

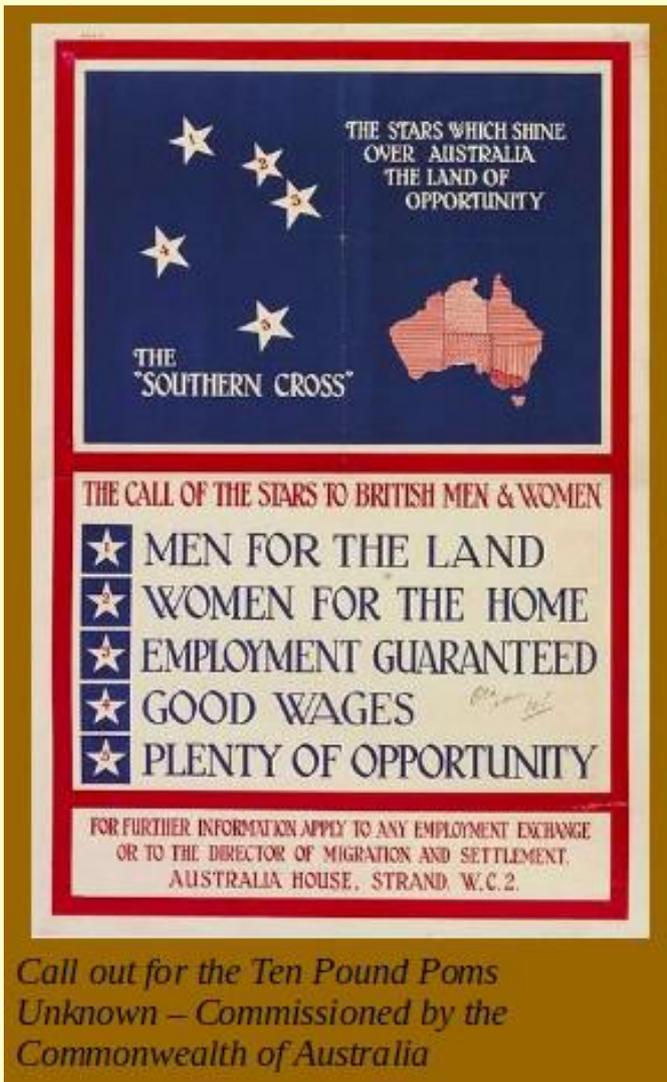
# My Wrestling Journey



*The travels of Our Man from Down Under*

# John Shelvey

## Part 1 - In the beginning



One day, a young me, was found by my mother, standing outside a neighbour's house in the rain. I explained I was waiting for the neighbour to return home so I could watch her telly. A few days later, the Shelveys had their very own television set. So, that was nice!

The above took place, probably 1957, as I remember I watched Aston Villa beat Manchester United in that years Cup Final, then again it may have been after the '56 final (which I didn't see). Around that time, one Saturday afternoon I looked at the t.v. and saw two men wrestling. One chap was balding and to a nipper like me, seemed to be getting on in years. T'other chap was also sans much hair but was decidedly Oriental in appearance (and no youngster either). Now I've looked at John Lister's splendid t.v.website but have not been able to find a match around that time, with two such protagonists, however I believe some dates may be missing so an entry may turn up in the future.

Fast forward a few years later and I was sports mad, football was King but wrestling was muscling its way through the pack, i.e. cricket, athletics, boxing,

tennis, etc. One day I was told by my parents *"Yes John you can go the Ball"* and so on the next Saturday, I found myself in the back of our black Austin 7, the car that had to be started by cranking a handle and let me tell you, that handle was Josef Kovacs vicious, spraining the wrists of many a friendly but unwise neighbour who proclaimed confidently *"Here George (dad) I'll turn it over for you, you just pull the choke out when it catches."*

I digress and probably will many times over. The journey was not a happy one, for as I sat salivating at the thought of an evening spent sitting inside the Brighton Stadium, being enthralled by the likes of Cornelius, Peters, Campbell and Yearsley (or Lynch) the FOG was descending. It became so bad that about halfway from nirvana my mother, nervous at the best of times, instructed my father to *"Turn around and go home."*

She explained that we didn't have enough money to stay overnight if the fog warranted we do so and my protestations fell on nervous deaf ears and back home we limped. As young as I was, I hadn't heard the phrase 'gutted'. But gutted I was!



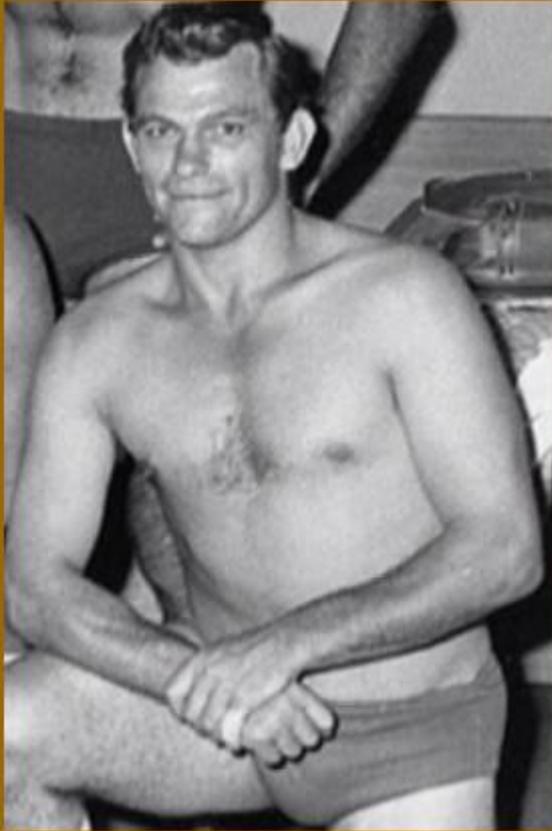
*Jackie and Linde got me gripped  
H.G.Stevens*

My grief was assuaged by my parents promise that we would go next week and the promise was honoured. My joy was tempered somewhat by the fact that Reg Williams was in the Main Event. Years later I would come to appreciate Reg as a good hand, but Joe Cornelius he wasn't! However, the wrestling bug had certainly taken a firm Brian Trevor's like grip and there was no turning back.

A 60s highlight took place in Eastbourne at a stadium where on occasion the family would go to watch stock car racing. On that day the posters proclaimed 'A Cavalcade of Sport'. On offer in a whole days entertainment, was professional cycling, speedway, midget car and stock car racing, along with WRESTLING!

So yeah, it was a case of be there or be square! The wrestling took place inside the race track, before the stock car final (there had been heats throughout the day) and hundreds of kids were invited to clamber over the safety fence and sit 'ringside', I'm not saying I was the first kid to take his place, but I had a great possi! First up globe trotter Frank Hurley went to a draw with Tony Cassio, then Arijit Singh turned beetroot from Clayton Thompson's head scissors and the Scotsman eventually took the only fall. The main featured none other than Mr. T.V. himself, Jackie Pallo taking on one of the founder members of the advertising agency called 'The Ugly Agency' Lindy Caulder. No need to tell you who won that, but a great time was had by all, even the weather was great!

In May of '64 our family emigrated to Australia, leaving mid week meant I could hear uncle Kent's dulcet tones one last time and as we were staying with an aunt in London prior to take off day, we also had one last opportunity to go to a live show. I'm not sure on which date we flew out, however I am positive that the last match I saw on t.v. was Dazzler Joe v Earl Maynard, however John Lister's itv wrestling does not have that match on around that time, however on the 16th. of May Joe was listed to be on the box against Enrique Don Juan, also known as Luis Enrique Edo Juan and I believe Maynard must have taken his place. The reason I remember the match so well, was because of its unique finish. Joe used his diving head butt to the stomach. Earl collapses and just gets up at the nine count but falls again without Joe touching him, then manages to get to his feet again, drops to the canvas once more, again without being touched and this time is counted out! On searching for the date/ match details, I saw that the previous Saturdays' wrestling had George Gordienko up against Gwyn Davies and I remember that match too again due to a unique submission. Gwyn came off the ropes, George dropped down and caught the Welshman with a leg scissors, Gwyn fell and George then rolled his body over Gwyn's legs. It's a 'trip' we've all seen many, many times, never used as a submission hold, , if you think of the immense size of Canadian's legs and hips locked on top of the backs of



*Bobby Burns made the same journey halfway around the world around the same time.*

his opponents legs, then a submission seems very likely. Even Kent went 'I Yi, Yi!

Our last visit to the wrestling took us to Southall, presumably because it was an easy tube ride. The audience was made up of Indians and the Shelvey family and one other. I couldn't see the other, but we heard his cockney accent now and then. For instance when Prince Kumuli was in the ring (three times that night, it was a heavyweight k.o. tourney) he would shout out, referring to his opponent, 'C'mon Prince, give him a **WHITE** eye' and if a wrestler should place his hand under his opponents crotch to lift him, 'other' would shout '*Handball*'. I don't believe it was much of a night and apart from Kumuli who beat Roy Bull Davis in the final I can only remember Carlos Rocha being there. I had read about him in the mags. and considered him an 'exotic' name, look, country of birth, etc. but Carlos proved to be a bit of a disappointment that night and lost to Davis in a semi. Which left a goody v baddy in the final. So that was nice!

So, time to jet away, leaving behind Joyce, Robinson, Kidd, Starr, Breaks, uncle Kent and Tiny and Lou, never to return again? (I should cocoa)!