No Limit

Yorkshire Ukulele Circle

The Yorkshire Ukulele Circle Newsletter - April 1997
Edited by Peter Pollard - Volume 3 - No. 2



We must always remember that our George would never have achieved all that he did without the strength of a good woman behind him. George couldn't have picked a better partner than Beryl Ingham who had been a dancer on the music halls with her sister when George was first getting started. George wooed Beryl and they married in 1924 and this later much maligned lady must take a lot of the credit. It is a pleasure therefore to feature Beryl on our front page as without this lady, you probably wouldn't be sat here reading this tonight.

1997

The Yorkshire Ukulele Circle meets at
- Carrgate WMC -
1st Tuesday in the month.
- Mirfield Conservative Club -
3rd Tuesday in the month.



Ron Holliday

The Pudsey Plonkers

The first meeting of 97' got off to a rousing start. The attendance is creeping up slowly. I was glad to see among the new visitors Dennis Mitchell, who I must say thank you for his kind comments about the meeting. I hope to see you again Dennis and I like the new title you gave me. But with stalwarts like Lionel Owen, Paul Mountain etc, providing equipment and know-how their support is much appreciated by other members, especially by me when my sound system went on the blink. So to everyone who contributed in making our first meeting a success, thanks. I'm sure we are going to have another plonking good year.

Mac McGee

Ron Holliday

We were all saddened recently by the news of the death of our good friend Ron Holliday. Always one of the most popular players within the Uke Circle Ron passed away after bravely fighting grave illness for the last few months. The Uke Circle just won't be the same without him. What a lovely man and what a lovely performer. The one man who could command silence when on stage was Ron. I loved his gentle voice and the songs he sang seemed to have been written just for Ron, they always seemed to reflect his gentle character. I received a number of heartfelt submissions from various people about Ron and wish to thank all members for their support, we would have run out of space if all the items had been used therefore as editor of our newsletter I would just like to record my grateful thanks for the wonderful performances and the pleasure of the company of **Ron Holliday.**

On behalf of everyone within our Circle we extend our sincere condolences to Ron's family.

New Branch of the GFS in Sheffield

The opening night of the Sheffield branch of the George Formby Society took place on Friday March 29 in the "Times Gone By" museum in the Banner building, Sheffield.

Owing to a major fowl-up in reading Dennis Taylor's map, I didn't arrive until turned nine and by that time the place was packed. There was of course plenty of Formby people there but it was nice to see many new faces within the audience. The 'Time Gone By' theme is based around the war years and they obviously have their regulars who took the trouble to create just the right atmosphere by turning out in forties style clothing.

The audience where treated to the talents of amongst others, Dennis & Dickie, John Beevers, The Smith boys Pete & Adam, Dean Spencer, Peter Buckingham, Dennis Taylor, all the way from Norfolk Pete Harper and John Beck, and of course our very own Charlie Hever.

From a first night point of view things couldn't have gone better and hopefully the Sheffield people will be able to maintain the standard. As long as you don't make the stupid mistakes that I made, you won't have much difficulty in finding the place and the meetings take place on the last Friday in the month. ***Twenty two artistes who all did two songs. What are we doing wrong?***



The Bow-Tie Brigade

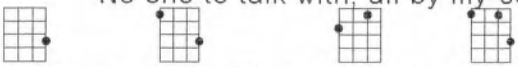
Another recruit in the ranks of famed bow tie wearers is Robert Dunkerley. He was also at the Sheffield opening and doing his stuff like a seasoned performer. It is nice to see him doing so well.

A comparative newcomer to the ukulele scene, Robert is a very enthusiastic member of both the Circle and the GFS. He doesn't let the side down in this picture, taken at the Winter Gardens at the March convention.

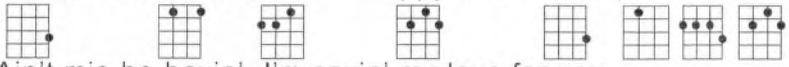
Ain't Misbehavin'



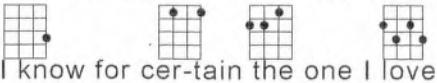
No one to talk with, all by my-self



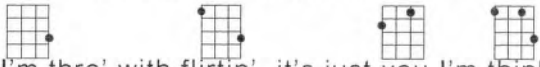
No one to walk with, but I'm happy on the shelf,



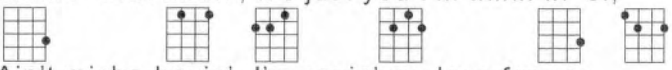
Ain't mis-be-havin', I'm savin' my love for you.



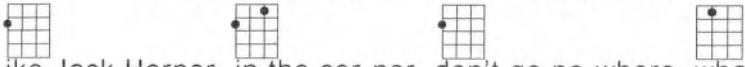
I know for cer-tain the one I love,



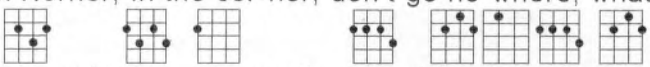
I'm thro' with flirtin', it's just you I'm think-in' of,



Ain't misbe-havin', I'm savin' my love for you.



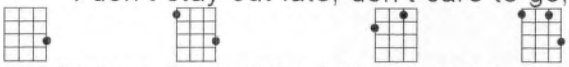
Like Jack Horner, in the cor-ner, don't go no-where, what do I care,



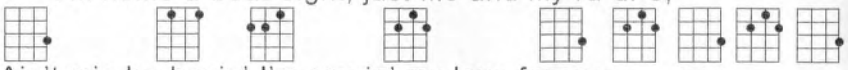
Your kiss-es are worth wait-in' for, be-leive me,



I don't stay out late, don't care to go,



I'm home a-bout eight, just me and my ra-di-o,

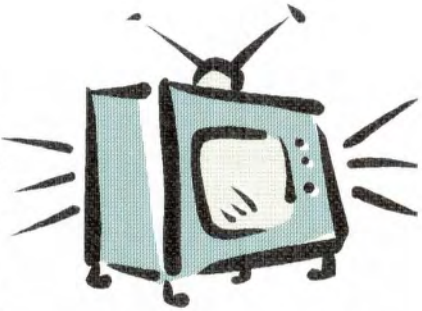


Ain't mis-be-havin' I'm sav-in' my love for you. you

Another one of my favourites - a good one for beginners to learn some good chords. Not George Formby but a well known tune and nice to play on a wooden uke. I hope you like it

P.P.

On The Radio



Being now a member of the great unwashed, unemployed and unwanted. I spend quite a bit of time listening to the radio. I have noticed of late quite a few programmes and T.V. shows using George Formby songs as background music. In the last few weeks I have heard "Cleaning Windows", "Lampost" and a couple of times "Photo In The Press." George is often the subject of humorous banter between Terry Wogan and Ken Bruce, the morning D.J.'s on Radio 2. The latter I believe is a Formby fan and a ukulele player. Little by little, secret admirers are coming out in to the open, all due I believe to the Society through it's members spreading the word. Now if Tony Blair wants to make sure of winning the forthcoming election!!!

Mac (King of the Plonkers) McGee

A Sad Day

The photograph below is one that I feel most of the readers won't have seen before. It features members of George Formby's family and I think it was taken at George's funeral. From the left:

George's fiancée Pat Howson, Frank Formby (Jeff Booth's dad), George's sister Louise, George's mum, brother Ted, and on the extreme right is George's sister Mary. The three faces between Ted and Mary are unknown. It is ironic that Pat Howson should be photographed with the family but at this stage George's mum's sight was very poor and she was unaware of Pat's presence



Roy Smeck

Roy was born in 1900 in Reading, PA, in the USA where his father bequeathed to him the sum total of his musical knowledge: 3 chords. But from those humble beginnings, Roy became a self-made string instrument virtuoso and played the vaudeville circuit in his early days. In 1926 he appeared in one of the first sound films ever made by Warner Bros./Vitaphone (the first music video!). The Vitaphone was a projector/sound machine that synchronised a moving image with an audio disc record at 33 1/3 speed and played from the innermost groove to the outside edge. The first nationally promoted Vitaphone talking picture was "Don Juan," starring John Barrymore, and the production was accompanied by other short entertaining video pieces including one entitled "His Pastimes" featuring our man Roy. (Al Jolson's "Jazz Singer" was issued a year later.)



The "Pastimes" piece made an instant celebrity out of Roy and was just the beginning of six decades of accomplishments on the banjo, guitar, steel guitar and uke. In addition, Roy invented the Vita-Uke marketed by the Harmony Company. He also put his name to several other uke, guitar, Hawaiian guitar, steel guitar, and banjo models made by Harmony, and made over 500 recordings for Edison, Victor, Columbia, Decca, Crown, RCA and others. He wrote instruction/method books for guitar, Hawaiian guitar, uke and banjo by the dozens; arranged innumerable tunes for the uke; and made the first multiple-soundtrack movie for Paramount Pictures.

Roy played at Franklyn D. Roosevelt's presidential inaugural ball in 1932; George VI's coronation review in 1939; and toured and played in Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Japan, Iceland, Greenland, Alaska, Canada, Puerto Rico, Korea and, of course, Hawaii. He appeared on American TV with Ed Sullivan, Steve Allen, and Jack Paar. In short, Roy has done it all.

Perhaps his greatest accomplishment, though, was very simply being the foundation of popular music through his happy, hopping ukulele music of the twenties and thirties when uke was king. He was a tireless performer who played nearly everywhere, would stage a uke contest for amateurs in cities he would visit, and would appear in local music shops along the way for free demonstrations on his vita-uke

Roy recorded hundreds of songs, on his own and with other groups. Many are on 78rpm records, and a good number can be found on LPs. *Does anybody know what the vita-uke was?*



Just how old are we?

A nice study of George as he ponders just how old the Yorkshire Ukulele Circle really is. You may remember that we celebrated the 20th Anniversary in October 1995 with a big splash 'do at the Shelf Village Hall. There is now a strong possibility that we got our sums wrong and the 20th was actually the 23rd. This means that in the Autumn of 1997 we could be celebrating the official 25th birthday. We are still trying to establish the correct facts and the past is a bit hazy to say the least. As is the memories of our founders, Dickie Speake, Lionel Owen and Paul Mountain. They say it comes with age! We will keep you informed of developments.

Subscriptions Increased



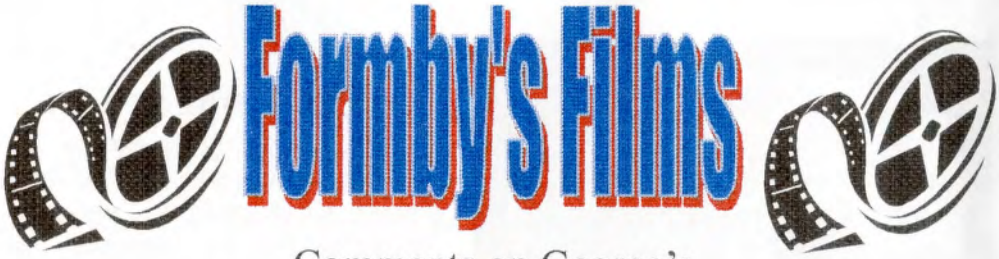
Since the Circle was formed 20 odd years ago the entrance fee has been held at 50p.

After lengthy consultations your committee has reluctantly decided to increase the fee to £1.00. We are sure though that given the large dollops of fun and frolics that are readily available at each and every Uke Circle gathering, it is still a small price to pay. You the member will benefit in the long run as the extra cash will be used ensure that the Uke Circle will continue to use good equipment and we might even get the very popular pie & pea suppers now and again.

Support the Newsletter Remember!

Fingers Wants Facts!!!

There are usually concerts taking place away from the Circle involving our members - tell me about them!



Comments on George's films from Leslie Halliwell's Film Guide

Boots! Boots! – Not listed.
Off The Dole – Artless comedy shot on a minuscule budget. It helped to make George Formby a star.
No Limit – Lively star comedy with Isle of Man locations.
Trouble Brewing – Lively star comedy
I Didn't Do It – One of the star's last vehicles; not too bad at all, but without the sweet smell of success.
Let George Do It – Generally thought to be the best George Formby vehicle, with plenty of pace, good situations and plenty of tunes.
Come On George – Standard comedy vehicle, well mounted with star at his box office peak.
Get Cracking – Adequate star comedy
It's In The Air – Amiable star comedy with good situations and songs.
Keep Your Seats Please – Good star comedy on a theme later reworked in *It's In the Bag* and *The twelve Chairs*.
He Snoops To Conquer – Spotty star comedy with insufficient zest for it's great length.
George In Civvy Street – The star's last film was oddly lacklustre and compared very badly with his earlier success.
Keep Fit – Good star vehicle with snappy songs and fast comedy scenes.
Feather Your Nest – The star in less farcical vane than usual; this is the one in which he sings Lamp Post.
Spare A Copper – One of the last good Formby comedies, with everything percolating as it should.
South American George – Not among the star's best.
Much Too Shy – A slightly vulgar and talkative farce which restricts the star.
Bell Bottom George – Formula star comedy, too long and too familiar.
I See Ice – Fair star comedy with good production.
It's Turned Out Nice Again – Tolerable star comedy from his late period.