



## Fanpower

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

# Ray Hulm



A lot of water has flowed under my personal bridge in the intervening fifty odd years but even so it seems pretty surprising that I really can't remember the first wrestling show that I attended. I have very clear memories of the first three shows; it's just that I can't for the life of me say what order they came in. The year would have been 1957 and all three shows were held at Walthamstow in East London.

I had started work a couple of months earlier and for the first time had a bit of cash to spend on entertainment. One of the shows was a Dale Martin promotion and this had the great Dara Singh up against Big Bill Verne in the main event. Billed as the Heavyweight Champion of the Punjab, Singh was making quite a

name for himself and Charles Mascell had him rated as one of the top twenty heavyweights of all time, I was duly impressed and so, on the face of it at least, was his giant Australian opponent. This was at the height of Joint Promotions efforts to present wrestling as a legitimate, competitive sport far removed from the bad old days of the pre war all-in game. This coyness about the more bizarre, burlesque aspects of the business were not shared by the promoters of the independent circuit who were responsible for the other two shows.

The list of wrestlers working those two independent promotions reads like a roll call of some of the great names of both pre and post war wrestling. Old hands from the all-in

days and rising stars of the 50's boom. working together to provide top flight sporting entertainment. The College Boy, Red Scorpion, Eddie Capelli, Young Samson and Milo Popopocopolis; all climbed through the ropes to display their skill to this enthusiastic fifteen year old. They were joined by blond bombshell Flash Edwards (I can hear the MC now, "and the first fall with a folding body press to The One With The Toni", ask your Gran to explain) and a pre Doctor Death Paul Lincoln. I have saved the best until last. When a young Don Steadman (no mention of "docker" at that stage) entered the ring it was to do battle with one of the all time greats, Bert Assirati. It doesn't get much better then that. Oh! and one more memory, a real piece of mat game trivia this. Down at the bottom of the program the words - matchmaker Mrs Assirati.