

TW**The essence of Wrestling Heritage****Archive****Preserving our readers' greatest memories****Household Names in Their Fifties****Paul Mitchell**

So who went on to long and who with Grecian 2000 and a vest carried it off well.

Frank Thomas

Heard it said (but not by me) that Count Bartelli went on too long, he had great ring presence and was much loved.. Don't know about the Grecian 2000 though!

Paul Mitchell

Shhhh I do Frank. I could make a list by weights ,thereby protecting the guilty.

Ron Historyo

Steve Logan

Hack

I'm one for saying that Bartelli went on for too long. But many were guilty... McManus, Kwango, Capelli, Knowles, Dempsey

Anglo Italian

Take out Capelli because he could still do the biz. McManus was clever enough to appear to do the biz. Kwango and Logan were grim towards the end. But we enjoyed seeing them in the flesh and in the ring. An element of appearance money was fair enough. Would we have preferred them to retire and disappear? I think not.

Paul's mischievous thread seems to be taking a pot shot at McManus? But wasn't successful and wealthy McManus the very embodiment of what every wrestler from above Watford Gap hated about Southerners?

He also worked very nicely with Breaks, Royals, Dennisons, Catweazles, and plenty of other non-Southerners (?) on a regular basis.

We moan about Torontos and Jack Dempsey and latter-day Logan and others for their poor workrate: never a word about McManus. He only stayed around as long as he could perform to an acceptable level.

Paul - did you ever share a ring with McManus?

Hack

Capelli I only saw on tv, which might well have been unfair on him.I just remember Kent telling us how wonderful and me thinking no he's not until he lost. McManus is an odd one.I always thought he was old. And boring. You allude to that earlier Anglo Italian. But

now we can see him in action again it's easier to appreciate what a good villain he was. Still predictable though. Some more names to throw in ... Gorilla Reg Ray, Pedro the Gypsy, Les Kellett, Shirley Crabtree, Jack Pye, if we include his 1970 comeback.

Bernard Hughes

It was certainly McManus that paul mentioned with the Grecian 2000.

I saw Capelli a few times in the early days and as i said before I rated him up with the leading welterweights at that time.

Who went on too long? Jack Atherton and Ernie Baldwin are 2 for starters.

David Mantell

WHO moans about Tommy Moore? He was one of the Wigan Snakepit legends and he and Ernie Riley still looked in great shape when they wrestled each other in that First Tuesday docu. He was uncompromisingly no-nonsense in his style and basically did pro wrestling as a second best choice in life to being able to earn money from shoot wrestling but putting him in the same breath as Torontos is just wrong. Tommy didn't pander to the audiences, but audiences with good taste always knew what a great wrestler he was.

Hack

You won't find anywhere that I've criticised Dempsey other than my comment above. Your comments refer to the Dempsey I saw in the 1960s up to his retirement when Alan Serjeant took over. This topic is about wrestlers who continued into their fifties. Jack made a comeback for the opposition. The first time I saw him in the 1970s it wasn't a bad match. Saw him twice more. He was an old man nothing like the one you have heard about.

David Mantell

The First Tuesday docu was in '88, screened '89 and he still looked (and in the gym clip, moved) in fine condition there.

paul mitchell

Anglo me mischievous never, yes I did and he was great to work with not a bit difficult unless hairline moves got him ruffled. A great professional true to the game till the end.

matey dave

is some one suggesting mr mcmanus wore a wig, how come it never came off

paul mitchell

No matey not even in your cine world

David Mantell

A combover and a lot of hairgel but not a wig.

matey dave

i wonder if anybody in the audience ever shouted out "COME ON BALDY"

melvyn m melvyn

He's still in hospital

Anglo Italian

Great to read Paul saying what a good pro Mick was 'cause he does generally come in for quite a bit of stick. I agree he was a thorough professional and deserved his status. So clever to carry it all off with limited ability and camouflaged physical features from head to heels. And of course 100% reliable.

I would love you to elaborate, Paul, on precisely what made it so good to work with him.

matey dave

well jackie pallo wrote he was a light wrestler and apart from something going wrong he never appeared to injure anybody

John

In a way, I don't think that that any of the wrestlers discussed on this topic went on too long. Count Bartelli, Mike Marino, Mick McManus and Steve Logan were all great wrestlers and great entertainers but what was wrong, in my opinion, was that they kept on winning nearly all of their bouts. Even when they were into their fifties, Bartelli, Marino and McManus were still title holders. Seeing Count Bartelli beat a young Pete Roberts, McManus beat and unmask a young Kung Fu and seeing Logan beat a young Caswell Martin just did not look right. If they wanted to keep wrestling, should the promoters have allowed it but insisted that they start losing more often?

Hack

That's an important point John, and one that I don't think has really been explored over the years. Not a case of going on, but status. I guess it's a case of not wanting to let go. But then it was the promoters calling the shots, or should have been. Another sign of weak management as we moved into the seventies.

powerlock

Passing the torch so to speak wasn't high on some people's lists

Bill Smith

Big Daddy was (or looked) 50+ and certainly went on too long

David Mantell

He turned 50 in November 1980

I'm pleased no-one's mentioned Ken Joyce as two of my favourite matches are from his later years - 1974 vs Steve Grey and 1981 vs Johnny Saint

matey dave

by the way i trust brian maxine never wore a wig

paul mitchell

Anglo Mick was misunderstood in many ways even in his latter days watch how he took bumps, he never dominated a bout he acknowledged opponents and was an extremely light worker, he had impeccable timing and was true to the game. regarding Dempsey he was magnificent in a time when the showmen needing balance and Jack gave the sport legitimacy pre pantomime villains, he was even in late age and not altogether a well man a dangerous opponent who also said more appreciated on a dales bill.

Anglo Italian

Thanks Paul. I think Mick was such a good actor with so many aspects of skulduggery going on and exaggerated reactions that he conned us into taking our eye off the action and impacts. Thanks to those qualities you mentioned, especially being a super-light worker, there was no element of competitiveness at all with his colleagues. And in fairness didn't his opponents sell McManus's evil so well, unfailingly.

Yes, in the light of that, McManus was what pro wrestling was all about.

We do harp on about the Peter Preston double-cross of McManus in January 1967. He must have been a sitting duck for most wrestlers to defeat if they'd wanted. I just wonder which other double-crosses went on with him in non-televised bouts. I bet there were a few...?

frank thomas

Funny you should say that Anglo, not exactly a double cross, but I did read in "wrestling review" that King Ben defeated Mick on three occasions, including once at the Albert Hall, and was due a challenge for Micks European title, but the next in line was Mal Sanders.

Anglo Italian

But Frank, if King Ben had double-crossed Mick once, do you think bouts two and three would have happened?

Hack

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david franklin

For me it is actually quite sad that nearly everyone mentioned probably went on too long. In a sad way the few who were forced to retire early (like Mark Rocco) have kept their wrestling heritage unblemished by old age. "Past their prime" TV of him does not exist.

It is unfortunate that the younger generation (who never saw our heroes at their peak) have only those YouTube records that show unimpressive (and often embarrassing) old men. They are not the legends we remember so well --- George Kidd, Steve Logan, Mick McManus, Jackie Pallo, Les Kellett, Eddie Capelli, Peter Rann, etc. all look unimpressive in the film that is currently available on the Internet.

David Mantell

I think George Kidd is fantastic in that short 1975 bout against Black Jack Mulligan. A really clever, thought-provoking piece of ring work.

Hack

George Kidd in his match with Mulligan was a very faint shadow of the George Kidd that had gone before.

powerlock

The Kidd vs Mulligan match was very much an exhibition showcase for Kidd

David Mantell

Maybe, but you CAN see what the fuss was all about from that match.

Bernard Hughes

Oh David, it's a pity that you never saw the real George Kidd.

When he was younger, he was so much faster and more flexible, naturally.

His moves back then did not look as worked as the later stuff on youtube etc.

At times you can almost see the opponent waiting for George to counter.

What a pity that we did not have youtube from say the 40's onward.

But then I suppose that people before me would say that they would have liked to see Hackenschmidt etc. on youtube.

powerlock

A lot of credit in this match should go to Blackjack, he made George look good

frank thomas

Jack was one of that trustworthy band who made everybody look good, I saw him meet opponents from Rev Michael Brooks, to Kung Fu, and Harvey Smith, a generous seller who's job was to make the "good guy look good" as I've said before on the forum, I can't recall seeing him win a match, and it was only on about the third or fourth time I saw him, get a pinfall!

John

I have this George Kidd v Black Jack Mulligan bout on DVD and I love watching it. I think George Kidd is great in it. Black Jack Mulligan does unselfishly sell his moves very well, as he did against all his opponents but not many of his opponents looked as good as George Kidd does in this bout, so much credit must go to George Kidd. George Kidd was clearly a bit overweight and watching it makes me wonder how great he must have been in his peak years..

David Mantell

This sort of reminds me of the debate about Kendo from some time back on here/FB where people were saying "it takes two to tango" - and then making out that Kendo looking good was entirely down to his opponents. It does take two to tango, but those two has to include the first one.

powerlock

George needed a certain type of opponent in that match, someone who was also extremely skilled and used to working in a number of styles. I wonder who else that was around at that time who was a heel could have worked so well with George. I can think of maybe two at that weight Zoltan Boscic and Jim Breaks

David Mantell

Why a heel? A clean match would have just as easily (if not better) displayed George's skills.

powerlock

It was a heel/face match I am staying with the scenario set by the promoter hence my choice. Yes there was a number of faces available that could have given George a good match but the crowd, Kent and the tv audience were behind George before the bout started which was what the promoter surely wanted. Would it have been the same in a face match maybe not.

Bernard Hughes

I don't know who was around "at that time", but in his earlier years George Kidd would make a good match against almost anyone providing that they were not too heavy.

And there were a lot of good boys around his weight in the 50's anyway

Anglo Italian

Since that was Geo. Kidd's final tv bout, and after a tv absence of about 6 years, and also since George was a promoter, I would imagine he chose carefully his opponent for that bout.

All the more credit to Jack/Larry.

David Mantell

I can understand where people are coming from with this - someone whose only experience of Johnny Saint is his bouts in the early 2010s for the Chikara promotion in the US would still think him an agile and brilliantly skilled wrestling genius - even if to most of us lot, his performances in those final bouts are a pale shadow of what he could do even as late as circa 1996..

Credit is due to Johnny Saint, George Kidd and Tommy Moore/Jack Dempsey for, even in their respective old ages, being able to do stuff that many guys in their physical primes would struggle to achieve mentally or physically.

powerlock

Although I got to see the first two or never got the chance to Moore or Dempsey. It's really hard to compare when there is literally no footage or you were just the wrong age to see them at their height. George Kidd's name alone provoked excitement when it appeared on a bill because he was so unique in what he did, likewise the others so seeing them stepping into the ring when their wrestling careers were coming to an end was a thrill for fans

David Mantell

Tommy Moore/Jack Dempsey were one and the same person (Tommy Moore was his legal name, Jack Dempsey his ringname.)

There's no footage in circulation of Tommy/Jack wrestling professionally but there is footage, in the First Tuesday: The Wigan Hold documentary filmed in 1988 and screened in early '89 of him and Ernie Riley, both in their late sixties, wrestling each other on the mat at the original Riley's Gym building in Pike Street, a couple of years before the Gym move to Aspull. Both men were in exceptionally good shape - never mind "for their age," they would have put a lot of much younger people to shame - and both of them could clearly still move around really effectively on the mat, take bumps and spring back up again..

(Admittedly, Tommy's motivation for keeping himself fighting fit at age 68 was to combat the symptoms of arthritis which was incipient in him and would otherwise take hold.
"When I get up, I do these exercises and for the rest of the day I feel champion.")

powerlock

Like I said didn't have the pleasure of seeing Dempsey and didn't pick up the second name so presumed it to be another wrestler, easily done. I know how important exercise is as I have chronic osteoarthritis in both knees, so I do non impact exercise coupled with natural anti inflammatory treatment, trying to keep going as long as I can before having knee replacements.

Bernard Hughes

I saw Jack Dempsey and he was worth watching.

Quite dour, a bit like Alan Colbeck, but they both knew their way round a ring and both of them usually got the job done in the 1950's.

david franklin

The perfect description of Jack Dempsey (and Alan Colbeck) Bernard,. It was guys like them that made wrestling so credible when I was first hooked back in the 1950's and 1960's.

Jack Dempsey featured in one of my all time favourite matches that I remember even today. It was at a small cinema in Westbury and he did a 10x5 minute round draw with Joe Murphy that was exactly what professional wrestling should be about.

powerlock

I always enjoyed watching Alan Colbeck. Extremely skilful and knew it, always looked comfortable in the ring, lacking a bit of charisma which is a pity as with that he could well have reached greater heights than he did

Bernard Hughes

That's true Power.

You would have thought that the promoters or referees would have told him.

Or perhaps they did and he didn't want to know.

He could certainly wrestle though, but with nothing on the charisma side, he needed an extrovert to make the bout really enjoyable.

Hack

I was a big fan of Dempsey but never took to Colbeck. Why? Maybe it's the Red Rose blood in me. I would like to see Colbeck again. Given another chance, who knows?

frank thomas

Alan Colbeck always struck as a dour wrestler, believe he tagged with Jackie Pallo for a time, a strange alliance!

PETER

Saw him in a match with Adrian Street-from one extreme to the other