

Ron's Wrestling Ramblings

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Southport

Being a Manchester lad it has been very nostalgic to be able to look at wrestling on the local coast. Morecambe , Fleetwood , Blackpool , Liverpool , New Brighton , Rhyl , Colwyn Bay , Llandudno, Isle of Man and others. All very familiar places to me. In the early 1970's when I got a car I used to pick up the Manchester Evening news and see where I could get to to see some wrestling. One place that eluded me was Southport. Just on the odd occasion The Floral Hall advertised, but I never quite spotted a bill that would get me out there. I do know Southport , but it just seems a little different to all the other places. I think it was because I never saw the sea come in.

Certainly the Lancashire coastal towns seem to have had pre war grappling but I have never seen any evidence that Southport had early stuff.

WRESTLING Grosvenor Sports
MON., Nov. 17th 1947 **Arena TULKETH ST., SOUTHPORT**
At 7-30 p.m. and Every Monday

Bert Assiratti (Empire, Europe and G.B. Heavyweight Champion).
v. **Madrali The Turk**
Stan Rylands v. Eric Colbeck
George Goldie **Tony Baer**
Varsity Boy v. Leo Giroux v.
PRICES 2/6, 3/6, 5/- (inc. tax)
Tickets bookable day of show.

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS
EVERY MONDAY 1948 **ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT**

MONDAY NEXT, FEBRUARY 16th, at 7-30
VAL CERINO (Malta) v. MIKE BYRNES (Ireland)
DANNY FLYNN v. ALF CADMAN
THREE BELSHAWS v. THREE OTHERS
For £100 A Team
JACK BEAUMONT v. CORDITE CONROY
CLIFF BELSHAW v. JIM HOLDEN
TERRANCE RICARDO v. PEDRO GONZALAS
Tickets (bookable in advance), 5/-, 3/6, 2/6, inc. Tax
With effect from Jan. 26th, Bookings will be from 2 to 5 p.m.

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS
EVERY MONDAY **ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT**

MONDAY, JANUARY 5th, at 7-30 p.m. 1948
MANNIE MARITZ v. VIC HESSELLE
(Heavyweight Champion of S. Africa)
Gene Reska v. Lew Roseby
Bob Silcock v. Count Bartelli
BEARDED MONARCH v. BIG BOMBER BATES
Tickets (bookable in advance), 5/-, 3/6, 2/6, inc. Tax

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS
EVERY MONDAY 1948 **ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT**

MONDAY, MARCH 15th, at 7-30 p.m.—
— THE FINEST POSSIBLE CONTEST —
Neither Man has Lost for Six Years!
JACK BEAUMONT v. COUNT BARTELLI
12½-stone Champion, Who will unmask if
Gt. Britain defeated
JIM MILLAR v. GEORGE RIDD
STEVE SEALEY v. JACK CUNNIS
JIM HURSEY v. REX MAXINE
Tickets (bookable in advance), 5/-, 3/6, 2/6, inc. Tax
With effect from Jan. 26th, Bookings will be from 2 to 5 p.m.

In the early 1960's they put wrestling on at the Grand Cinema so I am not so sure when The Floral Hall took over. I have bills from 1967. Maybe MM or Ost can help with their collections.

What I have unearthed though is a story of wrestling in Southport getting going after the war.

There had been a print works on Tulketh Street which was at the side of the station. In the war it was seconded for storage. At the end of the war it became available for sale. In 1947 It was bought up by a guy name Mawdesley and he obtained a license for Music and Dance. His intention was a skating rink and also Hockey and Netball.

In winter the plan was for Tennis , Badminton and possibly boxing with seats for 400 spectators. The name was to be The Grosvenor Sports Arena.

I never did find boxing , but at the end of October 1947 there was wrestling. For a couple of weeks no advertising in the paper I have been trawling through.

After that I found winter wrestling into 1950.

Unfortunately I just can't track down a picture of this place to really give us the feel for it.. Some great bills and about 75 shows promoted before the owner sold the place which left the promoter high and dry.

When I looked at Ardwick Stadium I felt sure the promoter was Wryton only to be proved wrong. Not one single bill mentions the promoter, but for example Bartelli was on so often.

It had to be Wryton... didn't it?

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11th—At 7.30 p.m. 1948

BIG BOMBER BATES v. JIM HUSSEY
YOUNG ATLAS v. JACK HARRIS
NORMAN WALSH v. VAL CERINO
COUNT BARTELLI v. JACK ATHERTON

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, APRIL 11th, at 7.30 p.m.: 1949

BERT ASSIRATT v. DEAN ROCKWELL
SHAH MOHAMMED v. CHICK BOOTH
CORDITE CONROY v. DON MENDOZA
CON BALASSIS v. CHARLIE SCOTT

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, APRIL 4th, at 7.30 p.m.: 1949

ALAN GARFIELD (The Modern Sambo) v. BILL McDONALD
YOUNG ATLAS v. JIMMY LEWIS
CLIFF BELSHAW v. STAN GARSIDE
CYRILL MORRIS v. REG WILLIAMS

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, APRIL 25th, at 7.30 p.m.: 1949
Referee NEWTON

COUNT BARTELLI v. CHICK BOOTH
CHRIS LONDOS (Greece) v. DANNY FLYNN
RED McKENZIE (Ireland) v. MIKE MARINO (Italy)
AMEDI PETERS v. CUNNINGHAM
BABY FACED STEDMAN (18 years of age, 16 stone youngest heavyweight professional in the world) v. BOB SILCOCK

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12th, at 7-30 p.m.: 1949
Referee Callaghan

COUNT BARTELLI v. STH. AFRICAN ANGEL

Harry Walker v Johnny Stafford

Tommy Pye v. George Goldie

Jim Holden v. Don Mendoza (Southport)

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, JANUARY 24th, at 7-30 p.m.: 1949

**FIGHT TO A FINISH
CANNOT BE A DRAW. SOMEONE MUST UNMASK**
Count BARTELLI v. The MASKED MARVEL

Seaman Wilkie v. Danny Flynn

Larry Larson v. Terrance Ricardo

Bill McDonald v. Charlie Scott

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7th, at 7-30 p.m.: 1949

**GRAND RETURN CONTEST. Scott will give £5 to
Charity if he does not unmask Bartelli**

CHARLIE SCOTT v. COUNT BARTELLI

Jim Mellor v. Alan Colbeck

Jimmy Rudd v. The Black Hawk

Tiger Wood v. John Hall

Bob Arncliffe v. Tim McCoy

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, JANUARY 2nd, 1949, at 7-30 p.m.

**GRAND RETURN CONTEST
BARTELLI WILL UNMASK IF DEFEATED**
CHARLIE SCOTT v. COUNT BARTELLI

GEORGE GOLDIE v. BILL OGDEN

REG WILLIAMS v. JACK ATHERTON

**WILD BILL BALLARD v. THE MIGHTY
INCHE (South Africa)**

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, MARCH 21st, at 7-30 p.m.: 1949

**Sam Burmister (Jewish Heavyweight Champion
of the World) v. Man Mountain Benny**

George Kidd v. Jim Mellor

Amed Peters v. Cordite Conroy

Frank Manto v. Jack Beaumont

Val Cerino v. Reg. Williams

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14th, at 7-30— 1949
REFEREE CALLAGHAN

COUNT BARTELLI v. CON BALASSIS

Jimmy Mellor v. Ken Joyce

Young Atlas v. Jimmy Rudd

THE MIGHTY ELMO v. LARRY LAYCOCK
(Bearded Ex-Marine)

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, MAY 9th, at 7-30 p.m.: 1949
REFEREE LEWIS

BERT ASSIRATTI v. CHARLIE SCOTT

JACK ATHERTON v. TONY BAER

CHRIS LONDOS v. AMEDI PETERS

REG. WILLIAMS v. BLACK PANTHER

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-

WRESTLING GROSVENOR SPORTS ARENA TULKETH STREET SOUTHPORT

MONDAY, JANUARY 9th, at 7-30 p.m.: 1950
Referee Callaghan

**FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER—
FOUR COLOURED Against FOUR WHITE**

COUNT BARTELLI v. THE BLACK PANTHER

JIMMY HOLDEN v. SHAH MOHAMMED

JIMMY MELLOR v. ACHRA (India)

JACK BEAUMONT v. SOUTH AFRICAN ANGEL

PRICES - 2/6, 3/6, 5/-



So it was Wryton all along.

Was this the start of wrestling here or was it on somewhere before the war.

The Ost

Good find Ron, yes I believe it was always a Wryton town, but I don't know about before the war. Looking through Ray's files I don't see anything this early so these will all be new additions.

From the late 1940's. Also Brierley Hill on there which later switched to R&A (or was that still Wryton?).

Manchester on there Ron so that may have been the Ardwick Stadium connection you were looking for.



Ron

Great piece of info above, but not Ardwick for Manchester. It moved about a bit , Levenshulme was one.

Yes thus far the Sports arena looks like first venue.

poolstead1

Not so keen on the "For the first time ever four whites v four coloured" but accept this was considered okay at the time. The claims do make you smile, I particularly liked the one billed with BABY FACED STEDMAN 16 stone and aged 18 the youngest heavyweight in the world. I see the very first bill listed circa 1947 lists one of the wrestlers as ERIC COLBECK would this be a relative of Alan? Or him listed under a slightly different name? Anyone know? Did Kent Walton ever tire of telling us all whenever RAY STEELE wrestled that he was his uncle! They were both billed as coming from Wakefield

Anglo Italian

Talking of Kent Walton, for me The Floral Hall Southport was a major and regular tv venue, not sure why they bothered going to such a far flung place; I mean they never went to Scotland, or the south coast, or anywhere in the West Country.

Garfield when still billed as The Modern Sandow. Topping the bill as early as April 1949. Can he have been such a headliner right from the start? Ranks alongside Nagasaki, though even Nagasaki didn't start off top of the bill. Makes me wonder whether Garfield had wrestled previously under another name?

Fancy investing in an ad to say you are no longer promoting - money to burn. Surely they should have mentioned their nearest alternative venue.

Assirati had a small pool of "willing" opponents and the more I see these bouts with Madrali, the less I am in awe of those appetizing headline matches. Thanks for uploading, Ron.

poolstead1

I assume you are talking tongue in cheek when you refer to Southport as some far flung place. For most of the North West region it's about an hour and approx 35 miles from where I live in the Bolton region and I would imagine similar for GRANADA STUDIOS who would be the outside broadcaster.

Hack

I guess Anglo Italian didn't do too well in geography at school. Just get the 298 Ribble bus from Leyland Anglo. Southport is the closest seaside town to Leyland, not too far flung at all at just 15 miles. I didn't go every week in the summer, far from it, but did go quite a few times during the school summer holidays from about 1967 to 1970 or 71. As Ron says Southport always was different, a much more genteel sort of place than Blackpool, but then most places are. No, it was a very nice place, and probably still is, I haven't been for quite a few years. Victorian buildings, wide streets and the second longest pier in Britain which never seems to quite make it to the sea. The walk from the promenade to the sea is a day out in itself. In this new fangled world it's now part of, the also not too far flung, Merseyside.

Back to the wrestling. That's a nice bit of wrestling history you've uncovered there Ron. That Mighty Inche has cropped up again. I hadn't heard of the Grosvenor Sports Stadium.

But I can tell you that Southport wasn't just a Wryton town. In the second half of the 1960s on day trips to Southport, so it would be in the summer, I kept my eyes open for independent wrestling posters and there were definitely independent shows going on there. I've no idea of the hall or who the promoter was, the location suggests Jefferson or Cape, but they were definitely on.

poolstead1

To be fair unless you live in the north west region it would seem far away! I remember going to Weymouth as a kid and getting on my parents nerves asking how much further every half hour it seemed like we were travelling to the end of the earth! Southport being a holiday resort had the usual seaside attractions. I remember if you walked along the front you would see the wrestling posters advertising their next shows. Like Morecambe it seemed popular with Scottish wrestlers as well. Andy Robin, Lee Thomas frequent names along with locals like Johnny Saint. I guess for the Scottish wrestlers coming down the motorway to Morecambe/ Southport/ etc was reasonably easy. Long, a good three hours plus journey but you missed all the heavy motorway traffic which builds up around Manchester. Makes me think.....WAS BLACKPOOL A POPULAR WRESTLING TOWN? I can't remember seeing any posters on visits there and yet they had a massive tourist influx. Can't remember it being televised from Blackpool neither?

Ron

This would seem to be an alternative to the Floral Hall and Wryton.

Think it might have been a cinema.

poolstead1

This poster makes me smile as well, very much of it's time with chauvinism alive and kicking! Paula Val Dez described as a SPANISH BEAUTY

I mean, have you seen a male wrestler described as a handsome hunk.

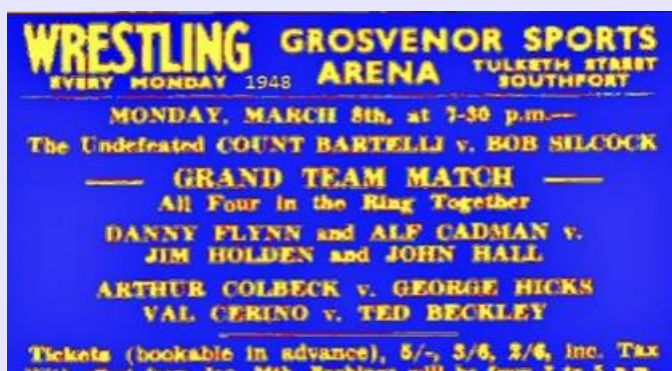
bkendo1

Worked a few places in Southport in addition to the Floral, one was I think in Cambridge at and hosted orchestral concerts, the Moulin was a cavernous club formerly the Piazza Cinema. I love Anglo's Northern baiting. Cassidy and Fred promoted in Southport so did Dominic Pye, Northern Promotions did the Moulin.

Ron

Here you are tagging with Mick McMichael.

Poolstead asks about Eric Colbeck. I am sure it would have been Alan, however we believe his real name was Arthur, and here he is again.



Anglo Italian

I too have been to Southport, in my far flung youth.

No need for all the tetchiness. Where I am seated now may seem far flung to some, but it doesn't to me because I am here.

Look at the context of my comment: televised wrestling. The tv cameras didn't go much outside an oval that encompassed Croydon, Shrewsbury, Bolton, Leeds and those Bedfordshire venues. Why would they go to places on the road to nowhere like Southport when they could deploy their resources easily along mainline routes, cameras onwards to other cities, etc? So many wrestling venues to choose from.

Bridlington, Brighton, Yarmouth, WSM, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Torquay and many other important wrestling venues were located on the coast but never televised. I don't squeal that the cameras never enjoyed Hastings Pier (the nation's loss, not mine.)

Equally, as far as I'm aware, several cities never had a sniff of tv wrestling: Cardiff, Newcastle, Liverpool, Bristol, Norwich, Hull, Sheffield....

The only coastal venues I can think of that had regular tv wrestling were Sarffend and Sarffport.

I'm wondering just why a relatively low-profile venue like the Floral Hall got the gig so often above all those hotbeds of wrestling named above?

Maybe the producers just felt that the name of the town SOUTHport had a nice southern twang to it ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ (dedicated to Broughton Ranger Minor)

poolstead1

Sorry if it came across as snotty not meant to be I assumed you were joking or had never been. I understand what you mean about Southport, after all Blackpool is nearby and you would think with its massive tourist trade would surely be more ideal and put on a lot more shows and Venues than Southport?

SaxonWolf

Sheffield was on TV, not as much as places like Croydon, but it was on.

The Ost

Liverpool and Norwich also had TV broadcasts.

grahambrookjazz

I refereed in a posh hotel in Southport for Bobby Barron and I forget the name of it but it did not last long. It just did not attract the punters; even Ricki Starr only managed to bring a handful in.

ianwpringle

Re t.v. halls being used. I think a lot was to do on if the artillery of trucks etc. could park close to the halls. Once inside could the hall take all the scaffolding and hundreds of yards of heavy thick wireing, extra lighting? Just a thought,

Regards to all Ian P.

The Powerlock

Definitely not St James especially on match days there was little or no parking by the hall.

grahambrookjazz

I attended several Wryton/Crabtree shows at The Floral Hall, Southport, including the wild TV taping of Big Daddy and Giant Haystacks versus Roy and Tony St.Clair which had Kent Walton exclaiming."iyiyiyiyi," in disbelief.

Although not there in person, I recall a TV taping there when Big Daddy had turned blue eye and he entered the ring accompanied not only by his tag team partner (I forget who) but also Windsor Davies and Don Estelle who were in summer season at the adjoining theatre.

Hack

We've made real progress discovering the opposition in Southport. Thanks folks.

The Ost

Interesting to see the Boz Cats billed without Catweazle

1978 Kid

Having previously lived in Southport for 20 years I can confirm that it isn't far flung, especially for all the Liverpoolians and Mancunians who visit for a nice day out.

In addition to the above venues, Pontins Holiday Camp in Ainsdale has seen its fair share of wrestling over the years.

In the last 3 or 4 years there was at least one show run by Megaslam Wrestling at the Prince of Wales Hotel on Lord Street which may well have been the "posh hotel" Bobby Barron used on an earlier occasion. Few would describe it as posh these days.

The reason for the regular TV shows recorded there may have been the affection which a certain former Guardsman had for the town. I remember reading somewhere that it was his favourite place to wrestle.

The Rocco world title match in 1981 has enshrined Southport's place in wrestling history.

poolstead1

Now you mention it, and I had completely forgotten I saw the wrestling from the Pontin Holiday Camp at Ainsdale a few times. It was a great place we could watch the wrestling whilst having our lunch! Happy days.

bkendo1

Zollys original tag partner was indeed the very underrated Mo Hunter, Gary Cooper was later and rarer addition.

Zolly was a superb technician and master scowler now sadly unwell and in New Zealand. Mick McMichael did a great job as a kingmaker he'd make the most lacklustre opponent looked good or usually evil.

The Ost

Zolly passed away I believe

grahambrookjazz

Bobby Barron ran the Southport shows for Pontin's along with their Blackpool camp and the two at Prestatyn (where I refereed). His promotion in the town probably was at the Prince of Wales. I stayed there a couple of years ago after attending a jazz concert and the hotel had certainly seen better days. It seemed to cater for an older clientele; mainly coach parties. The plus point was a very good help-yourself buffet breakfast which included fried bread; a breakfast item increasingly rare these days! I believe it is also offered at their sister hotel, The Scarisbrick.

Anglo Italian

No worries at all, Poolstead. Just a bit of fun. Just objectively noting the anomaly of a minor seaside resort on a par with Bexhill getting the tv gig, when so many other major venues missed out.

Ian's cables comment is a real eye-opener, hadn't thought of that at all, thank you, sir!

Could also be, and quite possibly were, all sorts of other reasons to do with nepotism and back-handers.