared into the night wearing it. George was travelling with the Cronshaw's and realised en-route that something was amiss, after a couple of telephone calls and an hectic dash by Peter Firth to recover the coat, normality was restored but Dennis and Dickie missed their fish and chip supper whilst waiting for Peter to return with the garment. I believe they didn't arrive home until the early hours.

Apart from that though the evening was a total success and it looks as if they Combined Services Club will be an ideal venue, a good size stage similar to the one at the Sale branch of the G.F.S. and clean comfortable surroundings with a well stocked bar and a friendly face to serve the drinks all convince your scribe that we can make a go of it, don't forget though that we have to support the owner of the premises who is allowing us to use his facilities free of charge. We must all do our bit and support both the management and the Yorkshire Ukulele Circle itself to ensure that we all don't miss out on our monthly dose of fun and jollification.

HEVER FOREVER !!!

My pal Charlie Hever has decided to put his considerable singing talents on to audio tape and the end result is a fine collection of a selection of the songs Charlie gives us at the meetings. On one side of the tape Charlie features the songs of the great Al Jolson and on the reverse of course he is singing the songs of our George. Charlie fills in the bits were he should be playing the ukulele, with some of his humorous patter and the tape has been playing constantly in my car since he gave it to me.

Some of our newer members may not realize that Charlie sings the Formby songs as well as Jolson because Charlie rarely does them these days, this is a great shame because Charlie's interpretation of George's works has to be heard by all. One song on the tape which is worth a mention is "Daring Little Rascal". Charlie's Formby impersonation in my opinion is just as effective as the Jolson. So come on Charles, a bit more Formby for the fans please!

SALE V.E. CELEBRATIONS

The celebration of the end of war in Europe fifty years ago this month started in style with the Sale branch of the George Formby Society throwing a 'V.E. Night' party at their recent meeting.

As usual, the Sale people involved in putting on their monthly meetings excelled themselves with their patriotic display of flags and bunting and books and magazines of the period.

It was standing room only, there was so many performers that they were limited to one song per person.

Memorable performers were some of the ladies including Eve Stewart, Sheila Palmer and Hilda Southworth who took to the stage with Dickie Speake to do some of the war time numbers, we also had a couple of numbers from the ever popular Andrews Sisters themselves, looking slightly more plumper than their photographs.

The show was non-stop until midnight and the spirit of the V.E. celebrations was captured perfectly. the Sale branch of the G.F.S. generates the same atmosphere as our Mirfield meeting and anyone who hasn't visited them as missed a treat.

Dennis & Dickie are regular visitors so the presentation and professionalism is the same as our meetings. I just wish I had filmed the meeting but there was literally nowhere to place a tripod.

Well done Sale!

The records Reg Thacker requires are as follows :

1926. Dominion C. 347 - All Gong Back / In The Congo
1934. Decca Records F. 5303 John Willie Gows Caroling (Pts. 1 & 2)
1937. Regal Zonophone IR51. Trailer for **Keep Your Seats Please**
1937. Regal Zonophone IR52. Trailer for **Keep Fit** (Both these are Private Recordings)
1938. Regal Zonophone MR2752. Noughts & Crosses / Mother What'l I Do Know
1938 Regal Zonophone MR2753. Blew A Little Blast / In My Little Snapshot Album
Columbia Records DD 444. Our Sergeant Major / They Can't Fool Me

BEST PRICES PAID FOR ANY OF THE ABOVE IN **GOOD CONDITION**

There's gold in them thar hills!!!

Who says treasure isn't around,

I recently when to visited my good friend and ardent Formby fan Reg Thacker. Some of you will know that one of the reasons why I occasionally video the meetings is that Reg who lives in Birmingham, cannot get to many events, so the videos help him to enjoy some of the atmosphere generated by you all. One of the reasons why Reg cannot visit us is that he works at the weekends at Aston Villa football club and he also arranges football programme fairs where the fans can come and purchase old soccer programmes. One of the chaps who deals with Reg knowing he was an avid collector of all things Formby, offered to sell him a wooden ukulele. Reg pointed out that George Formby was really more famous for the ukulele/banjo but as Reg has a room at home dedicated to George, he thought he may find some room on one of the walls to hang the wooden uke (Reg doesn't play), a fee of £50 was agreed upon and Reg took his new purchase home with him.

I was chatting with him a couple of nights later and Reg asked me if I thought the uke was any good, imagine my astonishment when he said the manufacturers name... ***MARTIN.***

In fact, Reg has picked up a beautiful Martin wooden ukulele which is of course an extremely rare item and would certainly fetch considerably more than £50. At the moment the uke is in my possession (just try getting it off me!). The case is original and is in extremely good condition, on opening the case there is a set of gut 'Keech' ukulele strings which must be at least 50 to 60 years old. When I showed the instrument to Dickie Speake he was bowled over by it and he suspected that the ukulele had scarcely been played. You can rest assured that it will now get the attention it deserves and hopefully Dickie will demonstrate his skills on it at one of the forthcoming Y.U.C. meetings.

The moral of this tale must be, keep searching, there must be some quality Ludwig's, Abbotts or Gibson's lying long forgotten in someone's loft,

make sure it's you that finds them....



Reg is seen here in his George Formby room displaying part of his vast collection of George Formby records. Reg is always on the lookout for items of interest, in particular he is trying to obtain **good quality** copies of a few records which are displayed on the facing page, if anyone has these records, please telephone Peter Pollard on 01924 462249.

Reg of course will pay the best price if the goods are right.

Girl with good taste...

One young lady who is showing real improvement over a remarkably short space of time is our very own delectable Michelle Kisby, lady exponents of the ukulele/banjo have always been a rarity and it is sad to relate that in recent years, the girls have all emanated from out of the county. That's all changed now and Michelle is starting to turn a few heads, not only for her immaculate sense of dress when appearing at the different concerts and the way she is getting into the art of the split stroke etc. She is also getting a reputation for the admirable good taste she has shown by displaying on her uke case, a full colour picture of the Mirthsome Twosome themselves, **Peter Pollard and Ted Bradley**.

There must be some sort of theatrical talent spotting within Michelle because she has obviously realised before anybody else, just how good the Mirthsome Twosome really are.

When our roving reporter spoke with Michelle, she bashfully spoke about how she puts a photograph of Peter Pollard under her pillow every night and is hoping that one day he will call on her perhaps to assist her in her singing lessons. Regarding the other half of the Mirthsome Twosome, Ted Bradley, she actually told me that she couldn't stand the sight of him and she only put his half of the picture on her uke case because she couldn't stand the thought of taking a pair of scissors anywhere near her beloved Peter to cut Ted's picture off.

Michelle said, "I suppose Mr. Bradley's not such a bad chap, a bit long in the tooth to be in a partnership with my lovely Peter though, and why he wears a toupee is a mystery to me because he must be approaching retirement and I think old men should accept the advancing years without trying to make themselves into something they are not".

Wise words Michelle, try to find some pity in your heart for old 'uns like Ted, he hasn't got much to crow about these days, we all admire the way Peter puts up with all his petty theatrical tantrums.

All Our Yesterdays

I recently visited my good friend in Birmingham, Reg Thacker. Reg as some of you may know is an avid George Formby fan and over the last twenty years he has amassed a sizable and extremely rare collection of George Formby memorabilia. He has probably the largest collection of Vellums I have certainly seen and they date right back to the first issue and even to the letters which passed between original members and the founder of the George Formby Society, George Wilson.

Whilst I was going through this wonderful archive I wondered if there would be any reference to when the Yorkshire Ukulele Circle first saw the light of day. Without to much difficulty I turned up the following article.

THE VELLUM - Volume 4 Number 15 - July August 1974

Dear Ed,

Here is something of interest for the next VELLUM, Monday 1st July 1974, Member Joe Cooper, Headingley, along with myself Frank Ellis (a prospective member), Ron Holliday and Dickie Speake got together and formed THE LEEDS AND DISTRICT BRANCH OF THE GEORGE FORMBY Soc. To meet on the first Monday of every month for a couple of hours of swapping notes and general plonking.

Joe Cooper is hoping to develop the project further with an advertisement in the Yorkshire Post for more members.

Should any member be in the Leeds and District any time, please contact Joe Cooper Tel. .....

Sincerely, Frank Ellis

P.S. Dickie Speake was not with us on Monday, 1st July but was all in favour when Joe contacted him. So we hope for moral support from all members of the G.F.S in this new venture to keep the uke in the public eye.

I do believe that Lionel Owen and Paul Mountain turned up to the second meeting of the Y.U.C. (to use our proper name), so when you are all having the usual brilliant evening at either of our venues, just spare a thought for these heroes from the past who are still entertaining us today.