

GOLDEN DAYS FOR FENLAND

ROUND 1

(The Indies- plus one or two others - In East Anglia during the late 60s)



1) The Prologue

Having taken some readers through the heady days of wrestling at Wisbech Corn Exchange with the Wisbech Chronicles I realised that so many halls across the Fens had dropped through the grating of wrestling history without registering so much as a 'plop'.

I don't have enough in the memory bank to give a detailed walk-through of each hall, but I'd like to share some cuttings, photos, clips, programmes, posters and memories from some of the halls that echoed and throbbed with the cheers and jeers of wrestling crowds as they turned up week after week to be entertained. To be entertained by some who were already big names ... some who used to be big names ... some who would become big names ... and some who may only find recognition of their services within articles such as these.

The indies, never having had the television exposure, provided many of the latter, so hopefully we can jog a few memories and get some researchers excited as we think "Did you ever see ..." and "Whatever happened to"?

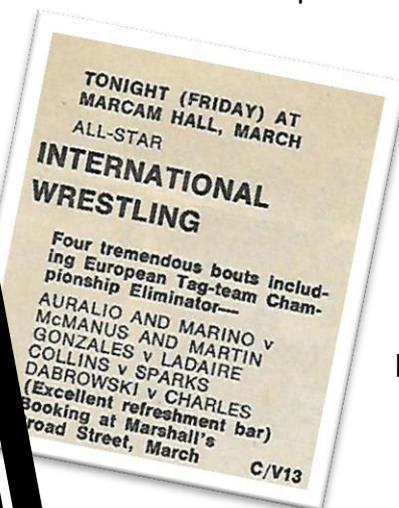
We'll be concentrating on shows put on in March, Downham Market, Kings Lynn, Peterborough, Holbeach, Spalding, Ramsey and other state capitals. It won't just be the Indies. Dale Martin and Wryton Promotions were very active in Fenland so we'll drag out some of their shows, too.

The Fens is a bleak area, and if you read the Wisbech Chronicles letter sent to me by Jack Taylor, one of the biggest indie promoters, you'll have read how he harked back to pre-motorway days when wrestlers had to drive down from Yorkshire to the Fens in thick fog. And fog has nowhere to hide across the flat Fens, of course. But the late sixties' audiences were appreciative of the efforts made. These reminiscences will, I trust, add to that appreciation.

2) Marching Into March

In addition to keeping Wisbech fans happy in the final throes of the sixties, Jack Taylor's International Promotions also put on regular shows in nearby March. Some were at the Marcam Hall and some at the Palace Hall.

Crowds were starting to dwindle as the seventies settled in, but the late sixties did provide some fabulous shows. Interestingly, very few people took the 25-mile round trip from Wisbech to March and back, so there was some scope for some repetition! As a second for Jack I rarely saw the same people at the Wisbech wrestling turning up at March. How travel attitudes have changed!

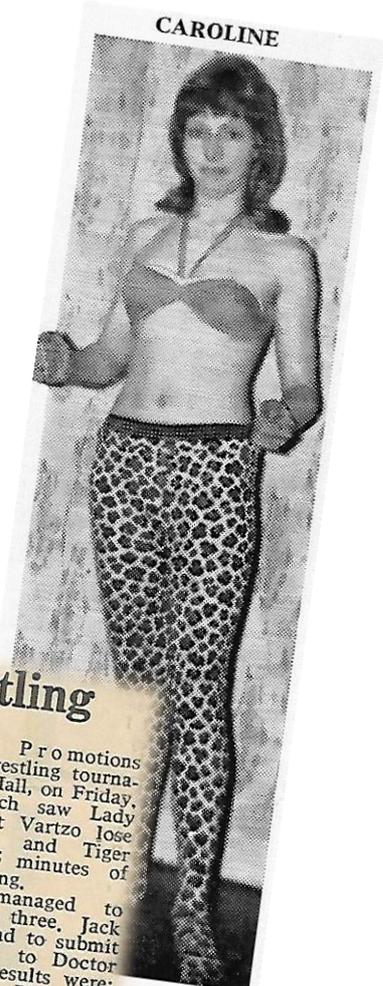


Jack promoted across the Midlands, notably at Granby Halls in Leicester, and in many halls across the Fens. We'll look primarily at March, Kings Lynn, and a couple of shows in Lincoln and Chatteris. The clip on the left is the first I have from 1967 and is a



typical International Promotions line-up. Jack himself stepped into Adolph Dabrowski's shoes to face Ric Charles, and there was a surprise appearance, and defeat, for Lord Snooty Monk (R), who was quite a regular in halls all over the Fens in the late sixties.

While Doctor Death was thrilling the Wisbech crowd as a villain-killer, over in March he was the baddie that he was in every other hall. Regular appearances were made by Lady Caroline and other female wrestlers – often in male v female matches or male and female v male and female tag matches. Mick Collins, Jim McLaren and John Monk were often chosen to take part in these ... as they had the know-how to make it look believable (and didn't mind looking a bit silly!)



INTERNATIONAL **WRESTLING** at MARCAM HALL
 ALL STAR **WRESTLING** -MARCH
 FRIDAY, 27th OCT. at 8 pm
 * ANOTHER GIGANTIC STAR SPANGLED PROGRAMME *

Fight to a finish 'challenge' match DOCTOR DEATH Hollywood USA masked genius v. JACK TAYLOR Accrington, Lancs. Triple champion		Plus female v. male Tag team clash!! LADY CAROLINE Oxford partnering BRITT VARTZO Swedish beauty
KAMI KAZE Japan v. DAVE CHAPMAN	JULES PIERPOINT France v. TREV. MCDONALD	JIM McLAREN Scotland. With TIGER BALENTINE Australia CV20

Wrestling

International Promotions staged another wrestling tournament at Marcam Hall, on Friday, when a tag match saw Lady Caroline and Britt Vartzo lose to Jim McLaren and Tiger Valentine after 15 minutes of entertaining wrestling. Although he managed to equalise in round three, Jack Taylor eventually had to submit for a second time to Doctor Death, and other results were: Jules Pierpoint beat Ploughboy Young McDonald, Kamikaze beat Dave Chapman.

* Making a rare appearance at Marcam Hall next Friday will be the American known as Klondike Bill. Klondike, almost 40 stones in weight is still undefeated since arriving in this country.

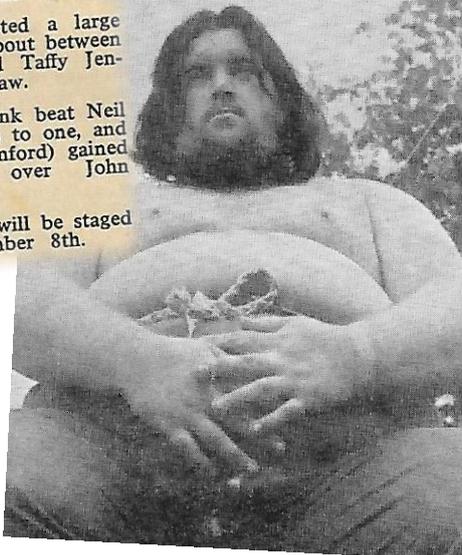
Wrestling

Klondike Bill, a 38-stone giant, figured in the main bout at Friday's wrestling show at Marcam Hall, March. His dubious tactics resulted in him being disqualified in his bout against Tony Port, of South Africa.

The show attracted a large crowd and a slow bout between Derek Perkins and Taffy Jenkins ended in a draw.

Lord Snooty Monk beat Neil Kemp by two falls to one, and Jack Brittain (Stamford) gained a similar success over John Romerio.

The next show will be staged on Friday, December 8th.



MARCAM HALL, MARCH * Friday, 8th December at 8 pm
 ALL-STAR INTERNATIONAL
WRESTLING
 * A sensational value for money programme *

BRITISH HVYWT. CHAMPION JIM ARMSTRONG Leeds 18-stone Hercules Giant RASPUTIN 20-stone Russian Giant	BLACK v. WHITE girls match Sugar PYE HARLEM New York, U.S.A. v. Lady CAROLINE Oxford, England's No 1
Terrific return matching Doctor Death v. Jack Taylor Hollywood USA Accrington	Tag Team special Pierpoint v. Paul Regan & Kamikaze Mick Collins

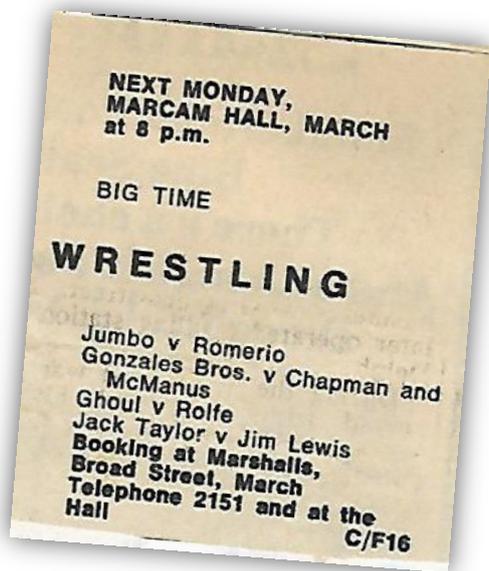
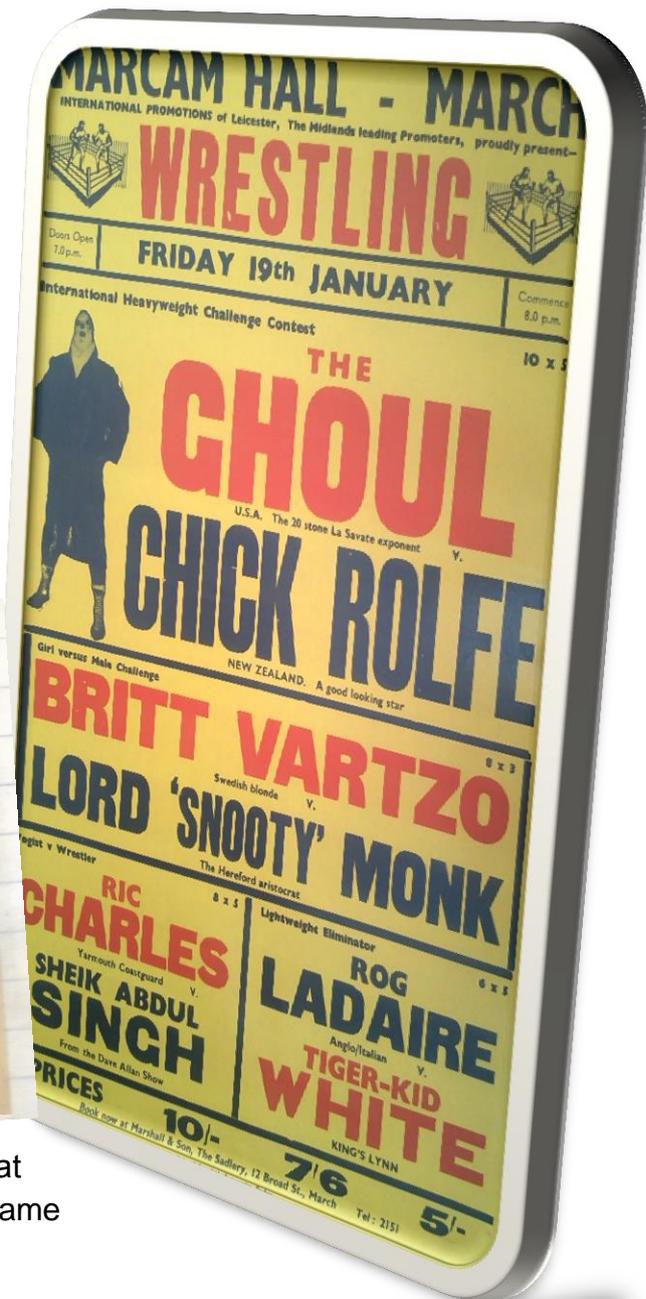
Advance Booking now at MARSHALL'S, THE SADDLERY,
 2 BROAD STREET, MARCH. Tel. 2151. BOOK EARLY.

The late-sixties Ghoul put in plenty of appearances across the Fens, often against the much outweighed local lad, Chick Rolfe, whose real name I think was Mick Sharder.

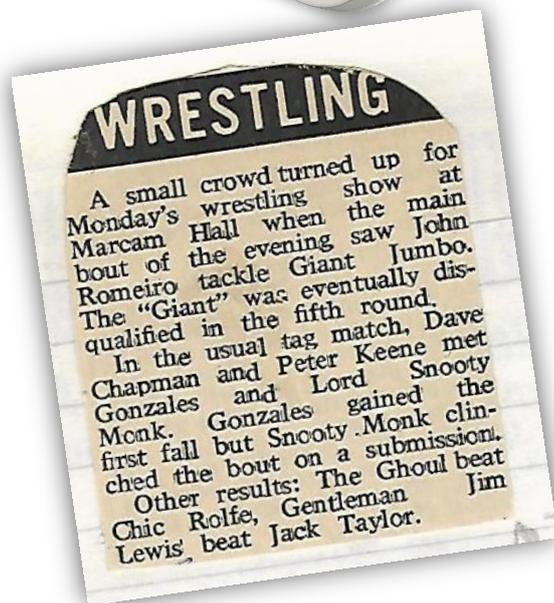
So this is the question. Given that the Ghoul's physique was unique, what were the chances that someone else wrestling without a mask ... but with the same physique ... was not the Ghoul?

Well, one Tiny De-Mann bore a more than remarkable physical resemblance to the Ghoul ... and appeared in the same halls during the same season.

That doesn't bring me any nearer to the answer to "who was the Ghoul in the late sixties?" It just adds to the enigma, that he also wrestled without the mask in the same promotions!



The Ghoul v Chick Rolfe return did not attract a great crowd and Jack took a bit of a break before setting up shop again.



It was November 1969 when wrestling returned to March, and once again Romeiro was there.

This time he was billed against the aforementioned Tiny De-Mann still a mystery without a mask.

Topping the bill, Pedro the Gypsy (R), who was no stranger to fans in the South.



A PARTNER OF DOCTOR DEATH

WHEN professional wrestling returns to the Palace Hall, March, on Friday, November 28, Doctor Death's former tag partner, Johnny Romeiro, will be in action.

Romeiro, a Latin American, is well-known to local grappling fans, having wrestled at March and Wisbech in the past.

It was at Wisbech that Romeiro tagged with the famous masked man Doctor Death, but an argument between the two produced a ferocious battle that ended with the Latin American being knocked out.

Romeiro's opponent on this

occasion will be the 22 stone giant, Tiny DeMann.

Topping the bill is the wandering Gypsy, who will face London's Golden Boy Bobby Cannon.

In a previous appearance at the Palace the Gypsy could not continue his bout with Sharkey Mayes after being thrown from the ring.

Completing the bill are two lively contests in the lighter weights. Kib White, who holds a victory over world welterweight champion Gentleman Jim Lewis, fights Irish flyer Mick Collins. Dave Valentin meets Ruby Gold in the remaining bout.

MARCAM HALL, MARCH
INTERNATIONAL PROMOTIONS of Leicester proudly present—
WRESTLING
FRIDAY 8th DECEMBER
Doors Open 7.0 p.m. Commence 8.0 p.m. 10 x 5
Giant Sized Heavyweight International

SHIRLEY CRABTREE
24 stone former European Champion from Halifax V.
GIANT RASPUTIN
RUSSIA: 21 stone former Guards Captain—Keeble

Additional Highlight Tag Team Challenge Thrills and Spills
PAUL REGAN // **JULES PIERPOINT**
from Dublin's fair City and... the flying French Star and...
MICK COLLINS // **KAMIKAZE**
Belfast's wizard celebrated Karate exponent

Return Fight to a Finish
DOCTOR DEATH
HOLLYWOOD. Accepts the challenge under duress V.
JACK TAYLOR
ACCRINGTON. Britain's triple champion

Six Rounds All Girls Contest
LADY CAROLINE
OXFORD. Antisocial V.
SUGAR PYE HARLEM
NEW YORK. Coloured girl wrestler

PRICES 10/- 7/6 5/-
Book now at Marshall & Son, The Sadlers, 12 Broad St., March
MARR & SON LTD. (COMMERCIAL) DEPTS. Tel: 2151

FRI. NOV. 10th
Doors Open 7.0 p.m. COMMENCE 8.0 p.m.
MARCAM HALL MARCH
BIG-TIME ALL-STAR INTERNATIONAL
WRESTLING
PROUDLY PRESENTED BY International Promotions
THRILLS SPILLS & EXCITEMENT
★ T.V. STARS AND INTERNATIONAL FAVOURITES ★

THIS WRESTLER IS DANGEROUS International Heavyweight Contest
KLONDIKE BILL
10 stone Alaska Giant the Prince of Madison Square

Junior Heavyweight Clash 8 x 5
JOHN ROMEIRO Latin-American Ace V.
JACK BRITAIN STAMFORD. East Counties Champion

Middleweight Thriller 8 x 5
TAFFY JENKINS TONYFANDY V.
ERIC PERKINS ELTON

The Famous 15 stone South African Heavyweight Champion
TONY PORTZ

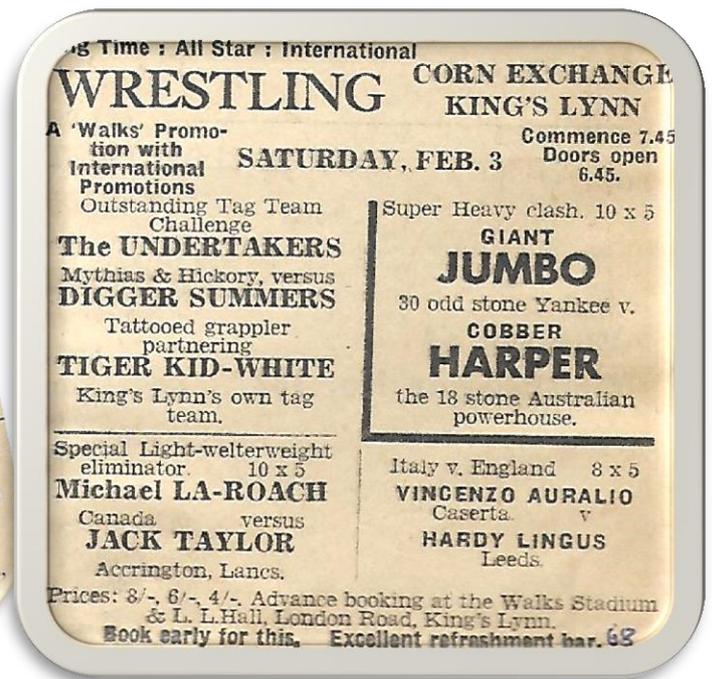
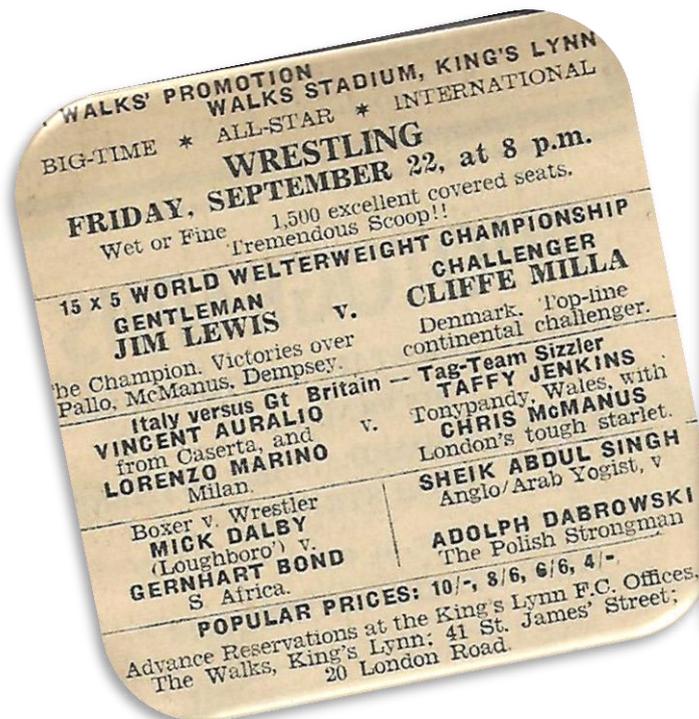
Midlands v South Lightweight Thriller 6 x 5
NEIL KEMP LANGLEY V. **PETE COLEMAN** LUTON

PRICES: 10/- 7/6 5/-
Book now at Marshall & Son, The Sadlers, 12 Broad St., March Tel: 2151

The big guys went down well in March. Shirley Crabtree, Klondike Bill and the Ghoul kept the fans very happy...

3) Doing the Rounds

In Kings Lynn Jack Taylor promoted with Walks Promotions at the Walks Stadium, which drew good outside crowds. Many of the promotions here were for charity, which we'll deal with in a separate chapter. He also promoted at the Corn Exchange, which was a favourite venue for Dale Martin, too. But here at the Walks we have Jim Lewis defending his world title ... and an appearance of the Undertakers ... with former pro boxer Mick Dalby from Loughborough in another boxer v wrestler battle. A guy called Tiger Kid White (framed) becomes a regular ... but more of him anon.



A couple more International Promotions shows before we move on. These were at the Corn Exchange in Kings Lynn, which Dale Martin felt was their preserve. Jack linked up the Ghoul and Klondike Bill as well as bringing back the Undertakers (L).



There's also a flyer from Lincoln and a line-up from Chatteris, another hall that struggled, but still saw good turn-outs. The ladies are there, too ... including Lady Caroline (R)...



The Palace—Chatteris *Friday 1st December at 8 pm
ALL-STAR INTERNATIONAL

WRESTLING

* GIGANTIC STAR-SPANGLED EXTRAVAGANZA *

Sensational All-Girls Contest LADY CAROLINE v. GERDA SNYDER		Empire Challenge JACK TAYLOR Accrington v. MICHAEL LA-ROACH Ontario, Canada.
Oxford, England's no. one girl wrestling aristocrat..	Germany, Cur- vacious Ace.	
Tag Team Sizzler Gonzales Bros. Pancho & Manuel v.	40 mins. Jim Lewis Mick Collins	Hvy. wt. Slam. PLOUGHBOY Beccles Suffolk v. SKULL MURPHY

Booking now at Aspi nall 10 High Street, Chatteris
Get your ticket early for this Tel. 2571

WRESTLING

THE DRILL HALL : LINCOLN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4th
Doors Open 6.45 p.m. Commence 7.30 p.m.

BRITISH WELTER/WEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP 15x5
THE CHAMPION
JACK DEMPSEY
WIGAN. Challenges Pallo & McManus for £1000 in this ring. v.
THE CHALLENGER
TONY ANDRASSI
LONDON

SUPPORTING CONTEST
HURRICANE SMITH
BRADFORD. v.
RALPH WARD
LINCOLN

CATCHWEIGHT CONTEST
STUART BELLAMY
LINCOLN. v.
RAY STEVENS
HALIFAX

ALL ACTION TAG MATCH 30 MINS. DURATION
BLUE ANGEL
Sensational star. and
KARL VON KRAMER
German Bully v.
BLACK EAGLES
ZULU & MOSER
Two great coloured stars

PRICES : 10/- : 7/6 : 5/-
Book in advance at the Drill Hall
BAILEYS, PRINTELS, SOMERCOTES, DERBYS.

GORN EXCHANGE, KING'S LYNN
INTERNATIONAL PROMOTIONS of Leicester, The Midlands leading Promoters, proudly present—

WRESTLING

SATURDAY 6th JANUARY
Commence 7.45 p.m.

Stupendous Heavyweight Tag-Team Thriller

KLONDIKE | **ARMSTRONG**
18 stone Nialan barometer AND
GHOU | **MURPHY**
18 stone 166 Heavyweight Champion

All Nations, 4 Man K.O. Tournament 3 Bouts
MEL CAMERON | **TONY CORTEZ**
SCOTLAND | ENGLAND

BERNHARDT BOND | **JAGAR SINGH**
SOUTH AFRICA | INDIA

World Mid Heavyweight Championship
ERIC TAYLOR | **TOMA HANSOM**
BRADFORD, The Holder v. SOUTH AFRICA, The Challenger



THE ZULU
EZZRA OKARA
Sensational Coloured Witchdoctor

GORN EXCHANGE, KING'S LYNN
INTERNATIONAL PROMOTIONS of Leicester, The Midlands leading Promoters, proudly present—

WRESTLING

SATURDAY 3rd FEBRUARY
Commence 7.45 p.m.

Outstanding Tag Challenge 45 mins.
THE UNDERTAKERS | **GIANT JUMBO**
HEAVYWEIGHT CLASH 10 T

DIGGER SUMMERS | **COBBER HARPER**
TIGER KID WHITE

Midweight Curtain Raiser
VINCENT AURALIO | **HARDY LINGUS**

International Lightwelterweight Classic
MICHAEL LA ROACH | **JACK TAYLOR**

PRICES 8- 6- 4-

The January 6th line-up shows how International Promotions strove to combine the classic wrestling style, with Eric Taylor and Toma Hansom, alongside the rough-house offerings from the likes of the Ghoul and Klondike, who wouldn't be breaking any records for nipping through the ropes after a tag! All tastes catered for !

In the Wisbech Chronicles we touched on Jack's TV coverage of a mixed tag match. The ensuing publicity spurred him on to book a similar match at Kings Lynn Corn Exchange. But the Council in Lynn put its civic foot down and banned it. So Jack got his publicity, although not in the way he had been expecting. It was big news in Kings Lynn!

The ladies were introduced into the ring to add some razzmatazz, but they were not allowed to get down to business. I did a quick re-vamp of the poster for the line-up, and Jack had enough warning to put a great bill in place to get over the disappointment of the banned tag match. In stepped Jack Dempsey to face World Champ Gentleman Jim Lewis, and Killer Ken Davies prepared to tag with Jack Taylor himself in the opposite corner. (It's a trifle bizarre to see a Dr Death vs White Angel unmasking as just a support. I guess that's what happens as Doctors get smaller!)



So, from March, Kings Lynn, Lincoln and Chatteris we next move across the road to Downham Market in Norfolk and to some other small-hall towns which staged some great grappling nights. The TV boys and the indies were both vying for the shillings of the Fen wrestling fan.

To be continued