



Fanpower

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



Frank Hirshfield

Frank, an amateur wrestler of note, has led an eventful life from building labourer, to pipe layer, to Covent Garden porter, to Mayfair wine cellar manager, to world renowned sculptor with exhibitions in France, the United States. and Israel.

I'm searching for information about my friend of fifty-five years ago, Professor Patrick O'Reilly. Patrick was a real life professor at the University of Sussex and part-time wrestler in the early 1960's as Mustapha Ali Bey. Not a bad name for an O'Reilly.

I suspect Paricks wrestling career was short lived but I attended two of his 'fights' at the New Cross Town Hall, a Len Britton promotion. I knew him as a manager of the Swan Hellenic tour operator, which in effect was a shop on the ground floor of the Old YMCA.

I was a wrestling coach for four years at the Y and occasionally Patrick turned up on the mats. With permission of the Gym Manager (a former Hungarian Greaco-Roman national Champion) I had permission to have non member Pro's practice there.

Patrick at around 65-70-kl used to practice, and indeed learn from Linde Caulder and Mike Demitre, who took an interest in him. All this I suspect was at the beginning of his journey to University life and a distinguished academic career

The pro's used the mats four days a week, mostly foreigners disliked by the Brixton Road training facilities at Dale's . Also, the Y had great showers and a pool.

One or two of the lighter Americans joined in until the promoter Popocoplis asked them to stop as they once turned injured up for a show in Kilburn. Gordon Nelson and his friend Gordienko practiced ground holds and occasionally had a "shoot." Gordon had wrestled in school and knew the ropes.

Bert came just twice and as luck would have it Ken Richmond was there giving extra time for Danny Walsh's bid for an Olympic Place. Walsh was a Member of Ken's Club. Flash Edwards, Bert and a couple of other pro's were miffed at having to hang about but of course Ken was a member of the Y. Bert said he would like to have a pull with Ken a mistake and an embarassement. Well, the Ken/Bert 'pull' could not be called serious. Ken despite his then 'Humanist' convictions, latterly a Jehovah's Witness, was an animal on the mat, but knew how to restrain himself.

Speaking of being miffed the Pros never helped roll out the heavy Coconut Mats and Canvas. Ken did that! Demitre, who I had a ton of respect for, told me he had told Bert not to.

I myself trialled for the 64 games but having lived abroad my home club was purely Greaco...and still is, so I was well beaten in the trials. I did in fact adapt and qualify for the 68 Games in Mexico.....but had met a gal in Paris and had other fish to fry....am still frying with her in France fifty-four years later.

Would the Games have given me that ?

After the finals in 1967 I was "done in," having arrived by Pan Am into Heathrow at 6.00 am from Idlewilde (Kennedy), on a frighteningly bumpy flight. Against better judgment I entered the weigh-in half awake. After the final I heard this elderly gentleman say to his companion, Lord C, in perfect French that I should have had the decision. I replied in French that he was too kind but I agreed with the decision Thereupon he suggested that I don't take a taxi home as he had (for nigh 3 hours) a car waiting for him. I went for a drink in his Mayfair appartment....chez lui.

He was George Hackensmidt!

He a lover of literature, classical music, fine art and at 80...Women !

How can one not admire the Pros ?

I am still hoping to find Patrick ...I am 85...he would be 79 –ish.