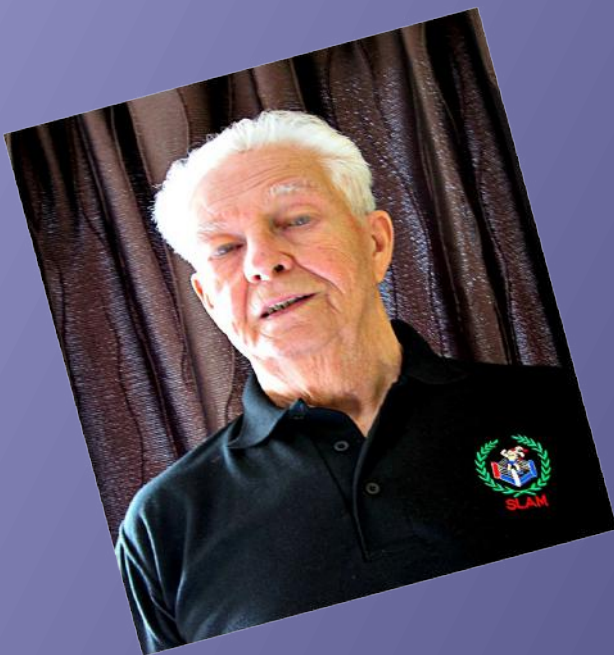




Fanpower

Without the fans there would be no stars, no wrestling, there would be no Heritage.

Bernard Hughes



I was 12 when I started going to watch Wrestling. After a year or so I made it a habit to carry some large self addressed stamped envelopes.

If I was close enough to speak to a wrestler I would ask him if he would kindly send me a photograph. Some did and some didn't and some, including Flo Walsh and then Kwango, were good enough to put a note or letter in with the photo. I'm afraid that all of my memorabilia has been gone for many years, but we didn't have a site like this back then.

I once saw a letter in a newspaper from Jack Cunningham talking about a visit to London by Maurice Tillet, "The Angel," Saying " It's that man again". So I

naturally thought that the author was the South African, barefoot wrestler of that name and wrote asking for a photo.

It wasn't, but this was a Jack Cunningham, a wrestling fan living in Highgate London. We corresponded for a while and both commented on the different sets of wrestlers that we saw in our favourite halls. He, together with a neighbour from a few doors away, was a regular visitor to Wimbledon Palais. He said that if I ever got to London, to ring him, (he gave me a phone number), and he would take me to see some real wrestling.

I had two friends at St. James's Hall, one of whom had relatives in Liverpool who really excited me with tales of the battles between Jack Pye and Bill Benny, but I knew no-one in Liverpool, no where to stay. However I had 2 aunts in Gidea park Essex.

The following summer I was down in London. I met Jack and his friend. We took the tube to South Wimbledon and I saw the Palais and southern wrestling for the first time. To tell you the truth, I don't remember much about the evening. I seem to remember that the Palais had a large imposing front but not too good on the seat layout.. I know that it was the first time that I saw and was impressed by Eddie Capelli. Possibly either Don Stedman or Mike Marino were top of the bill. What I remember most was that Jack said that they knew who The Ghoul was but wouldn't tell me.

I went to Highgate and Wimbledon again the next week and came away carrying a large ledger used as a scrapbook by Jack. It was full of newspaper cuttings about wrestling. The front part of the ledger was devoted to the various visits that The Angel had made to London. I think that I remember 5 or 6 lots of cuttings that did not make the papers in Newcastle. The back of the ledger was miscellaneous wrestling cuttings including the visit of Primo Carnera.

I liked Wimbledon Palais because it was a change of venue with a different set of wrestlers but somehow I missed the familiarity of what I had grown up with. I went to the Merry Fiddlers pub in Dagenham a couple of times. That was novel because it was in the open air behind the pub. Bert Assiratti was on there once when I went, and unmercifully took out some unknown Frenchman in a round and a half. Another time I saw Charlie Green topping the bill.

But after my travels I was happy to get back to the people that I knew to talk to and the familiar, comfortable surroundings of St. James's Hall