

# Ron's Wrestling Ramblings

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## Leicester

<https://heritagedocs.wixsite.com/talkwrestling/forum/memories-of-the-old-days/leicester-1>

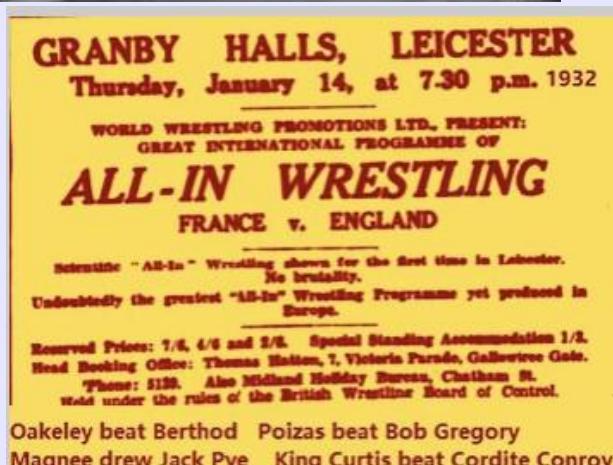
Ron

Leicester. Here is another trip back in time with some really good bills from the 1930's.

<https://www.wrestlingheritage.co.uk/apps/photos/album?albumid=16230245>



The Granby Halls built I think in 1915 and pulled down about 20 years ago. I managed to find the very first ever bill at the Hall.



By 1935 Jack Callaghan Junior, boxing promoter took it over and made a proper go of it after some failure in 1932. He even used Cath Look for a while to front it.

bjh99

First bill. interesting.

I don't think that I have seen many (if any) results where Jack Pye got a draw.

**Hack**

A great collection Ron, of a famous venue. Lucky Leicester having both the Granby Halls and the DeMontfort, and not forgetting Cossington Street Baths. A hall where Reggie Meen, local boy, was a regular. Interesting on that first bill to see the juxtaposition of "All In" and "Scientific wrestling." That's a new one. Thanks Ron.

**Ron**



Yes an at that time shows did not come any bigger than this one.

Bernard makes the Point about a Young Jack Pye only drawing, but in January 1932 these really were the pioneers. Lots of old wrestlers from another age squeezed a couple more years out. Walter Magnee was probably showing Jack all he knew.

Along the way I came across a black wrestler in 1932 called Sam Plate who had excelled at a lot of sports. He did not stick it for long but wrestled under the name of Black Diamond and also Black Devil, which I think was Wango's name.

Later in the 1950's another Black Diamond came along and he was masked, I never found out who he was.

bjh99

Hi Ron, re Jack Pye drawing. What I meant was that he occasionally won a match, but normally he got disqualified. I saw him get a draw with The Ghoul, but I think that was the only time that I saw him draw .

**Ron**

Yes he didn't need a title Bernard, he just filled halls, although they did call him champion of the north. Never thought about it but you are right, he nearly always got DQ'd

**The Ost**

Will catch up on these galleries over the next few days, been researching Leo Lightbody currently and been getting some results from the Granby Halls in the 30's. Have to say Reggie Meen was a big draw first time out, but nobody seemed impressed with his bouts.

Ron

**Thrills Without Frills !**  
**FREE STYLE WRESTLING**  
1946

**Cossington Street Baths**  
**TUESDAY, OCT. 29**  
Doors open 6.30 Commence 7.30

**MAN MOUNTAIN BEN**  
Manchester 20 odd stone of power v.  
**JUMPING JIM HUSSEY**  
Manchester, coming young heavy-weight

**AFRICAN KRUGER**  
One of the Veldt champions v.  
**TIM McCOY**  
Boxer turned Wrestler

**MARTIN RYAN**  
Wigan International Full-Back v.  
**GRANVILLE LAWRENCE**  
University Wrestler  
**TOM PYE**  
One of the Pye Brothers v.  
**SEAMAN WILKY**  
You remember  
Referee **PAT MADDEN**  
Popular prices: 6/- Ringside, 4/-  
Balcony and Outer Ringside, 2/-  
Booking office: Joe Jacobs, Haunch  
of Venison Hotel, Leic 228941:  
Benny Deane, 42, Silver Arcade,  
Leic. 23327.



Hack is right about Cossington Street Baths as I came away from the Granby Halls of the 1930's the Forties into the 1950's wrestling was at the baths.

Two new Galleries covering the 1940's and also 1951. 1950 is also there somewhere from a while back.

<https://www.wrestlingheritage.co.uk/apps/photos/>

In the 1940's some great advertising with some gimmick phrase almost on ever bill.

And If I ever knew, I have forgotten who African Kruger was.

**WRESTLING**  
EVERY FRIDAY AT 7.30 P.M.  
TONIGHT 29th FEB 1952

Sensational All-Star Programme  
**SPECIAL APPEARANCE OF THE ILLINOIS POWER HOUSE**  
**FRANK SEXTON** (Heavyweight Champion of the World) v. **MABSAN ALI BEV**  
Extra Special Return Challenge for the Light Weight Title  
**JOHNNY STEAD** (the Holder) v. **BERT ROYAL** (the Challenger)  
**RON JOHNSON** v. **GOFF PORTZ**  
**CHICK PURVEY** v. **JOHN ALLAN**  
Please Note prices of Admission  
7/6 - 6/- - 4/- - 3/-

**COSSTINGTON ST. BATHS**  
BELGRAVE ROAD  
BOOKING: BATHS TEL 61011

j\_shelvey

Even in '46 Jim was 'Jumping' Great stuff Ron!

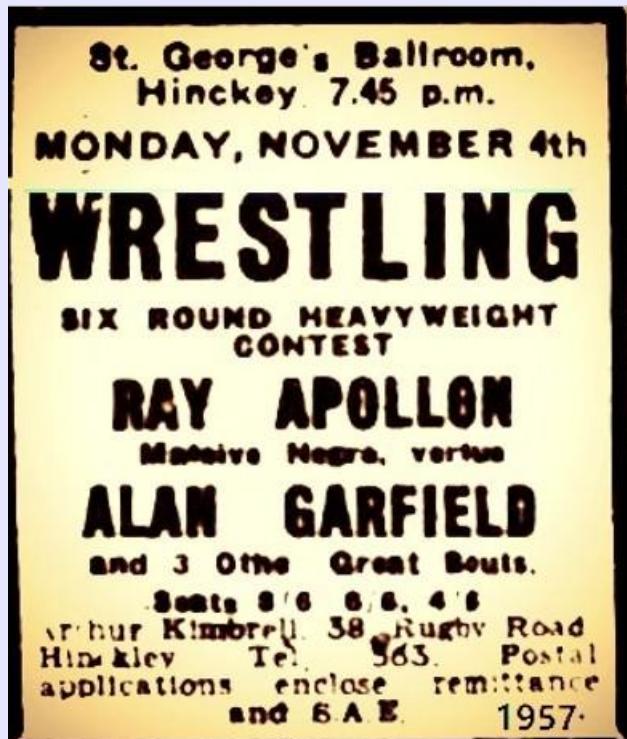
Peter

In aid of the "never seen the sea fund". Expect there were many children and adults in 1935 Leicester who had never seen the sea

Ron

Still at Cossington Street baths and into the age of Joint Promotions.

Frank Sexton was billed to be here back in 1952. I know some of his GB shows were cancelled such was his schedule and have no result for this one.



### Anglo Italian

Not many Londoners on these shows and McManus's sole bout was against Ted Beech. However, I did notice Stefan Milla fairly regularly in Leicester, even in a little feud with Alan Colbeck. I wonder if he was living in the Leicester area at that time. So many title bouts in Leicester.

Thanks for sharing, Ron.

### Ron

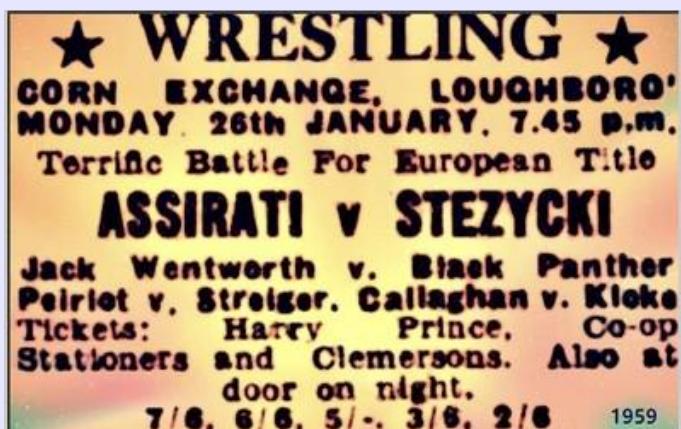
Thanks Anglo and you will enjoy looking at a few more from the South at nearby Hinckley.

Yet another place that does not spring to mind. The St George Ballroom could, I believe get towards a thousand spectators.

Garfield is here a lot in some great bouts, just a small window in time when he was at his peak.

<https://www.wrestlingheritage.co.uk/apps/photos/album?albumid=16231926>

### Ron

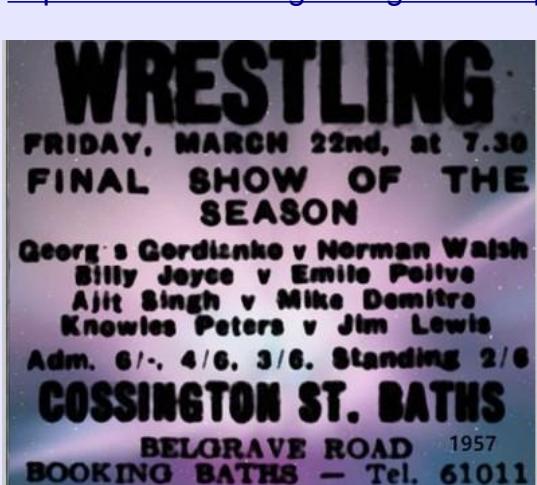


Staying in Leicestershire and mainly at the Corn Exchange Loughborough, another small window, and many shows featuring those discontent with Joint promotions.

Careers starting and ending here. Assirati still headlining but working I assume for himself and Jack Taylor.

Thornton (Peirlot) said "If you got involved and went in with Assirati, your money would go up" Assiratti did not have many Roster options at this stage and had many bouts with Stezycki.

<https://www.wrestlingheritage.co.uk/apps/photos/album?albumid=16231928>



### Ron

<https://www.wrestlingheritage.co.uk/apps/photos/>

Just added 1956 and 1957 to the galleries for Leicester. Still a very basic newspaper bill and I can confirm that Morrell stayed at Crossington Street Baths all through the 1950's, making it pretty much a twenty year run for the baths as a venue. Stay with me, 1958 will bring a rival into the Granby Halls to make this more interesting. I think this was the year Gordienko arrived here. Think he arrived Feb 11th.

### **Anglo Italian**

The Midlands, epitomized by these Leicester bills, seemed really to be where, logically, northern and southern wrestlers mixed in almost equal proportions. Masmabula v Gwyn Davies - who on earth dreamt up that mis-match? And you have even found a bill with Mendoza and Miquet on together, Ron, very unusual but Al must have been very very young.

But Ron: "Garfield is here a lot in some great bouts, just a small window in time when he was at his peak." A small window!!! Like 15 years at his peak, thank you!

Yes, Gordienko appears at the very end. Interesting to see in 1957 that Czeslaw also had great drawing power. He seemed to become over-exposed due to any variation in his career over the next twenty years: no titles, no absences, scarcely a foreign trip (ok, Sweden) - just endless support bouts. He wasn't billed as shaven-headed on any of these bills, must still have had hair?

Reading between the lines of the 1957 wording we can infer that Billy Two Rivers was a sensation when he first appeared on tv.

### **Ron**

Anglo, What I meant about a small window in time was that I caught him at Hinckley, prolifically, and could not see why he would be there so often.

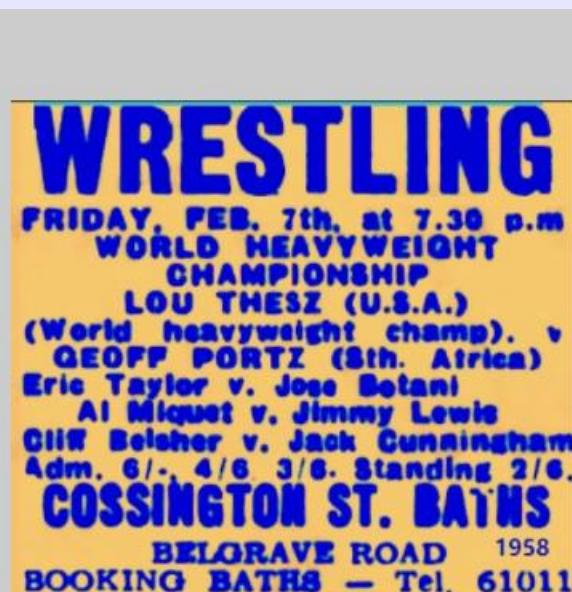
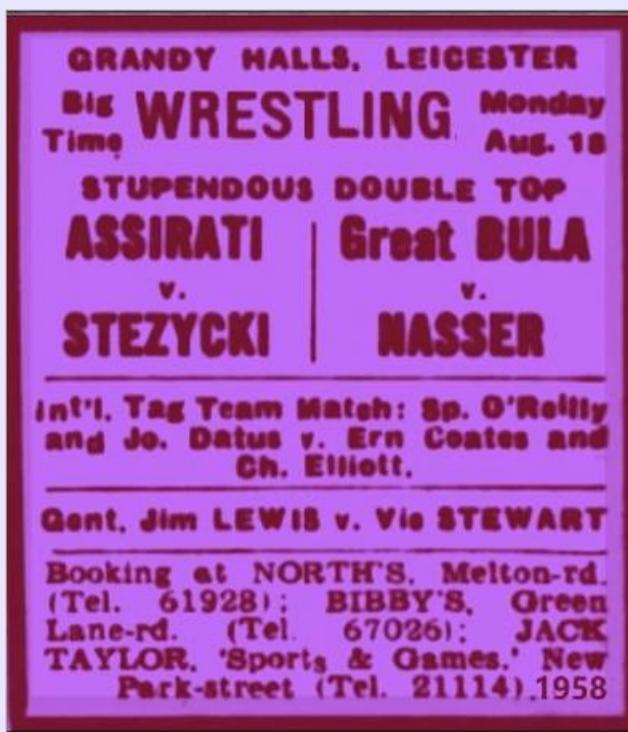
No argument about his peak, he even had another big USA tour in him to come.

Get ready for 1958.

### **Ron**

In 1958 Granby Halls emerges as a Rival to Morrell's shows at the baths.

Top names at both. <https://www.wrestlingheritage.co.uk/apps/photos/>



NORMAN MORRELL PRESENTS  
**WRESTLING**  
 Cossington Street Baths  
 Belgrave Rd., Leicester  
**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4th**  
 at 7.30 p.m. 1959

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HEAVYWEIGHT CONTEST  
**BILLY JOYCE**  
 WIGAN v.  
**ERIC LEIDERMAN**  
 HULL

---

HEAVYWEIGHT CONTEST  
**DIGGER ROWELL v.**  
**REG WILLIAMS**  
 BIRMINGHAM

---

HEAVYWEIGHT CONTEST  
**Lord Bertie TOPHAM**  
 and his man Powerty. v  
**CYRIL MORRIS**

---

CATCHWEIGHT CONTEST  
**Jack CUNNINGHAM v.**  
**BERNARD MURRAY**  
 BRADFORD

---

Admission 7/- 6/- 4/6. 3/-  
 Advance Booking:  
 The Bath Hall Cossington St.

INTER- NATIONAL **WRESTLING** Next Tuesday 21st OCTOBER, 7.45  
 GIBBSY HALLS LEICESTER 5

Another Tip-Top ALL-STAR BILL  
**Max Shirley Brian**  
**CRABTREE**  
 the Halifax Wrestling family v.  
**FAZAL LORANT BRETT**  
**Mahi Baronia Williams**  
 Kashmir Hungary Wales

British  
 Featherweight  
 Championship  
**Les PARRY**  
 Derby. Holder v.  
 Duncan **ROBERT**  
 Scotlnd. Challenger

Paddy **CURTIS** (London) v. Harry **YARDLEY** (B'ham)

Prices 9/-, 7/-, 5/-, 3/6. Booking at Lewis's Ticket Agency: Bibby, Green Lane Road, North's Melton Turn and Jack Taylor Sports and Games, New Park Street, Leicester Tel 21114 1959

### Ron

1959 is on in two parts, Norman Morrell is still at Cossington Baths going into a new decade and the other half is the Indy's essentially Jack Taylor at Granby Halls.

<https://www.wrestlingheritage.co.uk/apps/photos/>

That rare period where Bertie Topham got a try out with Joint and a decade ending with the Crabtree's looking as though they were flying high, similar to their billing in Halifax. Where did it go wrong?

### Ron

Jump from 1959 to 1963

<https://www.wrestlingheritage.co.uk/apps/photos/>

Two more galleries showing that by now Morrell has changed from Cossington St Baths to Spence Street Baths, but is also showcasing at DeMonfort Halls.

INTERNATIONAL  
 BIG TIME ALL-STAR **WRESTLING** Granby Halls, Leicester  
 THIS SAT., 19th OCTOBER at 8 p.m.  
 Sensational Prog. which defies competition.  
 \* Further to the \* Eight Five Minute Rounds Two to One Thriller  
 \* MONSTERS \* THE LAZLO JACK  
 Challenge to fight \* **MONSTER v BAKJO & TAYLOR**  
 \* 2 WRESTLERS \* Sat. Sun. 24th Hungary 12th. England 12th.  
 KENNETH EARLSA v BUTCHER GOODMAN ALEC JUDO PAT NUTTALL v ROACH Welcome Return of  
 Yorkshire S Africa Birmingham Bert CRADDOCK  
 BILLY YUKON v AL BENNISTON LINCOLN Barnsley v.  
 Canada Lincoln Harry BENNETT  
 Sheffield

Prices 10/- 7.5/- 5/- Booking now at North's Melton Turn, Lewis's  
 Green Lane-road Post Office, Newcombe's Cafe (opp.  
 Hotel), International Foundations Offices now 5, Newby St, Le.  
 21114 Meet Your Friends Here Excellent Refreshment Bar

He ain't short of masked men in 63 with the Legionnaire and the Professor, meanwhile fierce competition all year from Jack Taylor at the Granby Halls fighting back with The Monster, but by now no sign of the Shirley.

In My opinion 1963 was British Wrestling's most popular year with the fans.

— Norman Morrell presents —

**★ WRESTLING ★**

DE MONTFORT HALL, LEICESTER

FRIDAY, APRIL 26th, 1963. COMMENCE 7.30 p.m.

The Match we have waited for since November

**JACK TV PALLO**

Denies he has evaded this return contest at Leicester. Says he has had so many commitments Kidd was simply put out of mind. v

**GEORGE KIDD**

The World Lightweight Champion, who has had to wait so long for this fight says he will teach the arrogant Pallo a few things that he will not be able to put out of mind.

**A CHALLENGE ACCEPTED: And what a Fight this will be**

**ALAN COLBECK**

European Welterweight Champion who, ever intent on winning, has a ruthless non-stop style of aggressive wrestling, snapped up the challenge from Sando. v

**ERIC SANDS**

Former Amateur Champion of Eric Sands has proved himself in the professional ring. This bout is a sequel to the contest he had with Colbeck, televised from Leicester, which was rated the hottest bout ever on the screen.

ADMISSION: Belsay 10/-, Grand Tier 7/6, Gallery 5/-, Ringside 10/-, Outer Ring 7/6. Orchestra 6/-, Area 5/-

Advance Booking: Municipal Offices, Charles Street, Tel.: 37632. TICKETS NOW ON SALE AT THE BOOKING OFFICE

NORMAN MORRELL presents

**WRESTLING**

SPENCE STREET BATHS  
UPPINGHAM ROAD, LEICESTER.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15th,  
Commence 7.30 p.m. 1963

**TERRIFIC HEAVYWEIGHT CONTEST**

**Billy JOYCE v.  
Bruno ELRINGTON**

**The LEGIONNAIRE v. John LEES**

**Jim RAWLINGS v. Don BRANCH**

**Barry CANNON v. Jack TAYLOR**

Admission 7/6, 6/-, 4/6, 3/-. Book Now:  
Municipal Offices, Charles Street.  
Telephone 77632.

WRESTLING : 1937 WRESTLING :

**GRANBY HALLS**  
LEICESTER,

Monday, Feb. 22, at 8.15 p.m.

Direction: London & Midland Promotions  
Colossal All Star Wrestling Opening  
Programme:

**JACK PETTIFER v.  
(KING'S CROSS)**

**GARRY CURRIE**  
(AUSTRALIA)

**GEORGE BOGANSKI v.  
(RUSSIA)**

**BULLDOG BILL GARNON**  
(WALES)

Micky Wood v. Bearded Monarch  
(BIRMINGHAM) (IRELAND)

**BENGAL ENGBLOM v.  
(FINLAND)**

**TARZAN HUNTER**  
(U.S.A.)

**BOB FIFE v. HEINE STACK**  
(CANADA) (GERMANY)

PRICES: Standing 1/2, Seats (Unreserved) 2/6, Ringside (Reserved and Numbered) 3/6 and 5/-.

BOOK NOW: Midland Holiday Bureau, Granby St., Leicester, phone 59577; Paynes, 41, Aylestone Rd., Leicester, phone 300681, and at the Granby Halls on day of show.

### The Ost

These are great galleries, thanks so much Ron. I finally put a date on a newspaper clipping i've had for about 4 years. It had the results but the date was missing (I have lots like these BTW):

February 22nd, 1937 – Leicester, England  
[Granby Halls]

Jack Pettifer b Garry Currie (COR, 1st round)

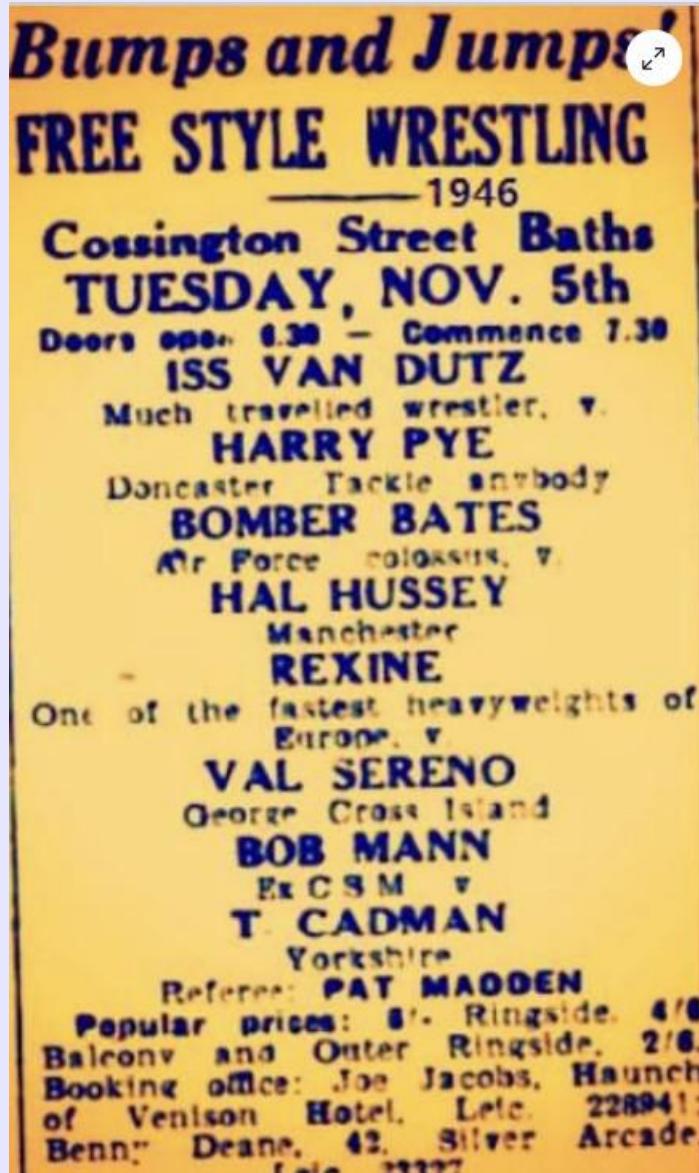
Bulldog Clayton b Henie Stack (DQ, 2nd round)

Mickey Wood b The Bearded Monarch (COR, 3rd round)

Tarzan Hunter b Carl Ferdinand (2-1)

George Boganski b Bulldog Bill Garnon (DQ)

“a woman spectator lost her wedding ring”



### j\_shelvey

Was the mystery of who Garry Currie was solved?

### The Ost

November 5, 1946 newspaper ad, they weren't too fussed with spellings on the bills.

### Peter

"Popular Prices". Hardly likely to be unpopular or no one would attend

### Hack

Still 6 bob in Blackpool twenty years later, That's popular.

### Hack

Leicester is a fantastic collection of Joint Promotions and the independents. What a great place to live. I don't buy this middle of the country idea because promoter Morrell was far more northern focused. The independents are great with Angus and Jock in their pre Scots guises, Bob Retsinnab making quite a few appearances, as did the Talio Kid, introduced to us all by Gerry Hoggarth.

### Ron

Strange is it not. Yet all so close.  
Wryton Had Birmingham.  
Dale Martins had Coventry  
Morrell had Leicester.

### Hack

Yes that is strange Ron, I hadn't thought of it geographically like that. All three were very different with their distinctive geographical flavours despite their proximity. Coventry shows were very much "southern" Dale Martin whilst Leicester showed Morrell's northern lineage.

Living in Wolverhampton travelling past Coventry still has a feeling of going south.

### Ron

I could also throw in that Frank Woodhouse had Derby until at least 1957, well into the Joint Tenure. How did that work. Indeed How did Dick Rogers hang onto Belle Vue until about 1956 as well

Doing a bit more work on Leicester.

Remember Jeff Conda or even Condor before he became Bartelli. Well, my eyes nearly popped out of my head.

Is this him Moonlighting in 1960 without his mask?



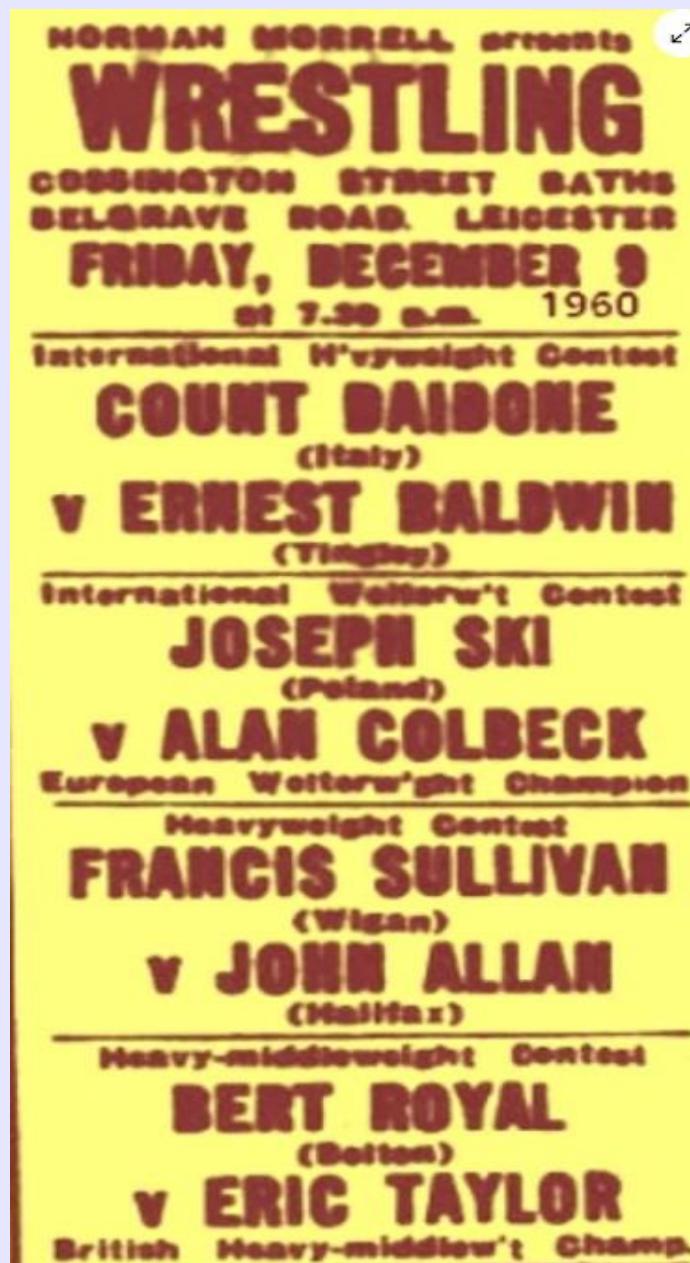
### Anglo Italian

Truly incredible find, Ron. Huge risk for Ct Bartelli. The motive: he must have been heavily involved in bringing along Black Mask.

Train Clements also stands out.

In spite of Hack's assertion that Coventry is located somewhere on the Riviera, even on this bill we see Kensington's Classical Stylist mingling with wrestlers from west and north and overseas.

Proper melting pot, Leicester. Even though I lived there, not said in any way with bias ☺



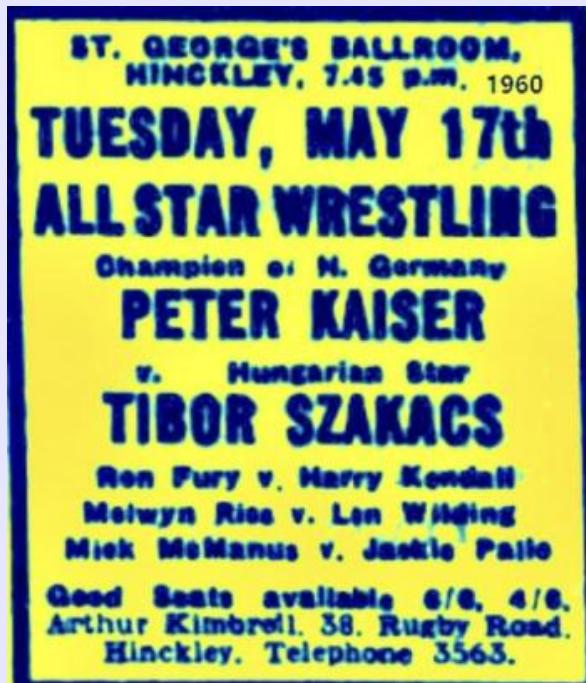
### Ron

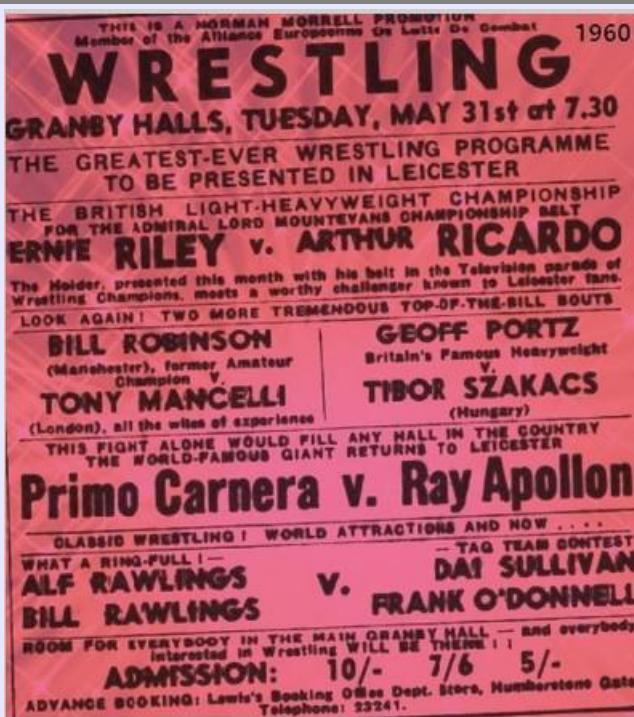
I will be ready to put 1960 Leicester on soon, the battles of Jack Taylor and Norman Morrell continue

But I am going to stir this further. Bartelli did not work for Morrell, so Morrell finds out about Conda in Leicester.

Does Morrell then invent his own Count. I have seen this name once or twice before, but is it Morrells pop at Bartelli or is this Count a real deal wrestler.

And another find at Hinckley Jackie and Mick





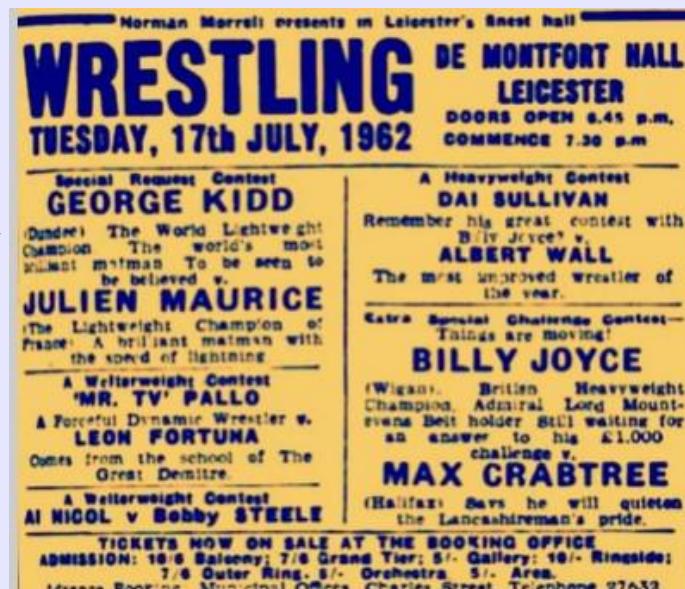
### Ron

I have added four more galleries to cover 1960 and 1962 at Leicester. Morrell starts the next decade at Cossington Baths but in 1962 is at Spence Street Baths.

<https://www.wrestlingheritage.co.uk/apps/photos/>

Somehow Norman Morrell manages to get Granby Halls for this show and it really is a cracker.

Was he trying to show Jack Taylor fans how much better his product is.



Incredibly after all his efforts to build 20th Century promotions and being busy on Jack Taylors International promotions, here we are in 1962 with Max Crabtree now working for Norman Morrell. By now Shirley had gone, not sure if he was injured or took that Lifeguard job at Blackpool

Big Bruno Elroy, I think I found this more than once.

Trained at Grovers Barnsley Gym and shown here with Jack Taylor.

Plenty to enjoy on this great set

### The Ost

Also intrigued about the "television parade of Wrestling Champions" where Riley was presented with his belt.

I am guessing that was the May 7 telecast from Leeds.

### Hack

These Leicester bills tell the story of wrestling in Leicester. Previous to this I had just thought Granby Hall equals Jack Taylor, DeMontfort equals Morrell, but there's so much more, with Morrell even using two halls at the same time.

Placing the independents alongside Morrell chronologically we see the development of some independents across to Joint. 1962 shows a significant development in British wrestling. At the start of the year we have Kidd, Capelli, Joyce, Kidd, D'Orazio (Tani) Crabtree wrestling for Taylor as

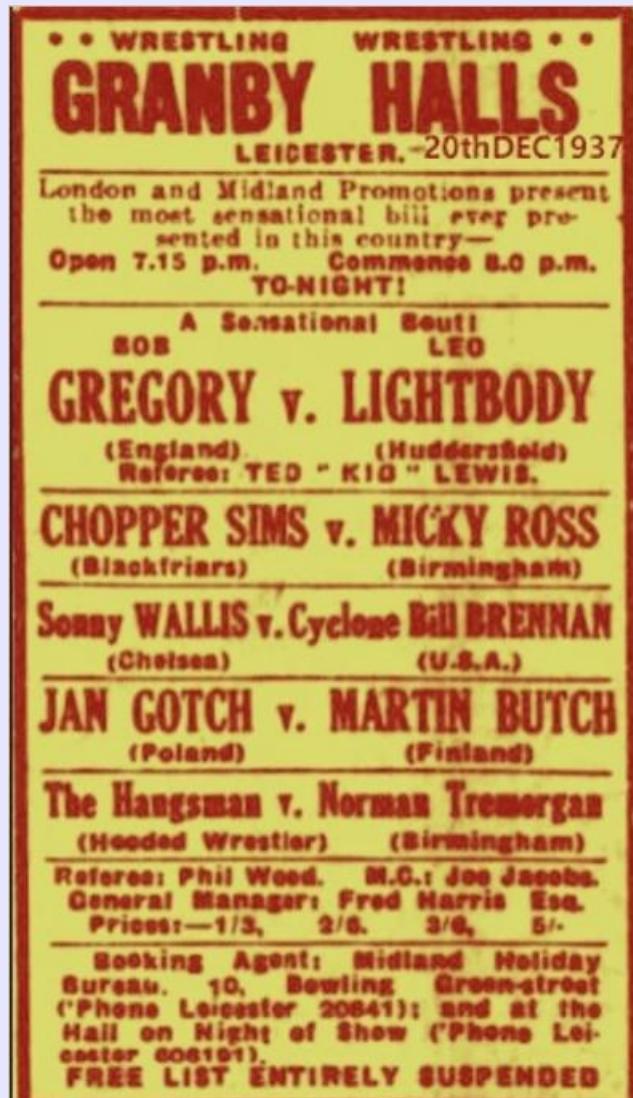
independents. At the time they were all promoting independent shows. In March 1962 they all ceased promoting independently and back to Joint, so by summer they are working on Morrell shows. Crabtree was interesting because during the 1960s he continued to promote, moving around from working independently to working in co-operation with Relwyskow as a Joint promoter.

As with Lincoln we have Taylor creatively using a fairly small band of wrestlers. Some interest on 1960s Taylor shows. Who is this Young McAllister? It's a name I've seen around. Interesting that he's billed from Stornaway, Robert McDonald country. [wrestlingdata.com](http://wrestlingdata.com) links the names Young McAllister and Portsmouth's Pete Wilson, but surely this couldn't be him in 1960.

Then a bit more of a Dr Death mystery. As we noted some time ago we have an early 1960 apparently lighter Dr Death wrestling Ken Joyce and Eddie Capelli. Who was this Dr Death?

I wonder if Germany's Mannie Hermann was Pete Herman from Barnsley. As Leon Arras and Harry Bennett were on the bill it seems quite possible. The previously considered Jess Conda crops up again. Last time round The Ost found billings of Bartelli working for Wryton on nights Jess Conda was on bills. Why would he go against his benefactor, friend and the strict rules of Joint Promotions at that time? If he was to moonlight this would be the last name he would chose. He would have used a name that wouldn't arouse suspicion.

Pre Joint outings for Tug Holton, Big Bruno, Danny Lynch, Jack Rowlands, Peter Rann, Linde Caulder, Angus, Leon Arras and Johnny Saint. That's Saint from Paris!

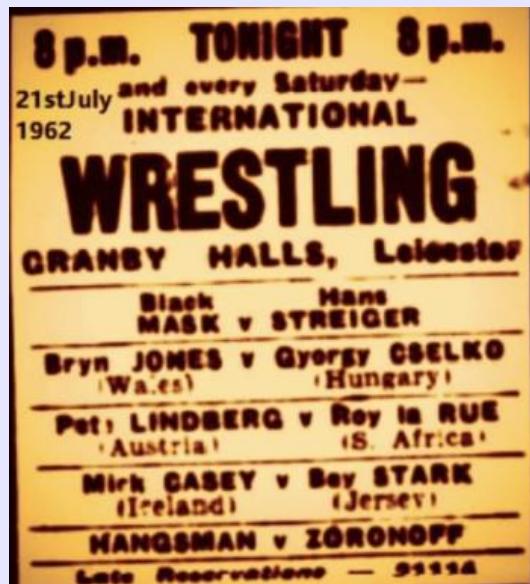


The Morrell shows presented less extravagantly. True to form Morrell crams his shows with big names. Just who would have opened the programme on 16th December? Or 2nd December? Or just about most of them. And then there's that packed Granby Hall show with Carnera and Apollon playing second fiddle. Yes, I reckon Morrell was proving a point that night. What was it with this town and Billy Joyce? He didn't get it always right though; Two Rivers against Bobby Graham and Wall v Logan I just don't get - no mystery about the outcome of those. Fascinating stuff Ron. Thanks.

Ron

Interesting that the character of The Hangsman was used a lot later at the Granby Halls by Jack Taylor.

It's possible some keen old fan saw them both.



### **j\_shelvey**

So, who was Gene Jansen (I doubt it was Jan Jansen), ( Who was Rexine? Why change just your christian name (from Geoff to Jess)? Who was the Australian Currie and finally (for now) was Ivan the Giant or John Wade ever featured, or mentioned in "The Wrestler"?

Another fine innings from Ron!



### **Hack**

John, it seemed to be established by Main Mask, The Ost and Ed Lock that Ivan the Monster was Ivan Kalmikoff. Neither Wade or Ivan were mentioned in The Wrestler. Main Mask supplied a photo of Ivan. Rexine was Rex Maxine. Don't know Gene Jansen

### **Hack**

I found Gene Janzen on bills from January 1960 to October 1961, all independents, mostly Jack Taylor and two or three Max Crabtree shows.

Keeping that in mind the conclusion to make is that he almost certainly wasn't American.

### **j\_shelvey**

I wonder if THE WRESTLER magazine thought that to publicise a wrestler known as Ivan the MONSTER was just too much of a stretch for a magazine promoting a 'legitimate' sport? The supposed Aussie Currie was...?

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<https://heritagedocs.wixsite.com/talkwrestling/forum/memories-of-the-old-days/leicester-1>