No Limit

The Yorkshire Ukulele Circle Newsletter - October 1996
Edited by Peter Pollard

The Yorkshire Ukulele Circle
'96 ELECTION SPECIAL



Those Were The Days - The Yorkshire Ukulele Circle 1983
This looks as if it is the last of the mohicans, only three familiar faces left from thirteen years ago.

MONEY BOX

Well, you can't go and book your holidays from it but the Yorkshire Ukulele Circle isn't totally bereft of cash. We have just about £230 in the bank. Look out for a pie & pea supper in the near future, what about a Saturday event?

The Yorkshire Ukulele Circle

Eight Bumper Pages This Month!

Hang the expense, we've increased the size of the newsletter so that you can watch the concert in peace, then take this up and read it by torchlight under the blankets which as any well educated person knows, is the only to read any good quality comic.

Wilf Ties The Knot!

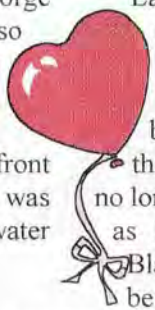
The thirteenth of July was a red-letter day for Wilf Salt from the Cheshire branch of the GFS when Wilf and his intended Dorothy were married in St. Thomas Church, St. Annes-on-Sea. They were actually within ukulele playing distance of George Formby's last home at Fairhaven so the scene couldn't really have been better.

The ceremony which took place in front of approximately sixty guests, was followed by a reception at the Parkwater Hotel.

Attending Wilf as his best man was Brian Edge, other members of the Society who attended with their respective wives were Stan Evans, Dickie Speake, Society President Dennis Taylor, Dennis Mitchell and video cameraman Peter Pollard who captured the whole event on tape.

It goes without saying that with Wilf's Formby background, and Dorothy's gang show and theatrical leanings, the evening would be full of entertainment and this was the case as the whole gathering contributed to a memorable evening of quality entertainment. George Formby of course was featured and received with great enthusiasm by the assembled company but the members of the St Thomas Church choir were not to be out done and responded with memorable renditions of the war time songs together with a selection of songs from 'Les Miserable' and even Elvis Presley made an appearance. Everybody agreed that the evening just couldn't have been bettered and most of the new found friends were already making arrangements to be in the same venue in one years time to celebrate the first anniversary of Wilf and Dorothy.

On the following morning the happy couple left for a short honeymoon in the Lake District before taking up residence in St. Annes-on-Sea.



The Cheshire branch will be bemoaning the fact that one of their most popular entertainers will no longer be visiting quite as regularly as he used to, but their loss is Blackpool's gain as Wilf will now be in residence at the Blackpool branch at the Wainright Conservative Club. The Uke Circle wishes them both many years of happiness.



Loud And Proud...Joe Sings Out For Yorkshire



THAT was the headline in a recent edition of the Yorkshire Post and refers to one of our rarely seen members who it must be said was, along with Dickie Speake, a founder member of the Uke Circle back in 1974. Joe Cooper hit the headlines because he has written a anthem for the fair county of Yorkshire to coincide with Yorkshire Day which occurred on August 1st. Joe was appealing for a brass band to arrange his song and do a performance. In a later edition of the Post it was reported that Joe was inundated with offers and finally chose the *Stanley Newmarket Colliery Band of Wakefield* to score the song.

You Lucky (Yorkshire) People,

George Formby may have come from Lancashire but Yorkshire appears to be the place where the Formby flame burns brightest. Four ukulele meetings a month, the two YUC meetings, the GFS in Leeds and Mac McGee's 'Pudsey Plonckers'. The President, Chairman, Musical Advisor, Asst. Treasurer and Asst Secretary all from this side of the Pennines. And also, your very own

FREE NEWSLETTER - PLEASE SUPPORT IT!

Formby Exhibition Starts on Fylde Coast

An exhibition of the life and times of George Formby is taking place at the present time in St. Annes-on-Sea, near Blackpool. Well known Formby impersonator and jazz musician **Alan Randall** is associated with the promotion and it is likely to run for three months from late July until October.

It would be nice if there were a permanent display of George Formby material and memorabilia somewhere on the Fylde Coast and perhaps if this venture is successful this will be the first step to just such a enterprise.

There must be obvious connections with the Warrington exhibition in 1991 but this selection of memorabilia is well worth a visit and for £2.50 you can have a very pleasant afternoon. Try It Yourselves!

The Street

Did you all see the Talent Night in the Rovers Return recently when Percy Sugden pulled out his ukulele and gave the regulars a rendition of "Lamppost". It just shows, only a couple of months previously to this, we were reporting the sight of ukuleles in The Street and the fact that Percy Sugden was adept at the art of ukulele plonking.

Keep reading "No Limit" to get all the first hand ukulele gossip!

Hee! Hee! - Never Touched Me!

That must have been the thought running through Dennis Taylor's head as he mounted the stage for the fourth year running to a tremendous standing ovation from a packed gathering at the Annual General Meeting of the GFS in the Spanish Hall at the Winter Gardens.

Dennis and the rest of his committee have had to suffer unjust criticism and have had to endure totally untrue rumours that had been put about by people who seemed to think that they could take over the Society and do with it just what they wanted to. I always credited the membership with having much more sense then that and on Sunday morning in Blackpool they pulled from the side of the Society a nasty thorn and gave it the order of the boot.

The air was much clearer after the event and let's just hope that all concerned will now get down to some serious and constructive work on behalf of the GFS.

The meeting started at around 11.00 and because Chairman Trevor Brown was indisposed, Vice Chairman Dennis Mitchell was thrust into the firing line to take charge of this very important meeting.

Immediately he was having to parry and side-step all manner of aggressive questions from opposing candidates on the floor. The Yorkshire Ukulele Circle can be proud of the fact that our Dennis held this meeting in a vice-like grip and was standing no nonsense from any of these petty usurpers. Another who deserves praise on this memorable day was Treasurer Kevin Selby who answered all sensible and slightly silly questions and allegations with professionalism and calmness.

Eventually the agenda rolled around to the time when the existing committee stood down from the stage in preparation for the voting that was to come. Mandy Wylde the Secretary of the Society was left alone on stage to request member to show their membership cards to signify their support for the first position in the elections, Chairman of the Society.

For this position there was only one nominee, our very own Dennis Mitchell and even though he was the only nominee, it was obvious that he met with everyone's approval as pink cards throughout the hall were thrust in the air. Dennis then took to the stage to take charge of the events to come.

The next vote was the one that had been on everybody's lips for the whole weekend. Retiring President Dennis Taylor against ex-editor of the Vellum, Stan Evans. Each candidate was asked to leave the room and the room was filled with excitement as the two gladiators chose separate exit doors at either side of the room. The showdown was on!

Chairman Dennis Mitchell called the room to order and asked for a show of votes for the challenger, Stan Evans. My eyes traversed the large hall and there just about in the middle of the room a number of pink cards went up together with other odd cards dotted around the room. The four 'tellers' were busy counting the cards but it was immediately obvious that my baby grandson's abacus could make this calculation with ease.

The room was abuzz. Dennis Mitchell, keeping a tight hold on proceedings then asked for the show of cards for Dennis Taylor. My eyes once again skirted the Spanish Hall but this time there was a sea of pink from all quarters of the room. The atmosphere was electric as Dennis Mitchell requested the return of the President and his beaten foe.

A breath bating pause which seemed to go on forever and then into the room comes the lad himself, smiling and waving to a audience which was already rising to it's feet to confirm the decisiveness of the vote.

A kiss from the lovely Pat, (lucky bugger) and he was up on to the stage to take his rightful place at the head of this unique Society. Dennis picked the microphone up but couldn't say anymore than "Thanks". He could have said plenty more and had every right to do so but this lad comes from Yorkshire were men play straight and fair.

It was at this point that the whole room erupted as the candidate for Secretary, Charles Stewart announced that he was withdrawing his nomination as he felt that he could not share the stage with Dennis Taylor.

The Chairman once again restored order and the rest of the votes took place in a sporting manner.

New additions to the committee were from the southern branches, Martin Hosmer and from Lancashire, Alan Middleton. North Wales's Dennis Lee is the new Vice-Chairman and Peter Pollard is the new Assistant Secretary. One very important newcomer was Carlisle member Tony Thornton who will be the new editor of the Vellum.

The committee of the George Formby Society is now for the first time in some years, fully staffed and it looks as if these names will together, keep the Formby flame shining bright. Let's just hope that now the **whole** membership can now start to support the Society in particularly the Vellum.



THE GEORGE FORMBY SOCIETY 1996-97

PRESIDENT	DENNIS TAYLOR
VICE-PRESIDENT	DICKIE SPEAKE
CHAIRMAN	DENNIS MITCHELL
VICE-CHAIRMAN	DENNIS LEE
SECRETARY	AMANDA WYLDE
ASSIST. SECRETARY	PETER POLLARD
TREASURER	KEVIN SELBY
ASSIST. TREASURER	ALAN HARRIS
EDITOR - THE VELLUM	TONY THORNTON
COMMITTEE MEMBER	MARTIN HOSMER
COMMITTEE MEMBER	ALAN MIDDLETON

MANCUNIAN FILM CELEBRATIONS

Special celebrations involving members of the G.F.S. were held in Rusholme, Manchester on Saturday 28th September when a plaque was unveiled in the Welcome Inn public house by Member of Parliament Gerald Kaufman. The plaque was to commemorate 100 years of British cinema and also, the fact that the only recognised film studio *away from London* was situated on this site in 1947.



I refer of course to Blakeley's Productions which started producing films as Mancunian Films in a converted Wesleyan Chapel in Dickenson Road, Manchester in 1947 and remained there until 1955 making low budget but extremely popular British comedy classics featuring such giants of Northern music hall as Frank Randle, Norman Evans, Jimmy James and not forgetting of course, our very own George Formby who made his first to features with John E. Blakeley.

The studios were effectionally known as "Jollywood" owing to the care-free easy going manner which Blakeley appeared to employ whilst making the films. Legends like Frank Randle, Norman Evans, Dan Young and Jewel and Warris would virtually make up their scenes as the film progressed.

Whilst the films were never popular in the South, they always made money in the North of England and John E. Blakeley was obviously a very shrewd man as he knew what Northern people wanted and he served it up in huge dollops.

I also think that he did every fan of good entertainment a great service by capturing on film the greatest British names in music hall in Britain between the 1930's and 1940's.

Unfortunately quite a lot of the original prints were destroyed in a fire after the studio closed down and are now unobtainable. There are though a few classics left that are **still available**. These include George's first two epics, "Boots! Boots!" and "Off The Dole" and at least a couple of the Randall classics. If you wish to purchase or would like to see a list of what's available write to: Blakeley's Films, Rose Farm, Wellbank Lane, Over Peover, Cheshire WA16 8UP

Last Saturday, the Society were well represented by amongst others, President Dennis Taylor, Dickie Speake, Dennis Mitchell, Mac McGee, Lionel Owen, Michelle Kisby, Martin Harrison, Dennis Lee and Peter Pollard who captured the event on video. Our members did two spots and finished each time with the ever popular 'thrash' and I think that without the Formby people the whole thing might have struggled to keep going.

Also there was brilliant Frank Randle impersonator, Keith Clifford and the Living Theatre Company who performed a very interesting play about the studio and the people living in the area at the height of the studios fame.

A Performance At The White House!

By David White

When I received an invitation to play at the White House, I had two thoughts.
Recognition at last!
Relations between the USA and us lot, must be on the mend.! (Mr. Clinton does play the Sax, so a duet on the uke, seemed to be on the cards.)
However, investigations revealed that the performance was to be staged, not in Washington DC but in Featherstone, and that our very own "Tetley" Dave was the organiser!
Apparently this was to be part of the "nostalgia" evening for the British Pub Week. The nostalgia part of the evening included a supper of bread and dripping and jam butties, served by the landlord who was wearing a steel helmet. (Maybe he knew more about 'nostalgia' evenings in Featherstone than we did)
Anyway, or any road up as they say in these parts, several locally based Yorkshire Circle members took part, including Lionel Owen, Mac McGee, Charlie Hevers and of course, 'Tetley' Dave himself.

What took place, was in my opinion a pure misunderstanding between our MC (Tetley) and the Featherstonians. Because it was directly after Dave's announcement that there was going to be a thrash that the trouble erupted! There was much shouting, punching, and pulling of hair going on in the audience, and that was only the women! The "fracas", or as we know the "thrash", even irrupted the cards and domino games, which has to be said is more than our uke playing did. Dave was playing "It's In The Air" at the time (it certainly was).

To conclude, and you don't have to believe everything you believe, the landlord chucked out the warring parties, which allowed the nostalgic evening to continue. Dave Parker said afterwards that this sort of thing was unheard of at the White House, and commiseration's must go to Dave and the organisers who had put a lot of effort in to make an enjoyable evening, only to see it spoiled by a minority of mindless inebriates.



Tribute to Wally Cronshaw

This lovely photograph of George Formby will now be a regular feature of the scene at the Blackpool Winter Gardens venue of the George Formby Society. It was presented to the Society by the family of our sadly missed pal from over the border, Wally Cronshaw who passed away late last year. Wally always enjoyed his trips into Yorkshire to visit the Uke Circle and he always made visitors to the Sale branch very welcome. It is nice to know that the memory of Wally will now be in attendance at every quarterly convention of the Formby Society. Also in this photo is one of George Formby's original uke's.