

Allan Best

**In Memory of a good friend.
Messages posted on the Wrestling Heritage website.**



July 28th 2014

Wrestling Heritage website:

We are very sad to report that Allan Best, one of our most highly respected and knowledgeable members, died on Monday 28th July. Those who have been part of Heritage for some time will remember Allan for his informed contributions to the forum and articles written in celebration of wrestling's past masters. Behind the scenes Allan generously provided background information for the site as well as many individual members. Allan had been absent from the site for some time due to his illness. His health deteriorated over the past week and he died quietly in a lovely nursing home following visits from his family.

Allan started wrestling in 1947 when stationed in Berlin near the Olympic Stadium. A resident coach at the Stadium was a former Olympic wrestler who Allan asked to teach him to wrestle. Allan continued wrestling at a local club on his return to Britain, becoming a trustee of the club which annually organised a physical excellence show featuring many of the country's top body builders, including Mr Universe Reg Park and Olympic weightlifter Jim Halliday.

It was the start of a lifelong love that continued until the present day, with Allan not only supporting sites such as Wrestling Heritage but serving as the official historian for the British Wrestling Association. This involved editing the Association's magazine and providing information for family members requesting information about former wrestlers. Allan was able to provide this valuable service due to his interest in both the amateur and professional codes. Allan was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the British Wrestling Association.

He will be greatly missed by all those involved in celebrating the heritage of both amateur and professional wrestling. We send condolences to Allan's wife and family members.





July 28th 2014

Rest In Peace Allan, a true servant to British wrestling.

My condolences to those grieving for him.

Bernard Hughes

Wrestling fan



July 28th 2014

Very sad news indeed, and a great loss to British wrestling. Allan's support for Wrestling Heritage goes back many years. He was always very generous with his time and his encouragement for the good of the website. I know of a number of individuals who asked Allan for help and he never let them down.

Allan was one of the few people that bridged the gap between the amateur and professional styles of wrestling, especially admiring the old time pro wrestlers like Assirati, Joyce and Dempsey. The breadth of his knowledge was possibly unequalled, and it was knowledge he shared with good humour and kindness.

My condolences to Allan's family and friends.

Alan Bamber

Wrestling Heritage website owner



July 28th 2014

Rest In Peace Allan.

Our thoughts are with your family; gone but not forgotten

Tommy Stevenson

Ex wrestler



July 28th 2014

Rest In Peace Allan.

Our thoughts are with your family.

Jackie McCann

Ex wrestler





July 28th 2014

Rest In Peace Allan.

You will be sadly missed.

Martin.R.Gillott

Ex wrestler



July 28th 2014

Rest In .Peace Allan.

My heartfelt sympathies to your family

Powerlock

Wrestling fan



July 28th 2014

Sorry to hear this. May he Rest In .Peace.

Masked Tex

Wrestling fan



July 28th 2014

Very sad news about Allan , I shall miss him having done a few emails with him over the last nine months.

A great historian who leaves some excellent work behind on the web.

Rest In Peace Allan, and sympathies to the family.

Ron Harrison

Wrestling fan



July 29th 2014

Rest in Peace Alan.

A first class helpful person - will be sadly missed.

Ray Plunkett

Ex Master of Ceremonies and wrestling researcher.





July 29th 2014 Gone to the ring above. RIP

Meru Ullah
Ex wrestler



July 29th 2014 Sorry to hear of the bad news of Allan Best passing away. His contributions to the wrestling world will be very sadly missed.

Condolences to the family.

R.I.P. Allan

Mike Agusta (Phil Kenyon)
Ex wrestler



July 29th 2014 R.I.P. Allan.

My heart and thoughts are with all of Allan's family and friends. God bless

Ian Pringle
Wrestling fan



July 29th 2014 So sorry to hear of the sad news. RIP Allan.

Graham Bawden
Wrestling fan



July 29th 2014 R.I.P. Allan. Thoughts are with the loved ones you leave behind .

Tilly
Wrestling fan



July 29th 2014 Very sorry to hear this; R.I.P.

Dave Sutherland
Wrestling fan





July 29th 2014

I'm really sorry to hear about the sad loss of Allan Best. My sincere condolences to his close family and fiends. RIP Brother.

Regards

Dale Storm

Ex wrestler



July 29th 2014

RIP Allan. Condolences to your family and friends.

Tom H

Wrestling fan



July 29th 2014

Absolutely devastating for us fans to lose one of our own. And what a one.

Professional Wrestling is an enigma wrapped up in a conundrum. Allan Best managed not only to participate fully in our hobby but brought into the mix the further element of his great passion, the amateur game. I can't think of anyone at any time who has managed to straddle both codes so analytically and successfully and good-naturedly. It's not easy and most others come up short on one side of the fence or the other.

In this respect alone Allan is a great loss to us. His input that we have all enjoyed has enlightened us about so many areas we wouldn't have been aware existed.

Free sites like this depend on generosity and Allan's ongoing generosity over several years was without limits. Whenever we set him a challenge, he rose to the occasion magnificently with fascinating research, memories and comment.

But we also miss now an absolute gentleman who was quick to join in forum fun and banter. Allan found happiness amongst us all on the Talk Wrestling forum during his final years and we can be proud not only of Allan but of ourselves in collectively having created such a place together.

My sincere condolences to Allan's family.

Simon LeFort

Wrestling Heritage website owner





July 29th 2014

Condolences to the family.

Chekarma

Wrestling fan

July 29th 2014

Sorry to hear of the loss of Allan Best. Thanks for all the input to this site. Condolences to his family. May they find comfort in happy memories.

June Walker nee Robinson

Wrestling fan



July 29th 2014

Sad news. An outstanding wrestling historian and one of the few who happily built bridges between amateur wrestling and the professional game. Condolences to Alan's family. RIP.

Ray Hulm

Wrestling fan



July 29th 2014

A sad loss of an old school gentleman who I have had the good luck and pleasure to correspond with since 2012. Without his help it is fair to say I would never have got to know about my grandfather's achievements as an amateur in the 1920s and 30s. I was put in contact with Allan via the BWA in 2012 and from the very first moment he gave me his total support and assistance. This not only helped me to delve into a sport which was completely unfamiliar to me, but also provided a link to a distant past that few remember.

As a result I have found some of my roots, and have been able to enrich my family's history (and lives) a great deal.

Knowing now that he was ill during much of the time that we corresponded makes his attention to my enquiries all the more meaningful. He was one of the very few these days who cared about what he did, and for that I am truly grateful that I was fortunate enough to be acquainted with him.

I hope Allan's family can find solace in knowing that his work is both appreciated and respected, and that he enriched at least one Heritage member's life.

May he rest in peace.

TiCo

Wrestling fan





July 29th 2014

R.I.P.

Caulkead
Wrestling fan



July 29th 2014

Very sad news indeed, one of our own. RIP Allan.

SaxonWolf
Wrestling fan



July 29th 2014

I would like to send condolences to Alan's wife and family from Billy Joe Beck, the Irish Canadian.

Billy Joe Beck
Ex wrestler



July 30th 2014.

RIP Alan Best.

Bill Smith
Wrestling fan



July 30th 2014.

Always very sad when someone who makes a massive contribution to something - in this case Wrestling - passes on. RIP Alan Best.

Chris Newman
Wrestling fan



July 30th 2014.

I knew Alan more by reputation than personally through my early years as an amateur with Manchester YMCA then re-met him via this website. He was a great guy and worked so hard for wrestling especially the Amateur side. Loved his knowledge and his gentle humour. Will be sadly missed by so many: family, friends and wrestling in general.

Condolences to the family.

Eddie Rose
Ex wrestler





July 30th 2014.

May Allan be granted eternal peace & rest.

My condolences to all his family & those who grieve his loss. He will be missed.

Carolyn Injoy
Wrestling fan



August 3rd, 2014

R.I.P. Allan.

Thoughts are with you and your family.

Johnny Kidd
Wrestling fan



August 17th, 2014

Allan was so knowledgeable and made many clear and constructive contributions to this site.

I will miss seeing his name pop up in the various threads and send my condolences to his friends and family.

Palais Fan
Wrestling fan



Wrestling Heritage feature:

Allan Best:

Singing the praise of an unsung hero.



Not all those that contributed to the success of British wrestling wore flamboyant gowns and brightly coloured trunks. Allan Best never stepped into the ring as a professional, but here was a man who made his mark.

Amateur wrestler, referee (left), historian, editor and latterly contributor to websites such as Wrestling Heritage, few did more to celebrate British wrestling, and certainly no one over so many years.

Allan became involved in wrestling whilst serving in the army following the Second World War. In 1947 whilst stationed in Berlin he went along each Sunday to the 1936 Olympic Stadium, taking part in all sorts of athletic activities. Allan was fascinated by the amateur wrestlers he saw, trained at the stadium by one of their Olympic representatives. After watching for a few weeks Allan asked if he too could get involved, and so began an involvement in wrestling that was to last over sixty years "A wrestling nut," as he described himself to us.

Whilst in Berlin Allan and a friend, "Brummie" Fletcher went along to a professional tournament in the Eastern sector. The two men were given ringside seats because they paid with West German Marks, which were worth much more than their East German equivalents. The wrestling took place in a huge marquee, and was packed out. The tournament made a lasting impression on Allan, not only because he saw wrestling moves that he hadn't seen before, but



the ferocity of the matches, with the winner of the German Heavyweight Championship (Schwartz on the right) adorned with a laurel wreath and the loser (Dose on the left) unconscious in the centre of the ring.

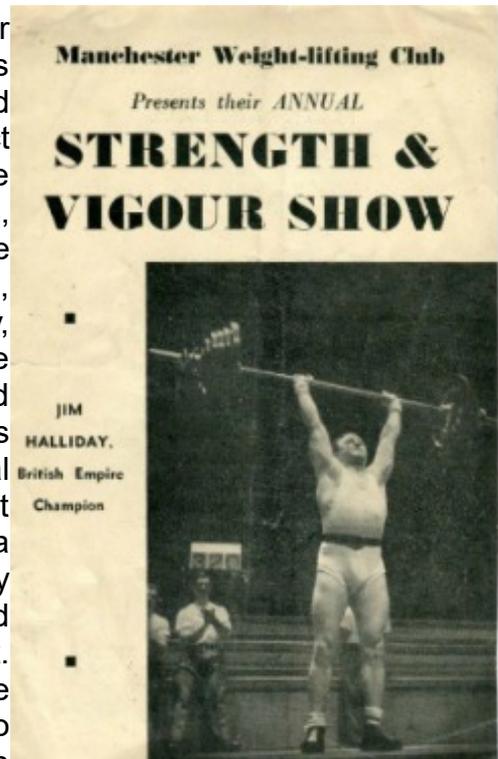


On his return home Allan found a wrestling club near his home with a very good middleweight coach. He signed up for the club and remained a member until the premises were demolished. Fortunately one of the other members established another gym and asked Allan to become a trustee. "For a small club it was in retrospect quite amazing," Allan told us. "Each year we put on a physical excellence show with the country's top "bodies" involved, including Reg Park, the one time Mr.Universe, all star weightlifting with Olympians Jim Halliday and Julien Creus, as well as wrestling between amateur champions. Happy days."

In the photo Allan is on the right arm of Mr Universe, Reg Park, around 1952. On Reg's left arm is Allan's trainer, Wilf, and the lady is beauty queen Joan Hunt.

Promoter George DeRelwyskow approached Allan with the possibility of turning professional, but Allan went into teaching. He taught wrestling at his first school and campaigned successfully for it's acceptance in the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Although Allan's life was devoted to amateur wrestling he was one of the few enthusiasts whose interest bridged both the amateur and professional code. For him there was no conflict of interest because in the old days there were many "real wrestlers" in the professional rings, and amongst those he most admired were Douglas Clark, George Clark, Bert Assirati , Dave Armstrong, Billy Riley, Bernard Murray, Jack Taylor, Jack Pye, and The Farmer George Broadfield. Allan had many memories of the old time professionals who he counted amongst his friends, "I attended a junior international tournament in Wigan put together by the great pro/amateur Roy Wood. I was invited to join a group of great men, namely Ernie Riley, Billy Joyce and Irish Roger Byrne. Ernie entertained by recalling when he toured India with Bert. They became separated and from a distance they heard screams of distress. They rushed to the source of the cries to see Bert with a man under each arm and not so quietly strangling them. At the scene they advised Bert to desist, which he did dropping them to the ground. The pair had apparently thought they might rob this man. Oh dear! The police arrived, recognised Bert and asked for his autograph. Job sorted. Amongst my other memorable encounters are when, me being the nearest person to, Primo Carnera he hoisted me up on one arm for a press photograph, Les Kellet's handshake and Jim Foy's amiable manners."



Bert Assirati was a man greatly admired by Allan, who he considered in the mould of American World Champion Frank Gotch. "He was an awesome sight in the ring and not of a particularly sunny disposition, but he was a massive draw the crowd hoping to see him beaten or if a foreigner joined him in the proceedings was egged on to destroy the enemy, which he invariably did. The last time that I spoke to Bert he was waiting for a taxi outside of King George's Hall in Blackburn, Lancashire. That would be just before he broke with Joint Promotions and was hardly seen again in this country."



Allan told us the most memorable match he saw was in 1965. It was the British heavyweight championship match between Billy Joyce and Billy Robinson. Robinson took the title from Joyce but both men earned their tumultuous applause at the end. Fittingly the match was at Belle Vue, Manchester, his favourite stadium. Allan remembered the packed houses, the tremendous atmosphere, " 'Roll out the Barrel' would ring around the hall then Dick the Dormouse Rogers would stride down the aisle to act as referee. After over

forty years one bout stands out in my mind. Maurice Tillet "The Angel" against a much lighter Pat Curry, a great forgotten wrestler. It all ended in the inevitable bear-hug by The Angel, but what a spectacle."

In the 1970s Allan's interest in professional wrestling began to wane, watching it only on television to keep his father company. He shed few tears when it was axed from television, feeling that it had had its day.

For many years Allan was the editor of the British Amateur Wrestling Association's magazine and followed that by becoming the Association's Historian. He received many requests for information about wrestler ancestors. As many callers did not understand the difference between amateur and professional wrestling his interest in both disciplines helped to answer most queries. At times Allan had to be very diplomatic and gently "let the enquirer down lightly" when it was discovered the family legends were not based on fact. Allan also helped researchers for numerous television programmes such as "Who Do You Think You Are?" and "Where Are They Now."

Allan was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the British Wrestling Association.



July 28th 2014

British Wrestlers Reunion website:

News has reached us from our friends at Wrestling Heritage that popular wrestling contributor Allan Best has passed away after a long illness.

Allan was an ever presence on both the Wrestlers Reunion and Wrestling Heritage websites providing us all with interesting articles which will remains on the site for many years to come for generations of wrestling fans to enjoy.

Allan started his wrestling career in 1948 whilst stationed in Berlin and continued for many years. On returning to Britain Allan has been wrestler, trainer, and editor of the amateur association magazine before he became the official historian for the British Wrestling Association. Allan was also awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Association.

Allan was also a great supporter of the professional ranks and counted many of the wrestlers as friends. Allan also corresponded for many years with Marjorie Assirati, the wife of great heavyweight wrestler Bert Assirati.

