

January 8th 2010

"WRESTLING AND WRESTLERS" BY JACOB ROBINSON AND SIDNEY GILPIN (1893)

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

With so much ice and snow around I cannot resist revisiting a passage in the book *Wrestling and Wrestlers* by Jacob Robinson and Sidney Gilpin (1893) which gives an account of a wrestler who tried to win a bout at Langwathby Rounds by using hypothermia rather than hipes.

In the year 1820, on New Year's Day, the ground was covered with a coating of snow three or four inches deep, when a curious scene took place during the wrestling. It so happened that Isaac Mason of Croglin, was drawn against Isaac Westmorland of Ousby. Mason well known for his smuggling adventures and his numerous eccentricities entered the ring wearing an old home-spun overcoat, so thick and patched that it set at nought Westmorland's attempts to clasp his arms around it. No persuasion could induce Mason to try and accommodate matters by stripping. He would not move a jot; and in the meantime his opponent was becoming quite numb and frigid with cold.

At length Mason showed signs of relenting, and ultimately took off the obnoxious overcoat. Still Westmorland's arms were found too short and refused to meet. Continuing therefore to doff what was most cumbersome off went the coat, then the waistcoat, and finally Mason stood stripped to his sark' in the snow, with nothing on but his trousers, where his opponent managed to keep him standing until he, in his turn, was nearly starved to death!

As I type this, the temperature outside is 10.8° C. I desperately need Isaac Mason's old homespun overcoat, thick and patched.

Meanwhile, my e-mails have been making me twitchy. On the 2nd January P.P. Millar contacted me by way of the Grasmere Sports web-site: *Dear Sir, many years ago I purchased a sterling silver watch at an auction in England 's north west . The watch is beautifully inscribed as the second prize for a wrestling competition for the natives of Cumberland and Westmoreland residing in London in 1836. Could you shed any light on it? I am currently living in Geelong Australia .* I replied by sending him photographs of the relevant pages of the 1870 *Wrestliana* which give details of the London wrestlings each Good Friday.

Then, three days later my Breton friend, Guy Jaouen , mailed me: *Roger, a prize to James Little in 1836. A bit expensive but nice.* Believe it or not another watch, another second prize in 1836, had turned up on e-bay, bought for £226.01. The web address gives access to detailed photos of the watch and its engravings. It mentions the Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association so is probably a prize at the Carlisle Wrestling at The Swifts Racecourse.

The last e-mail of the night was from another Breton friend, Jean-François Hubert, secretary of the International Federation of Celtic Wrestling to announce the setting up of a web-site for the IFCW and inviting contributions. The world is becoming a little smaller each day.

Dates:

Wednesday 13 th January Junior Points Night at Currock House Gym.

Wednesday, 20 th January Senior Points Night at Currock House Gym.

January 14th 2010

BACK IN ACTION AFTER THE CHRISTMAS BREAK

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

Carlisle Wrestling Club is back in action after the Christmas break. Despite black ice, rutted ice, and newly fallen snow, young wrestlers from West Cumbria, Northumberland and Carlisle 's outlying villages accumulated in astonishing numbers in the Currock House Gym for the second Junior Points Night.

Once there, keeping warm was not a problem, as the youngsters, ranging from six to seventeen years of age, wrestled their hearts out. A whole new crop of youngsters has appeared this Winter, but inevitably the more battle-hardened wrestlers came to the top in the competitions.



The crème-de-la-crème was Kieron Miller who won both the six and seven stones competitions, and wrestling up to his big brother, David, in the 8 ½ stones. In the final of the 7 stones, Thomas Gibson nearly back-heeled him from the standing start, but Miller managed to slip out of the chip and let his man down first. The second fall was much more controlled when Miller won by gaining hold and rushing his man forward and down. Carlisle Wrestling Club has an old trophy, small, dented, no plinth, no silver left, which polishes up to a sort of matt grey colour. Despite appearances, this tired lump of metal is of high value, for it is awarded each Points Night to the wrestler judged to have given the best performance of the night as decided by the officials and coaches. This week's general high standard was attested by the nomination of four different wrestlers for the honour, but in the end Kieron Miller was the winner.

One of the other nominees was David Miller who showed a full range of effective techniques, hipping, twisting and outside-clicking in fine style. Jack Brown,

too, showed his polished skills in winning three sections. In the Under 15 Years final he hanked newcomer Henry Wainwright for the first fall and then executed a fine combination of hipe and devastating cross-buttock to flatten his opponent.

The girls section of the club is strengthening year by year. Five athletic girls took part in the Points Night. In their own section the spread of ages and weights made the end results inevitable (Katy Brown felled Dawn Gibson in the final) but they also played a full part with the boys in the other competitions. Mixed wrestling is not allowed in the Grass Season, but on the mats in a training environment, the girls thrive.



January 21st 2010

CARLISLE WRESTLING CLUB SENIOR POINTS NIGHT 2010

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

Carlisle Wrestling Club had a hectic training night for the youngsters when the Currock House mats were filled with coaches, young wrestlers and action. When that session ended an altogether more focused and serious event began: the Men's Points Night for January when the club's champion wrestlers competed with each other and the up-and-coming wrestlers of the next generation.

Two of the champions, John Harrington and Richard Fox were at their more comfortable winter weight so were unable to qualify for the weight categories that they dominated in the summer. Richard Dixon, however, lean and tall, was fit for everything. In the 11½ stones he went through the opposition in the round-robin format without losing a fall, despite Andrew Carlile being on sharp, hipping form. Carlile helped Dixon to win the 13 stones, too. In the round-robin he felled John Harrington in the first run-through, but went down to Dixon. As a result there were three wrestlers on equal falls when all the dust had settled. This meant a three way wrestle-off with Harrington, Dixon and Carlile all dropping a single fall. At this point Richard Dixon moved up a gear and won all his falls. Sadly, Murdo Laurie, who competed so well for Carlisle in the Academy Shield, had to withdraw after a couple of bouts with an old shoulder injury. In the All Weights, too, a wrestler had to pull out half way through the competition. David Bowman, a former Under 18 Years Champion, now returned to the area as an Auctioneer in Wigton, was going well when he pulled his hamstring.



Richard Fox had already felled the pre-injury Bowman and was on great form. His falls included one of those sudden buttocks which turns a man's world upside-down. At one point his opponent's head was two feet clear of the ground with the rest of his body perpendicular above that. Not surprisingly, Richard Fox went through the competition unbeaten.

While the stars blazed and shone, others contributed greatly to the entertainment. Watchai Noimai returned to the mats after a long lay-off, and reminded us of how fast and exciting he is as a wrestler. Lack of practice just dulled his speed fractionally when up

against the best, but he was up there with them and just needed some polish from match practice. Stephen Hodgson, a student at Newton Rigg, a sparring partner of Craig Naylor, proved a handful after only a few training sessions at the club. And what about Robert Wharton? He may even have thought he was retired from wrestling, but he has been bringing his sons to the training sessions, and found himself firstly refereeing the lighter weights of the Points Night, and then taking part in the All Weights. I bet he was sore the next day.

January 28th 2010

FLYING THE FLAG AT THE ESPOIRS CHAMPIONSHIPS IN APRIL

(CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page)

Wrestlers from this region will once more be flying the flag for England on an international stage when they take part in the European Espoirs Championships in Brittany in April. The wrestlers have to be at least sixteen and not yet twenty-one years of age, and be prepared to compete over two days in both our own backhold style, and the Breton style which in their language is called Gouren.



As there could be ten teams competing in the Championships, a high level of fitness is needed to survive all the bouts, a high standard of competence in Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling is essential and intensive training in the alien Gouren style a prerequisite. Anyone who fancies a go should attend the first training session at Currock House, Carlisle on Sunday, 7th February (2- 4pm)

The coaching team is as good as it gets for us. Alan Jones and David Atkinson will be in charge of the team while it is in Brittany , as well as for the preliminary coaching, and in addition, Andrew Carlile will be at hand each week to teach the finer points of Gouren to a new generation of wrestlers. Alan Jones is the great motivator of wrestlers and himself competed in the European Championships in their early days in the eighties. David Atkinson and Andrew Carlile are our two wrestlers with the best knowledge of technique in Gouren. They have both competed and achieved the highest levels in several European Championships at both Junior and Senior levels. Their own knowledge of Gouren and coaching techniques was boosted immeasurably when Sylvain Begoc, a top Breton wrestler, over-wintered in Carlisle . His main purpose was to boost his English skills, which he did by taking hotel work, but he also put in place a prolonged and detailed course of training in his beloved Gouren.

The big question is whether we have the young wrestlers who are skilful and determined enough to make their mark this year. From Northumberland Jacob Wragg and the Under 18 Champion, Jack Hale, have expressed interest, and there are also the likes of Ross Wilkinson and Nathan Birdsall, who may take part, but have the complication of being at University. In the Kendal area, Sam Wilkinson and Stuart Mason have the qualities needed. Down in West Cumbria at Waberthwaite are Ashleigh Killip and Andrew Woodend who add so much to their academy. In Carlisle Wrestling Club are the Ridley brothers, Joe Thompson, Watchai Noimai, David Miller, Jack Ewart, Paul Murray and Craig Naylor. Ewart, Murray and Naylor all regularly trained with the senior wrestlers for the 2009 European Championships, so are not beginners. The coaches hope that some of those senior wrestlers who took part in East Kilbride last year will turn up to help with the training sessions. Everything is in place; all we need now is action.

In November and December of last year I gave bulletins about the critical illness of Kendal wrestler, Joseph Robson, multi-champion at 14 and 15 stones. After surviving acute pneumonia he eventually returned home for Christmas, only to be rushed into hospital with meningitis on Christmas Eve. Thankfully, Joseph is now at home and mending fast. He is more than three stones lighter than his fighting weight, and will be off work for a while yet, but no permanent damage has been done, and he is up and about and active again.

Dates:

Sunday, 7th February 2pm- 4pm Training session for the European Espoirs Championships in the Gym at Currock House.

Wednesday, 10th February Carlisle Wrestling Club Junior Points Night at Currock House.

February 4th 2010

CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND WRESTLING RETURNS TO CARLISLE RACECOURSE

([CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture](#) - [CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page](#))

After a long lapse, Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling is returning this year to Carlisle Racecourse, twice.

Last year wrestlers from Carlisle Wrestling Club, immaculate in their traditional strips, put on an exhibition in the pouring rain, which left them as muddy lumps. Despite the difficulties, the wrestlers have been invited again, and this time there is a plan to make it into an open competition, probably in March. The other Racecourse wrestling event will be as part of the Cumberland Show which is heading for higher ground this year at Carlisle Racecourse. The arrangement of the Show, main Ring and all, will no doubt be now entertaining the committee, not used to having fencing and permanent buildings as part of the showfield. For the wrestling, however, there is a perfect answer: the saddling enclosure. That ring is perfect for wrestling, wide and flat. And it even has raised banking on one side to ensure a better view. The new ring would also free the wrestling from its previous main-ring slot which was always late in the day, when farmers were rushing home to milk and do-up. Of course, this perfect ring would not be suitable in March as it would then be periodically full of horses and big hats.



Carlisle Racecourse was first a venue for wrestling in 1809 when horse-racing was in the doldrums at the old Swifts Racecourse down by the River Eden. A purse of 20 guineas was given for wrestling and the crowds flowed back: *The wrestling became so attractive, that even the horses were deemed a secondary object.* This project set up Carlisle as the Mother Ring of the region, and wrestling continued there for more than a century. Machell's book on Grasmere Sports concludes with photographs of the winners of the wrestling at Carlisle Racecourse in 1909 and 1910. The wrestling tradition does not seem to have continued once the Racecourse moved to Blackwell; but now it will return, perhaps for another century.

Young wrestlers hoping to take part in the European Espoirs Championships should attend the first training session this weekend at Currock House. Our Breton friends are unhappy that we seem unable to take wrestlers to the Brittany Backhold Championships in Guipavas on Saturday, 27th February this year after several years of keen participation. If anyone is able to go, please contact me (016974 73559) immediately, to see if we can rescue the situation.

February 11th 2010

FEBRUARY JUNIOR POINTS NIGHT AT CARLISLE WRESTLING CLUB

([CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture](#) - [CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page](#))



For forty years Carlisle Wrestling Club has nurtured the young wrestlers of the future, whilst giving the best men wrestlers something to do in the winter. Each year is a filtering process with the latest crop of youngsters giving the sport a try. Some give up quickly; others persevere for a year or two and then disappear, but enough stay, mature, strengthen and become the stars of our traditional sport at venues at home and abroad. The present crop of youngsters at the club is a promising and lively lot, with a significant number of girl wrestlers taking part.



At the third Points Night of the indoor season one of those girls, Megan Gibson of Southwaite, caught the eyes of the officials and coaches, for she was voted the best wrestler of a long and busy night, unanimously. In the 7 stones final she met her younger brother, Thomas, who had such a stellar season in 2009. Good, and strong, as he is, he could not match Megan's drive and balance. Twice she manoeuvred for hold and then rushed Thomas forward off the right hip. She then went on to win the next weight, the 8 ½ stones, in a final with Philip Potts of Dalston. Once more she gained a good hold, but this time was unable to rush him forward. Instead, she got down low and twisted him back over, twice. The first winner of the night was also a girl, Charlotte Wilson of Thursby, in the 6 stones. She has quickly picked up the skills of twisting and back-heeling, and is not shy of flinging opponents down hard to the mat.

Staying with the theme of girl-power, Katy Brown of Haydon Bridge was the winner of the girls' section, but also wrestled up to her big/little brother Jack in the 10 Stones. In one bout she slipped into a good hold and tussled away making all the right moves but not quite able to complete the moves. Jack may be two years younger, but he is also a foot

taller. The girl-theme continued right through the programme, with Charlotte Wilson wrestling up to Thomas Gibson in the Under 12 Years and Dawn Gibson reaching the final of the Under 18 Years where she was felled by Jack Brown.

Jack Brown stands head and shoulders above most of the other wrestlers, and he used his physique well to gain his falls. He is particularly adept at hipping and then finishing off with a cross. Spare a thought for Kieron Miller, who last month won the best performance cup. In the midst of the competitions, he limped through the door, handed in the challenge trophy, and limped out again. That's football for you.

Results:

Carlisle Wrestling Club February Junior Points Night - 6st 1, C Wilson; 2, N Dixon; 3, E Wilson; 4, A Marston. 7st 1, M Gibson; 2, T Gibson; 3, T Wilson; 4, M Wharton. 8 ½ st 1, M Gibson; 2, P Potts; 3, T Gibson; 4, N Dixon. 10st 1, J Brown; 2, K Brown; 3, P Murray; 4, O Burbury. Girls 1, K Brown; 2, D Gibson; 3, E Wilson; 4, M Gibson. Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, C Wilson; 3, T Allison; 4, W Wilson. Under 15 Years 1, J Brown; 2, T Gibson; 3, M Gibson; 4, C Wilson. Under 18 Years 1, J Brown; 2, D Gibson; 3, P Murray; 4, P Potts.

Sunday, 14 th February 2pm - 4pm Training session for the European Espoirs Championships in the Gym at Currock House.

Wednesday, 17 th February Carlisle Wrestling Club Senior Points Night at Currock House.

February 18th 2010

FEBRUARY SENIOR POINTS NIGHT AT CARLISLE WRESTLING CLUB

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

The February Points Night of Carlisle Wrestling Club threw up a few surprises. Andrew Carlile was ill and absent. John Harrington broke his hold to end lamely a promising tough bout with Richard Dixon.



But the wins went to the proven champions who learned their skills on the Carlisle mats and now are wrestling stars at home and abroad. Richard Dixon of Lessonhall won the lightweights without losing a fall and then benefited from John Harrington's broken hold to do the same in the middleweights. His tall, lean physique gives him a strong base for all the skills that he has acquired over a decade. He swung, hiped, leg-up buttocked and twisted, and, if needed, he has the capacity to fling himself backwards with an arching twist which brings his opponent down an inch or two before him. That late flying twist nearly gave him a clean sweep of all the points categories, when he and Richard Fox of Hethersgill flew across the mats in the All Weights, but it was a dog-fall, and in the re-wrestle Fox won with a crisp hipe. He went on unbeaten to head the group after buttocking John Harrington of Bewaldeth, and then sensibly back-heeling the massive young Jack Ewart to avoid lifting him. Health and Safety would have approved.

Of course, watching the top wrestlers in action is a keen pleasure to anyone interested in Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling, but watching the efforts and improvements of the younger, aspiring wrestlers as they take on the champions is equally exciting. Three young wrestlers, Jack Brown of Haydon Bridge, David Miller of Crookdake, and Paul Murray of Arlecdon had all trained vigorously with each other in the first part of the evening during the weekly junior coaching session. Bout by bout you could see them bringing the best out of each other as their coaches pushed them another inch.

The slightest of the group, David Miller had shone during training, but in the senior competition, he was unable to gain a fall, however well he competed. Jack Brown hiped and twisted as never before, and Paul Murray proved that he is back on full form. In the light weights Murray beat Brown and gave Richard Dixon a fright. By far the smallest wrestler in the All Weights, he made the onlookers gasp when he wriggled out of Richard Fox's control mid fall. He was unable to exploit the chance as Fox quickly recovered and buttocked to win, but the youngster had made a point. The three young wrestlers at least have each other to hone their skills. Imagine what it is like to come without their background of experience and years of training to compete with the stars of the sport. Gordon Nichol of Newcastleton finds himself pitched into that scenario, and needs to be proud of himself, for he is fighting it out and coming a close second to the best wrestlers. If he perseveres, he could be joining them at the next level.

Results:

Carlisle Wrestling Club February Senior Points Night

11 ½ st 1, R Dixon ; 2, P Murray ; 3, J Brown; 4, D Miller. 13st 1, R Dixon ; 2, John Harrington; 3, J Brown; 4, P Murray . All Weights 1, R Fox; 2, John Harrington; 3, R Dixon ; 4, G Nichol.

Date:

Sunday, 21 st February 2pm-4pm Training session for the European Espoirs Championships in the Gym at Currock House, Carlisle .

February 25th 2010

NONE OF OUR WRESTLERS IN BRITTANY THIS WEEK FOR THEIR BACKHOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

No wrestlers from our area will be in Brittany this week-end for their Backhold Championships. This is particularly disappointing in view of popularity of the trip in the past few years with big batches of wrestlers travelling by coach to compete. There are young wrestlers who wished to take part, but the problem lay in finding an adult able to lead the group. We may be long in tradition, but we are also short of man-power.

The Breton Backhold Championships originally arose from the usage of our wrestling style in the training of beginners in schools in Brittany . Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling is significantly simpler than the Breton style and was used to develop a feel for the sport before moving on to Gouren, with its complications and technicalities. At first there was very little participation by our wrestlers. I remember travelling with Russell Housby as the only representatives of our region to a snowy, slippery Brittany . Then the Milnthorpe Academy, with David Parsons in charge, took up the mantle for a year or two. Three years ago so many wrestlers wanted to compete that I organised a coach. Last year, the Northumbrians under Darren Whitfield went, en masse, and swept up wrestlers from other academies en route with their luxury coach. We had so many wrestlers that the huge Rocher Tremblant (trembling rock) at Huelgoat was moved as never before. Our wrestlers always did well and many returned year by year. This time work commitments prevented David Parsons and Darren Whitfield from taking charge and no-one else has come forward.



For most of the Twentieth Century Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling was a parochial affair, popular in its own area, but separate from the rest of the world. In my youth, the nearest I had to international competition was to don a kilt and wrestle at Braemar Highland Games.

Then in the early seventies Ted Dunglinson persuaded a group of us to travel to Cornwall, surely the other side of the world, to wrestle in the Cornish style: loose canvas jackets, interminable bouts and total exhaustion. Only in 1985, again inspired by Ted Dunglinson, did we become truly international and became founder members of the International Federation of Celtic Wrestling. Since then our wrestlers have competed in Iceland, Holland, Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, Spain, Austria, Sardinia and the Canary Islands.

Although we have failed to send anyone to Brittany this week-end, the international connection is not redundant. At Easter, a team of young wrestlers from the North will be taking part in the European Espoirs Championships at St Brieuc in Brittany. In preparation for that event there are weekly training sessions at Currock House, Carlisle, the home of Carlisle Wrestling Club, under Alan Jones, David Atkinson and Andrew Carlile. The training is not a secret affair, so if anyone wanted to watch the young wrestlers being prepared for the international, they would be welcome to watch 2pm to 4pm on Sunday in the Gym at

Currock House.

March 4th 2010

GOUREN TRAINING SESSIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE NOW IN FULL SWING

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

Gouren training sessions for the European Championships are in full swing each Sunday at **Currock House** in Carlisle . Three young Carlisle wrestlers, Jack Ewart, Paul Murray and Craig Naylor, are being put through their paces with fitness work, as well as detailed coaching in both the Breton style and or own Cumberland and Westmorland style. Three Northumbrians were to join the party last week but were unable to make it.



The Breton backhold Championships took place in Guipavas last week-end without any Cumbrian presence. The keenest wrestling was when young wrestlers were fighting to impress the selectors of the Breton team for the Espoirs Championships. Two Scots made the long journey to provide international spice. Frazer Hirsch, who often competes in our events, did especially well by winning the Senior 90kg class from a good field. Tudy le Meur who has been so impressive with his hank on previous visits here was top of the 74kg pile, which was the most popular category. Many of the winners were young Bretons who have spent muddy times in tents in my paddock in previous years. Despite the appalling conditions last year, the Bretons are set to return this year. Their organiser, Christian Salaun, emailed to ask for the wrestling calendar for this year, so once more the Bretons will boost Grasmere and surrounding events. My Breton connections throw up some oddities at times. Guy Jaouen, who was the original driving force for the international organisation, has asked me to find him a Border Collie pup. Twenty-five years ago Ted Dungleinson provided the first, and subsequently I have found another one. If I can find him a young bitch, he will come over on wrestling business, and take the pup back with him. Any offers?

With the Young Farmers' Field Day imminent, Carlisle Wrestling Club has been hosting training sessions for individual clubs. Longtown YFC followed on from the international training last Sunday for their session, and Brampton YFC will be put through their paces on Friday 12th March. The first event of the new season is amazingly early: on Sunday, March 21st Carlisle Racecourse will host the first wrestling of 2010.

And finally, as they say on the ITV News, I was on the receiving end of a limerick at Ivegill Bookclub last week. Retired Head, John Hefford, who wishes to remain anonymous, has me sussed, and obviously reads this column:

There was a keen Wrestler called Roger
 Who took in an elderly lodger.
 With a buttock and hype
 And an elegant swipe
 He would harass that hapless old codger

Dates:

Sunday, 7th March, February 2pm - 4pm Training session for the European Espoirs Championships in the Gym at Currock House, Carlisle.

Wednesday, 10th March, Carlisle Wrestling Club, Final Junior Points Night at Currock House.

Wednesday, 17th March, Carlisle Wrestling Club, Final Senior Points Night at Currock House.

Saturday, 20th March, 7.30pm Waberthwaite Open Night : Under 9,11,13,15,18 years of age. Under 7stone.9, 11,13,and All Weights. Plus usual Pie & pea Supper for wrestlers.

March 11th 2010

'GAME OF TWO HALVES'

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

The sporting cliché of a *game of two halves* was freshly minted at Carlisle Wrestling Club this week. The fourth of the winter's Junior Points Nights was the final chance to gain enough points to win one of the club's trophies. In some categories the final outcome was entirely open. In the 6 stones, for example, no fewer than seven wrestlers lay within two points of each other. On the other hand, some wrestlers had already built unassailable leads. Thomas Gibson and Jack Brown were unbeaten in their categories and no-one was within touching distance.

In the girls, Katie Brown was also unbeaten, but each time she won, Dawn Gibson had come second. However, the only way Katie could lose the trophy was by the luck of the draw and a defeat by Dawn. And that was what happened. The two girls met in the first round and Dawn Gibson wrestled as never before to fell Brown. After Dawn had felled her sister, Megan, in the final, and Katie had felled two other wrestlers to reach fourth place, both girls had gained thirteen points. The culmination was a sudden death decider and the bout closely echoed their first encounter with chances on both sides. In the end, Dawn Gibson won a finely balanced contest by taking Katie off her right hip with a sharp twist and rush. The Officials and coaches were impressed as they awarded the

trophy for the best performance to Dawn for her new level of accomplishment. Poor Katie Brown. Was she upset? Certainly. Did she mope and wither away?.. Don't be daft. This is the Katie Brown who rides race-horses at Point-to-Points. If she falls off a horse, she gets on again. Having lost in the girls, she then cut a swathe through the lads in the Under 18 Years. In the semi-final whom should she meet but Dawn Gibson. As Dawn went for hold, Katie caught her with a full blooded cross-buttock and thumped her down flat on the mats. All that remained was to sort out little-big brother Jack in the final. Jack Brown is younger than his sister, but much taller and heavier. Both final bouts followed the same pattern with Katie getting under Jack's guard, gaining the hold, defending her position, and then rushing him forward off her right hip.



Jack Brown had already had a good night winning both the 10 stones and the Under 15 Years. Kieron Miller, too, won twice, at 6 and 7stones in fine style. His big brother David showed how good he is at hiping to win the 8 ½ stones. And Taylor Allison won the Under 12 Years, felling the previously unbeaten Thomas Gibson on the way.

Carlisle Wrestling Club Points Night results:

6st 1, K Miller; 2, W Wilson ; 3, C Wilson; 4, A Marston. 7st 1, K Miller; 2, T Gibson; 3, C Wilson; 4, M Gibson. 8 ½ st 1, D Miller; 2, M Gibson; 3, T Gibson;4, K Miller. 10st 1, J Brown; 2, D Miller; 3, P Murray ; 4, K Brown. Girls 1, D Gibson; 2, C Wilson; 3, M Gibson; 4, K Brown. Under 12 Years 1, T Allison; 2, T Gibson; 3, E Wilson ; 4, M Wharton. Under 15 Years 1, J Brown; 2, K Miller; 3, T Gibson; 4, D Gibson. Under 18 Years 1, K Brown; 2, J Brown; 3, P Murray ; 4, D Gibson

Dates:

Wednesday, 17th March, Carlisle Wrestling Club, Final Senior Points Night at Currock House.

Saturday, 20th March, 7.30pm Waberthwaite Open Night : Under 9,11,13,15,18 years of age. Under 7stone.9, 11, 13, and All Weights. Plus usual Pie & pea Supper for wrestlers.

Sunday, 21st March 1pm Carlisle Racecourse Sporting Champions Family Day U12/U13Girls/U15/U18/U18Girls/12 ½/ AW

March 18th 2010

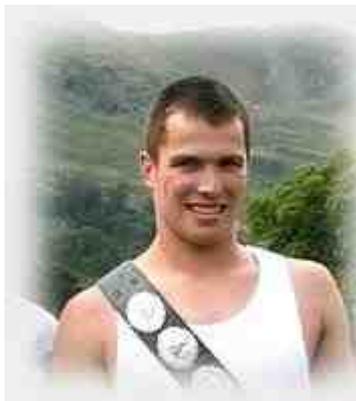
LAST OF THE CARLISLE WRESTLING CLUB'S WINTER POINTS COMPETITION

(CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page)

The dominant wrestlers in Carlisle Wrestling Club's Winter Points Competition had their comeuppance at the final session of the year.



Richard Dixon of Lessonhall had a perfect score in both the 11 ½ and 13 stones, six wins in all, but he had to be contented with two second places on the night. The crucial bout in the 11 ½ stones round-robin was when he and Andrew Carlile of Carlisle wrestled a long, tense bout before Carlile struck with a left leg back-heel and finished with a twist. In the 13 stones his nemesis was John Harrington of Bewaldeth, who had played second fiddle to him in the previous three competitions. This time he caught Dixon 's long right leg with an inside-click which cut him down to size and second place. Richard Dixon, by his high standards, may have faltered on the last night, but make no mistake, he has been the wrestler supremely on form throughout the Winter months, and fully deserves the two Points Trophies he has won.



The All Weights section was the closest to call as the last session began. Only a single point stood between John Harrington and Richard Fox of Hethersgill after all the effort of the previous months. They met early in the round-robin and it was Fox who blasted his way past Harrington with a lift, a carry across the ring and a sudden splash down on the mats. So, it should have been Richard Fox's night, and it was in a way, for he ended up with the All Weights Points Trophy, but another wrestler won on the night and showed great style. David Atkinson of Carlisle has mainly been on the mats recently as a coach for the club and the international. After a lot of wondering, at the last moment he added his name to the list, and proceeded to give the other wrestlers a master-class in attacking wrestling. His best throws were a mid air hipe-cum-cross-buttock, which accounted for Richard Dixon, a left-leg inside-hipe, which caught John Harrington unawares, and a sort of wrench buttock off the right shoulder, which flattened Jack Ewart of Westward.

Two young, strong wrestlers, Gordon Nichol of Newcastleton and Jack Ewart, played a big part in the All Weights. Nichol made extra sure that John Harrington was not going to win by lifting and throwing him forward. As an extra he then accounted for Richard Dixon after a long effort

to get rid of the hank. In the end Ewart and Nichol ended with the same number of falls, so they had to wrestle-off. That bout ended spectacularly as Ewart cross-buttocked Nichol at trouser pocket level to bring him thumping cleanly down to the mats.

Results

Carlisle Wrestling Club Final Points Night - 11½ st 1, A Carlile; 2, R Dixon ;3, C Naylor; 4, P Murray. 13st 1, J Harrington; 2, R Dixon ; 3, A Carlile; 4, M Laurie.

All Weights 1, D Atkinson; 2, R Fox; 3, J Ewart; 4, G Nichol.

Dates:

Saturday, 20th March, 7.30pm - Waberthwaite Open Night : Under 9, 11, 13, 15, 18 years of age. Under 7stone, 9, 11, 13,and All Weights. Plus usual Pie & Pea Supper for wrestlers.

Sunday, 21st March 1pm - Carlisle Racecourse Sporting Champions Family Day U12/U13Girls/U15/U18/U18Girls/12 ½ /AW

March 25th 2010

END OF THE INDOOR SEASON, AND THE FIRST EVENT OF THE 2010 GRASS SEASON

(CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page)

Last week was a busy one for Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling with Waberthwaite Academy 's Open Night signalling the end of the indoor season, Carlisle Racecourse staging the first event of the 2010 Grass Season, an afternoon of wrestling at Caldew School, Dalston, and the Annual general Meeting of the Wrestling Association.

Young wrestlers from Carlisle, Kendal and Milnthorpe joined the locals at Waberthwaite where Tom Porter had organised a big range of ages and weights to give everyone a chance. Tom and Ashley Killip who do most of the coaching could be proud of the quality on display in their young wrestlers. Of the locals, Lloyd Hunter did especially well with some big hipes in the younger weights, Tom Johnstone showed excellent class to win the 9 stones, and Philip Cowell was a leggy menace to all opponents in the men's wrestling. The visitors in the shape of the Wilson and Atkinson families from Kendal showed that they have continued to build on the high levels of last year. James Hall of Milnthorpe Academy won all the battles of the giants, and I mean giants, to take the Under 18s and the All Weights.

John Wilson, the Kendal coach, newly elected to the Governing Board was on the road again the following day with his 8-seater vehicle fully stuffed with sons and nephews, to try their luck at Carlisle Racecourse. Sam Wilson won the first event of the 2010 season when he buttocked Carlisle's Taylor Allison in the final of the Under 12s. Another Kendal wrestler, William Hayhurst, still muddy from Rugby, won the Under 18s in a final with Matthew Atkinson. Apart from those, the winners were all from the Carlisle stable. Jack Brown won the Under 15s and his sister took the Under 18 girls. In the men's wrestling two champions showed how it should be done: 12st Champion, John Harrington, outside hiped his way to win the 12 ½ stones; and Richard Fox, champion at 13, 14 and 15st, buttocked his way through the field, making light of the heavy going and a steeply sloping ring.

The Governing Board became significantly younger at the CWWA Annual General Meeting. Old lags, Jim Bland and Eddie Younger were returned for another stint, but three new members were also elected. All three represent a new element in wrestling, parent power. John Wilson, the Kendal coach, recently retired from the ring, and father of Jamie and Sam, Paul Gibson, father of John, Thomas, Megan and Dawn, and Peter Thompson, father of Joe, were all elected. Another common factor is that over the last few years they have travelled thousands of miles to events throughout the North of England. They know the state of play for our sport better than most.

Waberthwaite Academy Open Night

Under 9 Years 1 H Wilson; 2, M McCurry; 3, E McCurry. Under 11 Years 1, L Hunter; 2, G Wilson ; 3, A Atkinson. Under 13 Years 1, S Wilson; 2, G Wilson ; 3, A Atkinson. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, T Johnstone; 3, S Lashley . Under 18 Years 1, J Hall; 2, M

Atkinson; 3, A Woodend. 7st 1, S Wilson ; 2, D Hadwin; 3, C McNally. 9st 1, T Johnstone; 2, S Lashley ; 3, L Hunter. 11st 1, P Cowell; 2, C Naylor; 3, P Murray . 13st 1, M Atkinson; 2, P Cowell; 3, A Killip. All Weights 1, J Hall; 2, P Paine; M Atkinson.

Carlisle Racecourse

Under 12 Years 1, S Wilson ; 2, T Allison;3, T Gibson. Under 13 Girls 1, M Gibson; 2, E Hayhurst . Under 15 Years 1,J Brown; 2, T Gibson; 3, G Wilson . Under 18 Years 1, W Hayhurst ; 2, M Atkinson; 3, J Brown. Under 18 Girls 1, K Brown; 2, D Gibson; 3, M Gibson. 12 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, A Carlile;3, J Brown. All Weights 1, R Fox; 2, John Harrington; 3, J Ewart.

April 1st 2010

GOOD FRIDAY WAS ONCE OF THE BIGGEST DAYS IN CUMBERLAND & WESTMORLAND WRESTLING

([CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture](#) - [CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page](#))

Good Friday was one of the biggest days for Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling throughout much of the Nineteenth Century, and it happened in London of all places.

William Armstrong in his book, *Wrestliana*, (not to be confused with Litt's earlier book of the same name) gives detailed accounts of each year's Good Friday meeting from 1824 to 1869. Based on the memories of *very old members* he reckons the origins of the meeting were well back in the previous century when *The natives of Cumberland and Westmorland were in the habit of meeting on Kenington Common on Good Friday to celebrate their favourite sports of wrestling and leaping with a leather belt for the winner of the All Weights wrestling and a pair of buckskin gloves, in imitation of the prizes at that time given for competition in many parts of Cumberland and Westmorland.* After 1824 the event was much more seriously organised with big money prizes for the open events and silverware for the event for those who lived in London . Every so often a silver snuff box will appear on e-bay to remind us how lavish the prizes were. The growing success of the event led to bigger and bigger venues. In 1863 it moved to the Agricultural Hall, Islington, where *nearly 10,000 spectators* could watch, and pay handsomely towards the prize money and the large annual donation to the Cumberland Benevolent Society and the Westmorland Society's Schools.



In the 1870's the event moved out of doors to the huge Lillie-Bridge Grounds and continued there until its demise in the 1890s.

The Good Friday wrestling was important enough to have full pages of engravings of the action in the illustrated newspapers of London , and detailed accounts in the national papers. One of my favourite articles appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the 22nd April 1867, written by a city gent full of *ignorant curiosity* who gives a funny account of the friendly violence which is Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling. He talks of bodies flying through the air, plunged into the sawdust, and *a body converted for the time into the likeness of a coal sack, yet one man with a bloody nose appeared to be the whole list of wounded.* He was particularly impressed by William Jameson, the champion wrestler from Penrith who was *like a polar bear on its hind legs huge as he is, he was entered for the pole-vault, and apparently proposed to throw this huge hillock of flesh some nine or ten feet in the air.*

Four of our wrestlers, Paul Murray, Craig Naylor, Jacob Wragg, and Jack Hale, are in Brittany this week-end competing in the European Espoirs Championships. Good Luck!

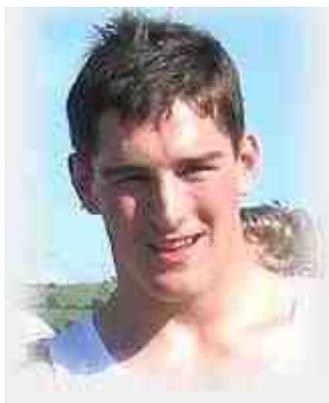
April 9th 2010

ALLOCATION OF CHAMPIONSHIPS EVENTS FOR THE COMING SEASON

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While four of our young wrestlers were facing some of the toughest wrestling of their lives in the Espoirs Championships in Brittany, the Governing Board of the Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association was allocating its toughest events, the Championships, for the coming season.



A team of four wrestlers, Jack Hale, Paul Murray, Craig Naylor, and Jacob Wragg, came up against formidable opposition in St Brieuc. The best result went to Jack Hale of Rothbury who hipped his way spectacularly through the 90kg backhold class until he reached the final with Manuel Cano Gonzalez from the Canary Islands. The English coach, Alan Jones, happened on a Canarian coaching session in the corridor outside the arena where their wrestler was being told how to block the hipe, and that is what happened in the actual bout with Hale unable to get away with his swinging exuberance. In some ways Paul Murray of Arlecdon was even nearer a title for he was beaten 3-2 in the closest of encounters in the semi finals of the 62kg backhold, with an easier opponent as the other finalist. Sadly, Murray broke his shoulder on the following day in the Gouren style, and will miss most of the coming season. The most successful team was the Canarians. They combined a fanatical will to win with high levels of technique. The best wrestler overall was Emilio Jose Cano of Leon in Northern Spain.

Seventeen events applied to host the eleven CWWA Championships. The action begins early with the 13 stones at the Northumberland on May Bank Holiday Monday, and ends late with the Under 15 Years championship at Alwinton Show on the second Saturday in October. Kirkby Lonsdale, the

only show held on a Tuesday, has never staged a championship previously, but this year will host the Under 18 Years/10st competition, an appropriate venue with so many good young wrestlers coming through the ranks at Kendal and Milnthorpe academies.

Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association Championships 2010

All Weights	<u>Alston Gala</u>	Saturday, June 26th
15st	Dalston Show	Saturday, August 14th
14st	Kirkheaton Show	Saturday, June 19th
13st	Northumberland County Show	Monday, May 31st
12st	Haltwhistle Gala	Sunday, July 11th
11st	Millom and Broughton Show	Saturday, August 28th
10½ st	Penrith Show	Saturday, July 24th
Under 18 Years	Cumberland Show	Saturday, July 17th
Under 18 Years/10st	Kirkby Lonsdale Show	Tuesday, August 10th
Under 15 Years	Alwinton Show	Saturday, October 9th
Under 15 Years/8st	Grayrigg Show	Thursday, August 26th

The annual meeting of CWWA referees will take place at Carlisle Rugby Club on Thursday, 15th April. The Association has a list of approved referees, and all of those will be receiving direct invitations, but the meeting is also open to those interested in becoming a referee.

April 15th 2010

KENDAL ACADEMY WAS FOUNDED IN 1950

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Although the Cumberland and Westmorland Grass Season has already begun with the event at Carlisle Racecourse, there is still a lull between Winter's weekly training sessions and the non-stop intensity of the main programme which runs from May to the end of October. The winter season has been rounded off at Waberthwaite with an Open Night, and at Kendal and Carlisle with the annual presentation of Points Trophies to the wrestlers who have performed best throughout the winter internal competitions.



Kendal Academy, founded in 1950, is the oldest club around. It was late in arriving on the scene, but while a dozen or so academies flourished then foundered, it ploughed a lone furrow until Carlisle Wrestling Club rose again from the ashes in 1970. Both academies rely on strong family connections to provide the base for survival. At present, the dominant group is the Wilson/Atkinson family, sons and nephews of the club coach, John Wilson, as a glance at their results confirm. The Hayhurst family was in at the formation of the academy sixty years ago, and it is good to see William Hayhurst doing so well.



At Carlisle , the Gibson family was especially successful with three siblings winning Points Trophies. Paul, their father, newly elected to the CWWA Governing Board, must be proud of Dawn, Megan and Thomas after such a successful winter. Jack Brown of Haydon Bridge was the most prolific winner with three trophies to his name.

During the Summer season, there are more points and trophies to be won. The CWWA totos up all the wins and places for the whole season, and awards Victor Ludorum trophies at its annual dinner. This system rewards persistence and mileage as well as technique. You have to be a winner, but many times. Another set of prestigious trophies is awarded at the end of the season by the Lakeland Sports Promoters Association for runners and wrestlers at its affiliated events, which include the main Lakeland Sports

such as Ambleside and Grasmere, and many events in the south of Cumbria .

Its time now to put the finishing touches to the embroidery on the new wrestling strip. The new season is imminent.

Carlisle Wrestling Club Points Winners 2009/10

6st - K Miller; 7st - T Gibson; 8½st - M Gibson; 10st - J Brown; Under 12 Years - T Gibson; Under 15 Years - J Brown; Under 18 Years - J Brown; Girls - D Gibson; 11½ st - R Dixon ; 13st - R Dixon ; All Weights - R Fox.

Kendal Wrestling Academy winners 2009 /10.

Under 8 Years -Harold Wilson; Under 10 Years - George Wilson; Under12 Years - Sam Wilson; Under 12 Years - William Atkinson; Under 15 Years - William Hayhurst; Under 18 Years - Matthew Atkinson; 6st - Sam Wilson; 8st - Sam Wilson; 10st - James Hayhurst; 12st - Matthew Atkinson; 14st - Graham Brocklebank; Heavyweights - Graham Brocklebank; Girls - Connie Hodgson.

Most points in total: Matthew Atkinson.

Most improved wrestler: Geoffrey Hodgson.

April 23rd 2010

REFEREES AND RINGS

(CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page)

Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling in some ways never changes. Hipes and buttocks were the same animal in 1810 on the Swifts racecourse down by the River Eden as they were at the new Carlisle Racecourse this month. But this most traditional of sports constantly evolves to fit in with social and legal pressures of the time.



To be a referee in Victorian times you had to have a stovepipe hat, a frock coat and an aura of self-importance, if you believe the old pictures. In my youth, fifty years ago, three elderly men used to meet regularly in the middle of the ring to pass the time of day and give decisions on close falls. No doubt some young lad may read this and say Nowt changes, but refereeing has changed, and significantly.

For a start, there are no discussions in the middle of the ring. The two judges are expected to give their decision instantly based on what they could see rather than on what might have happened. If they agree then that is the decision; if not then the referee has to agree with one of them or call a dog fall. A majority decision is entirely logical, and the best option, but that has not always been the case.

The biggest difference for referees in the past decades is that they are no longer passive observers of the action, but are constantly involved. The referee is responsible for the draw, the

taking-hold, the safe progress of the bout, the decision, and communicating it to the commentator and crowd.

We now have a list of approved referees, so that we no longer have the old worthy turning out as referee at the local show, and using the standards he remembers from his distant experience of a wrestler post-War. Most of those on the list were at the second annual workshop for referees last week to review the previous year, discuss any changes of law and interpretation, and add names to the list. As well as the main list there is also one for new referees who are active wrestlers or new to officiating. They cut their teeth on controlling junior wrestling, before moving to the seniors.

Last year's emphasis on the rule that wrestlers, once they have hold before the action starts, must keep hold or lose the bout, was adjudged a success. But at the same time referees must stop wrestlers fighting for hold, or taking a greedy hold with left elbow low.



The longest and most detailed session was about when a bout is to be declared out of the ring. Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling, outdoors, requires a ring at least 14 metres in diameter, with an extra two metres safety zone. The practice is to mark the ring with a sawdust line. The referees agreed that a fall has to be completed within or on the line to count. The wrestlers may sprawl beyond the line but if any part has touched down prior to that, then the fall counts. A fall begun in the ring but completed outside does not score. The referees also agreed to the formation of a small advisory panel of referees who were given the task of helping the novice referees and also advising senior referees when appropriate.

May 1st 2010

ICELANDERS

(CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page)

Not many people know this, but fifty years ago I took part in an international wrestling match between the UK and Iceland . The ring was moss and gravel overlooked by nearby ice-caps, and the crowds were not great being made up of larks high in the air, curious ptarmigan scuttling around our feet, distant sheep, and the seven other lads who were in my meteorological group as part of the British Schools Exploring Society expedition to Central Iceland 1960. The opposition was an Icelandic lad who had been attached to us for the summer as a diplomatic gesture in the midst of the Cod Wars. Since then I have returned twice with official wrestling teams. In 1990 Iceland hosted the European Championships of the International Federation of Celtic Wrestling in Reykjavik , and in 1994 I took a youth team to Iceland 's mega-event, the Althing, when all communities gather to compete in everything from Olympic sports to milking cows. Significantly more wrestling traffic flowed the other way. Firstly, the late Johannes Jonasson would bring teams to compete for the Icelandair Trophy, and then the late Hjalmur Sigurdson took up the reins and regularly brought wrestlers to compete at Grasmere resulting in some memorable bouts . In 1999, when Carlisle hosted the European Championships, a group of Icelandic girls came along also, and for them new events were put in place which foreshadowed the present move towards more female classes.

With the death of Hjalmur, the links became less frequent, but this year a new initiative has been launched by Olafur Oddur.

He wrote : I have been thinking about glima and back-hold, and the possibility we have to make it stronger. *I think that it would be very good for us to have more cooperation and for us to visit you and compete in back-hold. I would like to ask you a few questions which I have been thinking of lately. Is it possible that we might organize 7-10 days of competition and training to you 2010 or 2011. As we compete in some tournaments, maybe have some glima Performance and get a chance to practice back-hold under your guidance. Is it possible to have national competition between England and Iceland maybe also Scotland , for example 17-20 years old 4-5 in each team. Is it possible to get one person from England to come to Iceland maybe next spring to teach back-hold (over one weekend). This is my personal thoughts that I have not worn under the board of Gli yet, but wanted to ask you before we go any further. I have great confidence that cooperation between these countries has a positive impact on our Sports. With best regards, Ólafur Oddur.*

Nothing but good could come from such contact. We know how much the Breton wrestlers add to our sport at the end of August. The Icelanders could do the same.

Meanwhile, back home our wrestlers will be in action on Sunday after hibernation.

Sunday 2nd May 12.30pm Hethersgill Vintage Society at Carlisle Airport U12/U15/U18/Ladies Open/12½/AW.

Saturday 15th May Northern District YFC Field Day at The Square, Kirklington

May 6th 2010

WRESTLING AS USUAL FOR HETHERSGILL VINTAGE SOCIETY

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

It was business as usual for wrestling at Hethersgill Vintage Society at Carlisle Airport . The people and patterns of last year formed the basis of the action. John Harrington won the middleweights; Richard Fox took the All Weights; three of the Gibson family were in the prize-money; and what seemed like a bus-load of young Kendal wrestlers added both quantity and quality to the sport. Carlisle Wrestling Club provided the first winner when Taylor Allison felled the Kendal dynamo, Sam Wilson in the final of the Under 12 Years. In the semi-final Wilson had felled his old/young rival Thomas Gibson with two hanks which is sophisticated wrestling from one so young. In the final, though, Allison was big and strong and knew how to cope with Wilson 's ploys.

All last year, William Atkinson had to take on big brother Matthew and Under 15 Champion William Hayhust wherever he travelled, so his wins were limited. This year the other two were spectators as he smartly dealt with all problems in the Under 15 Years. In the Under 18 Years he was again put in his place by the other two, with William Hayhurst felling Matthew Atkinson in the final. The Miller brothers, Kieron and David added greatly to the enjoyment of the wrestling, but they were too light to beat the Kendal lads.

With the Young Farmers Field Day due to take place soon, one of the stars of that event recently tried out her technique in open competition. Micha Graham is a natural twister, and she duly twisted Dawn Gibson twice in the girls final. John Harrington of Bewaldeth is now very much a senior wrestler, and in the 12 ½ stones, he had to swat away the young pretenders, culminating in



the final when he felled

Matthew Atkinson with the most devastating trip of all, the



right-leg outside stroke, done in

such a way that both his opponent's legs flick out

sideways and the body hits the ground before he can blink. Richard Fox in the All Weights had a much harder task in the All Weights. For a start he had to get past John Harrington in the first round and his final opponent, Jack Ewart, is much higher and heavier. Ewart had done well to survive in an early round when Stephen Hodgson, a student at Newton Rigg, gave him a hard time. In the end Fox was in his usual confident bustling form, never losing an advantage gained.

The new rule interpretation about what constitutes a fall out of the ring was precisely illustrated when one bout looked like going over the sawdust line which marked out the ring. Just as the wrestlers looked like flying out of bounds, a quick twist from one dumped the other on his backside right on the line, and the fall was correctly given. A sad but heartening sight was that of Paul Murray sitting as a spectator with his arm strapped to his side, still in pain from the broken shoulder sustained in the European Espoirs Championships: sad, obviously, because he should have been out there in the ring enlivening the action; heartening, because he has that all-consuming keenness for wrestling which will bring him back stronger and better than ever.

Hethersgill Vintage Society Rally

Under 12 Years 1, T Allison; 2, S Wilson ; 3, T Gibson. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, S Wilson ; 3, K Miller. Under 18 Years 1, W Hayhurst ; 2, M Atkinson; 3, W Atkinson. Girls 1, M Graham; 2, D Gibson; 3, M Gibson. 12½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, M Atkinson; 3, Y Roper. All Weights 1, R Fox; 2, J Ewart; 3, W Hayhurst

May 13th 2010

CUMBRIAN NORTHERN FEDERATION OF YOUNG FARMERS MEETING

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)



If only we could tap into the energy generated by Young Farmers, we could keep the National Grid ticking over comfortably. With so much effort and enthusiasm pitted against them, the regular, trained wrestlers did well to



come out on top at the Cumbrian Northern Federation of Young Farmers, held at Kirklington. David Miller, of Aspatria YFC and Carlisle Wrestling Club, set the example in the 9 ½ stones, smoothly hiping his way to the final. There, Chris Pears of Caldbeck gave him pause for thought, but Miller won with a flourish when he nailed the last swing of a swirling bout. The remaining weights inevitably went to champion wrestlers from farming families. Richard Dixon occasionally laboured in the 11 ½ stones, but he always had the final twist in reserve. The final of the Over 11 ½ stones brought together two multi-champions, Richard Fox for Longtown and John Harrington for Caldbeck. The hectic and varied programme of events at the Field day was illustrated by the arrival of the two wrestlers wearing sheep-shearing footwear. Fox, in addition, was wearing some rather fetching and spectacular make-up. It soon became apparent that no sheep would stand a chance against either of them. In the end Fox won with a buttock and a back-heel.



The Field Day sees one of the biggest competitions for female wrestlers. In the Ladies Under 10 Stones, regular wrestler, Dawn Gibson of Skelton injured her shoulder in the final, which gave Fiona Laurie of Kirklington the victory. The winner of the Ladies Over 10 Stones, Mica Graham of Carlisle, is a proven winner over the years. She is like a Kelly doll on her feet, always bobbing up again whatever the pressure, and she has no inhibitions about twisting the opposition right to the ground. Then, endearingly, she sometimes apologises to her opponent, not a common trait in men's wrestling. The Gibson family split up for the day's wrestling, with the girls, Dawn and Megan at the Field Day, and young Thomas heading south to Sedbergh Gala. His journey was successful, for he won the Under 12 Years and in the final felled his great rival, Sam Wilson, who had won their previous encounter. William Atkinson and William Hayhurst, not unexpectedly, won the other boys' classes. Stuart Mason, who learned his wrestling at Milnthope Academy showed his class in winning the 12 ½ Stones and wrestling

up to Graham Brocklebank in the All Weights. Brocklebank showed no sign of the injury which curtailed last year's season for him. His big brother, Thomas, however, had to stay on the side-lines, for he had had a bout with a hedge-trimmer and lost.

Results:

North Cumbria YFC Field Day, Kirklington

9 ½st 1, D Miller (Aspatria); 2, C Pears; 3, P Potts. 11½ st 1, R Dixon (Wigton); 2, M Fisher; 3, D Fearon. Over 11½ st 1, R Fox (Longtown); 2, John Harrington; 3, L. Murdo. Ladies 10st 1, F Laurie (Kirklington); 2, D Gibson; 3, N Smith. Ladies over 10st 1, M Graham (Carlisle) 2, A McGregor; 3, M Housby.

Sedbergh Gala

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, S Wilson ; 3, S Brown. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, J Metcalf; 3, I Hammond. Under 18 Years 1, W Hayhurst ; 2, M Atkinson; 3, W Atkinson. Girls 1, C Hodgson; 2, E Hayhurst; 3, E Wilson. 12½ st 1, S Mason; 2, M Atkinson; 3, S Wilson . All Weights 1, G Brocklebank; 2, S Mason; 3, T Hodgson.

May 20th 2010

OLYMPIC GAMESIN MORPETH NORTHUMBERLAND.

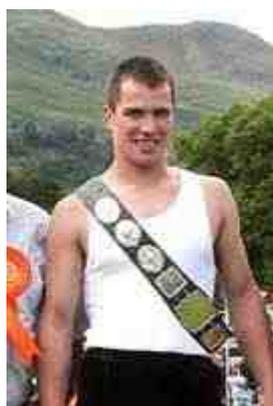
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The first time I ever wrestled in an adult competition, was in the Olympic Games. Not Athens or Tokyo or Moscow , unfortunately, but Morpeth Olympic Games in Northumberland. I had often wondered about the name, but never found an answer until my recent get-well-away-from-wrestling holiday in Shropshire when I visited Much Wenlock. You may have noticed that one of the one-eyed tellytubbies which are to be the mascots for the 2012 London Olympics is called Wenlock, and with good reason.

In 1850 the first Wenlock Olympic Games were held, combining athletics and fun events for every grade of man. The main man behind the event was Dr William Penny Brookes, and he furthered the Olympian ideal by supporting an Athenian revival in 1859, and helping to set up the National Olympian Association in 1865. In 1870 the first Morpeth Olympic Games were held and they continued each August Bank Holiday until 1958, when I arrived and they closed.

In 1890 Baron Coubertin, organiser of the International Congress on Physical Education, attended Wenlock Olympic Games, the same year that Brookes petitioned Parliament to make Physical Education a compulsory part of the curriculum in National Schools. In 1896, only months after Brookes death, the first Olympics was held in Athens . One of the main thrusts of the Olympian movement was that sport should be available for all grades of men and that provoked a response from what became the Amateur Athletic Association which believed that sport should be restricted to amateurs and gentlemen - in other words athletes from public schools and Oxbridge. Morpeth, surrounded by a coalfield and farmland, was a natural centre for a big event for wrestling and running for working-class men hoping to make a bob or two from their fitness and skill, hence Morpeth Olympic Games.

Morpeth wrestling has taken place at the town Gala for the past few years, but this year, sadly, it is off the menu. Two other prestigious events have disappeared from the wrestling calendar this year: Keswick Show knocked back by years of mud and flood, and the big indoor event at Rothbury Mart in the beginning of September is taking a sabbatical this year.



However, the official calendar of CWWA events should be available to members at the Northumberland Show on Monday, when the 13st Championship takes place. Last year was an annus mirabilis for Richard Fox who won three titles (at 13, 14 and 15 stones) in fine style. I should imagine that he will have to tweak his winter weight to defend his 13st title, but he has already shown good form at the YFC Field Day.

The Icelanders are not coming to England this year, but are instead making a determined effort to retune their backhold wrestling by holding a training week-end at the beginning of September and then looking to compete over here next year.

June 3rd 2010

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY SHOW

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Last year was a marvel for Richard Fox of Hethersgill when he won three World Championships of Cumberland and Westmorland Style wrestling. Last week, in front of a big crowd, he retained the first of those titles, the 13 stones. He may not be the cleverest wrestler in the draw, but his combination of technical skill, power, determination and general wrestling instinct put him well ahead of the opposition. He was well tested out in the first two rounds when he met John Harrington of Bewaldeth and David Atkinson of Carlisle . Harrington had struggled to weigh in for the 11 ½ stones, then went on to win it, but presumably with an empty stomach and some nervous tension. In the championship Fox was able to manoeuvre him around in their first bout until he was in the right position to back-heel. Another back-heel gave him the second fall, too. David Atkinson, who is not a regular in the ring these days, pushed Fox even harder and more noisily in the second round, unsettling Fox with his attacking hipes, but in the end winning the first fall with hold and a rush forward. Fox then fell back on his knockabout wrestling style, a man nearly impossible to knock off balance and able to turn defence into attack in an instant. He won the second bout by countering Atkinson's hipe and then finished him off with a twist over the knee for the decider.



Frazer Hirsch travelled down from Dundee to compete, and gave a good account of himself winning with both attack and counters. He hiped Alan Walton of Haltwhistle off a back-heel and took falls with a strong straight-in-front hanks. But, when he tried to do that to Richard Fox, he failed and Fox twisted him down. The second hold was a rushing, riving, twisting bout with a premium on survival and reaction rather than neatly executed techniques. In that style of wrestling Richard Fox was always ahead of the game and put in the final winning twist. In an email to me on a different matter, Frazer Hirsch commented that “ The best man won on the day. Richard is a cracking wrestler.” Well said Frazer; well wrestled Richard.

In the All Weights, Andrew Ord of Morpeth, who was close to winning the CWWA Points trophy for the All Weights last year, demonstrated again his no frills, efficient style in disposing of the lighter wrestlers and then showing his power in the final by hiping the substantial frame of Jimmy Hall of Langwathby. Hall had won the Under 18 Years in fine style when he twice hiped the slighter frame of Craig Ridley of Slaggyford.

One of the best performances of the day came from Thomas Gibson of Southwaite who felled his great rival Sam Wilson of Kendal in the final of the Under 12s despite losing out to a neat hank for the middle fall. He then went on to take the Under 14s, too, showing how well schooled he is by the Carlisle Wrestling Club coaches.

Results:

Northumberland County Show, CorbridgeUnder 10 Years 1, J Stewart; 2,D Duncan; 3, H Bertram. Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, S Wilson; 3, J Wilson . Under 14 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, A Wragg; 3, S Kyle. Under 18 Years 1, J Hall; 2, C Ridley; 3, W Hayhurst 11 ½ st 1, John Harrington;2, R Dixon ;3, C Ridley. 13st World Championship 1, R Fox; 2, F Hirsch; 3, R Walton. All Weights 1, A Ord; 2, J Hall; 3, W Hayhurst .

Dates:

Saturday, 12th June Roman Wall Show

Lowgill Sports

June 10th 2010

KILLINGTON SPORTS

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

“What’s modern youth coming to these days?” they say, and tut.



Well, last week most of modern youth seemed to be at Killington Sports. Crocodiles of them wound their way up nearby hills before racing down to the finishing tape. They leapt along in sacks, threw and tried to catch eggs, pasted each other in the pillow-fight, shackled up for the three-legged race and flung each other about in the wrestling ring. Those with time on their hands either rolled down the nearby drumlin or had another ice-cream.

The biggest difficulty for the wrestling was fitting in all the bouts before darkness fell. With more than twenty entries for the Under 15 Years the organisers had either to wrestle “sudden death” or find floodlights. Rounding up the westlers to compete was another problem for it is difficult to wrestle if you are up a hill or in a sack. Senior heavyweights like Jack Ewart and Joe Threlfall had a long wait to compete.



In the end, the last bout of all was one of the most interesting, as it pitted Grasmere Champion, Joe Threlfall against the younger and lighter Graham Brocklebank in the final of the All Weights. Threlfall had controlled all his opponents before dispatching them with an outside-hipe or a twist over the knee. Brocklebank warmed up by winning the 13 stones event.

Against expectation, Brocklebank took the first fall when he moved quickly to twist the twister to the ground. Normal service seemed to resume in the second bout when Threlfall gained hold and then rushed his man forward and down. In the decider, Brocklebank pushed in and seemed to be going for a hipe, but that was just a ploy to set Threlfall up for the twist that took him suddenly back the other way and down.



Thomas Gibson survived a fright from his old/young adversary, Sam Wilson to win the Under 12 Years. Daryl Hodgson, slimmer and taller than I remember, came top of the big pile which was the Under 15s. Stuart Mason, now working as a builder, had the shoulders and skill to win the Under 18s and a new event for those Under 21 Years and under 12 stones. And Connie Hodgson reminded everyone how good she is with her hiping and twisting as she won from a good entry of girls.

On Saturday it is possible, if you are keen enough and dad is paying for the petrol, to fit in two events: The Roman Wall Show in the afternoon and Lowgill Sports in the evening. Next week-end, get a tent and camp out after the 14st World Championship at Kirkheaton in Northumberland and take in Rothbury Tractor Rally the following day.

Results: Killington Sports

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, G Wilson ; 3, B Anderson . Under 15 Years 1, D Hodgson; 2, J Kevill; 3, F Witt. Under 18 Years 1, S Mason; 2, B Brocklebank; 3, J Hall. Under 21 Years/12st 1, S Mason; 2, W Atkinson; 3, B Brocklebank. Under 16 Girls 1, C Hodgson; 2, R Boardley; 3, H Hodgson. 13st 1, G Brocklebank; 2, S Mason; 3, W Atkinson. All Weights 1, G Brocklebank; 2, J Threlfall; 3, J Ewart.

Dates:

Saturday, 12th June 2pm Roman Wall U13,U17,11.5,13.5,AW

7pm Lowgill U12,U14,U16,12,AW, Ladies

Saturday, 19th June 2pm Kirkheaton U9/U12/U15/12/14st Ch'ship/AW

Sunday, 21st June 1pm Rothbury Tractor Rally U10/U13/U16/12/15/AW

June 17th 2010

THE ROMAN WALL SHOW

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The star of the show on the lofty Roman Wall ridge was undoubtedly John Harrington of Bewaldeth who won both the 11½ and 13 stones. Each time in the final his opponent was the up-and-coming Craig Ridley of Slaggyford. The two finals followed the same pattern with Harrington setting the pace in the first hold with attacking expansive wrestling, twisting and hipping. Then in the second hold a coolly efficient inside-click, right at the start, finished the bout. Harrington's wrestling came to an end in the All Weights semi-final when Andrew Ord of Morpeth controlled him and then used his long legs to hipe successfully. In the final, Ord met Andrew Carlile of Carlisle, who had been competing well in all the senior categories on a rising trajectory. As one of the lightest wrestlers in the field Carlile had to rely on timing and trickery. Out he went in the first round of the lightweights, but he did take the middle fall against John Harrington by riding the hipe and twisting. In the 13 stones he reached the semi-finals and took the first fall against the ubiquitous John Harrington with a neat cross-click, then lost the next two falls. Now came the All Weights. He reached the final. He took the first fall with a shimmy and a twist. The Romantic script was unfolding, the headlines were waiting to be written, then Ord hiped him twice, emphatically. Sic transit gloria.

At Lowgill Sports the most prolific winner was James Hayhurst, who had been prised from his trials bike for the evening. He won the Under 14 Years and then the Senior 12 stones as well as taking a lively part in everything else except the Girls event which was won by Connie Hodgson. Graham Brocklebank, back to his best form and fitness, was the inevitable winner of the All Weights.

Results:

Roman Wall Show

Under 13 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, S Kyle; 3, R Palmer. Under 17 Years 1, W Hayhurst ; 2, C Moore; 3, W Atkinson. 11 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, C Ridley; 3, W Atkinson. 13 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, C Ridley; 3, A Carlile. All Weights 1, A Ord; 2, A Carlile; 3, John Harrington.

Lowgill Sports

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, S Wilson ; 3, M Ford. Under 14 Years 1, J Hayhurst; 2, T Gibson; 3, S Wilson . Under 16 Years 1, W Hayhurst ; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, T Gibson. Girls 1, C Hodgson; 2, H Hodgson; 3, A Beswick. 12st 1, J Hayhurst; 2, D Hodgson; 3, A Taylor . All Weights 1, G Brocklebank; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, T Hodgson.

Dates:

Saturday, 19th June - 2pm Kirkheaton U9/U12/U15/12/14st Ch'ship/AW

Sunday 21st June - 1pm Rothbury Tractor Rally U10/U13/U16/12/15/AW

Saturday, 26th June - 2.30pm Alston Gala U12/U15/U18/ Ladies /11½ /13/AW World Championship

Sunday, 27th June - 2.30pm Patterdale Country Fair U12/U15/U18/11½ /13/AW

June 24th 2010

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling? It all took place in Northumberland last week, including the CWWA 14st World Championship at Kirkheaton Show. But, two Carlisle men, David Atkinson and Andrew Carlile, faced each other in the final.



David Atkinson is a *'rara avis'*, a rare bird, for he is a city lad in a sport dominated by farming families. We keep losing him, but he always seems to return. He broke a bone as a lad at Currock House, but returned to the ring. He went to live in France and came back. He worked for a year in Bristol, not a noted centre for C&W wrestling and came back like the swallows in summer. He catastrophically broke his leg at Ambleside Sports yet still kept faith with wrestling, steel plate and all. No longer was he a regular competitor but he tried himself out at a few chosen venues with good effect, but not quite up to his old swashbuckling championship self. He coached at Carlisle Wrestling Club and on one night was on blistering form to win the internal Points Competition. At the Northumberland County Show in the 13st Championship he pushed the defending champion, Richard Fox to three closely fought falls. At Kirkheaton the old David Atkinson emerged undiminished. He felled the holder, Richard Fox, in the first round. Fox only survived because of the sawdust line at the ring edge for the first two holds, but Atkinson then got a good hold and rushed Fox forward and down. The second success came when Atkinson buttocked Fox by the ears, which sounds physically impossible, but wrestlers know what I mean. Atkinson faced a different problem with the Under 18 Champion, Jack Hale who swings and hipes. His first bout was a disaster as he tried to buttock and missed, landing on his nose, in a heap. Regroup. Atkinson got a good hold and rushed his man forward. In the decider Hale eventually got his hipe going, but Atkinson rode it and twisted to win.



The final created a problem not normal in wrestling bouts: who was going to look after the baby? When Andrew Carlile felled Jacob Wragg in the first round, Carlile's child, Morgan, was being nursed or possibly hiped by David Atkinson. When Carlile and Atkinson met in the final no childcare had been organised so Joe Brown, Jack's dad, stepped into the breach. The final saw Atkinson return to his best. For the first fall he hiped and swung Carlile onto his knees. In the second hold Carlile rode the hipe and got last twist. At last, in the final bout Atkinson hoisted Carlile onto his right hip, reached across, high, with his right leg and cross-buttocked him in mid-air. The Champion was back. In September David Atkinson goes to Iceland for three days to coach our style of wrestling. Lucky Iceland .

Other wrestlers who shone last week were Harry Bertram in the youngest age-groups, Joe Hale, who can fell bigger lads regularly, Jack Brown who is going for his chips this year, and Andrew Ord who has got the winning way for all the heavier weights in Northumberland.

Results:

Kirkheaton Show

Under 9Years 1, H Bertram; 2, C Brodie; 3, A Law. Under 12 Years 1, Joe Hale; 2, T Gibson; 3, G Aynsley. Under 15 Years 1, Joe Hale; 2, A Singer; 3, T Gibson. Girls 1, J Elder; 2, M Dickinson; 3, E Ridley. 12st 1, John Harrington; 2, J Brown; 3, A Carlile. 14st Championship 1, D Atkinson; 2, A Carlile; 3, Jack Hale. All Weights 1, A Ord; 2, R Fox; 3, N Birdsall

Rothbury Tractor Rally

Under 10 Years 1, H Bertram; 2, C Brodie; 3, A Brown. Under 13 Years 1, D Brown; 2, Joe Hale; 3, H Bertram. Under 16 Years 1, J Brown; 2, Joe Hale; 3, D Brown. 12st 1, J Brown; 2, D Brown; 3, C Carlyle. 12st 1, A Ord; 2, J Brown; 3, Jack Hale. All Weights 1, A Ord; 2, N Birdsall ;3, Jack Hale.

Dates:

Saturday, 26th June 2.30pm Alston Gala U12/U15/U18/ Ladies /11 ½ /13/AW World Championship

Sunday, 27th June 2.30pm Patterdale Country Fair U12/U15/U18/11 ½ /13/AW

Saturday, 3rd July 12 noon Skelton Show U13/U16/U18/11 ½ /13/AW

Sunday, 4th July Langdale Gala

Distington

July 1st 2010

ALSTON GALA

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

After a ten year monopoly by the great Scots wrestler, Robert McNamara, ending in 2007, the CWWA All Weights World Championship has become a more open contest. The young heavyweights, Russell Housby and Richard Younger, shared the spoils for the past three years, but when the entries were taken for the championship at Alston Gala, neither was in the draw. The holder, Richard Younger, who won at Langhom Common Riding last year, was at home nursing a broken jaw, so his father had to return the big championship trophy. As a result there was bound to be a new champion. Would it be one of the heavier, older wrestlers or one of the rising generation? Round by round the more mature wrestlers saw off the challenge of the young. Joe Threlfall had rude awakening with his first bout when the Under 18 Champion, Jack Hale, hiped and twisted him for the first fall, but he recovered to win the next two holds with controlled style. In the semi-finals he was back-heeled the Northumbrian heavyweight, Andrew Ord, for the first fall and then took the second with his well-honed twist over the knee. In the other half of the draw, Darren Whitfield, the Rothbury Academy coach, warmed up in the first round by hiping the big Wigton lad, Jack Ewart, twice. In the semi-final he met the new 14st Champion, David Atkinson, and practised his twists and buttocks, giving the lighter man no chance.

So, the final brought together two wrestlers, Threlfall and Whitfield, who would surely have held the championship in the last decade, but for Robert McNamara. At first each bout seemed like a stalemate, with Threlfall gaining the better hold and Whitfield fighting against it, but all that changed in an instant when Whitfield feinted right and then twice brought his man down with a quick buttock to win the All Weights Championship for the first time at the age of 37. This was not, however, Whitfield's first championship, for he held the 14st belt for three years in 1991-3, before he grew too big, and Big Mac came on the scene for the Heavyweights. Following his career as a Civil Engineer, he spent some years in the South of England and was only an occasional competitor in the Northern rings. Having returned with his family to Rothbury he has become a major player in the renewal of Rothbury Wrestling Academy, and is giving so much back to Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling. One of his young protégés, Joe Hale, had an excellent day, going home with an armful of trophies. Carlisle wrestlers, Andrew Carlile and David Atkinson, showed their class by winning the 11 ½ st and 13st respectively. Carlisle smoothly eliminated the younger wrestlers with neat twists and hipes. Atkinson was in full flow with his speciality hipe off the right hip.



At Patterdale Country Fair the wrestling was in direct competition with the England v Germany game in the football World Cup, so spectators were thinner than normal, whilst the wrestling entries were surprisingly good, mainly because of the Kendal Academy contingent. William Atkinson wrestled well in both boys' and men's events, but the undoubted star was Graham Brocklebank, who won both the 13 stones and the All Weights. In the final of the All Weights, Jimmy Hall gave him a shock by taking the first fall and pressing hard for the other two, but in the end Brocklebank managed to twist him over the knee.

Results:

Alston Gala

Under 9 Years 1, L McLaughlin; 2, H Wilson ; 3, J Threlfall. Under 12 Years 1, Joe Hale; 2, T Gibson; 3, T Athey. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, Joe Hale; 3, T Gibson. Under 18 Years 1, J Hall; 2, J Brown; 3, J Wragg.

Ladies 1, D Thompson; 2, M Gibson. 11 ½ st 1, A Carlile; 2, W Atkinson; 3, C Ridley. 13st 1, D Atkinson; 2, A Carlile; 3, J Wragg. All Weights World Championship 1, D Whitfield; 2, J Threlfall; 3, A Ord.

Patterdale Country Fair

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, S Wilson; 3, G Wilson . Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, T Gibson; 3, Jack Hall. Under 18 Years 1, James Hall; 2, M Atkinson; 3, W Atkinson. 11 ½ st 1 W Atkinson; 2, B Brocklebank; 3, S Wilson . 13st 1, G Brocklebank; 2, W Atkinson; 3, B Brocklebank. All Weights 1, G Brocklebank; 2, James Hall; 3, M Atkinson.

Dates:

Saturday, 3rd July 12 noon Skelton Show U13/U16/U18/11 ½ /13/AW

Sunday, 4th July 2pm Langdale Gala U12/U15/U18/11/13/AW/Girls

12.30 Distington U12/U15/U18/12 ½ /AW

Sunday, 11th July Haltwhistle Carnival including 12st World Championship

July 8th 2010

SKELTON SHOW

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)



Skelton Show, on its earlier date, had a big crowd basking in the sun. Langdale Gala, a day later, had mud-ruts in the field and spectators were sparse and soggy. A stormy morning cancelled the wrestling at Distington and there was no-one there, anyway. At Skelton the wrestlers were competing with the horses in the main ring. Wrestlers were in full flow in one part and yards away Clydesdale horses were stamping white cosmetic powder off their fetlocks. And all round the big ring, crowds of spectators focused on the wrestling. After the thin attendance of wrestlers last year, this year they saw the sport at its best. Richard Dixon of Lessonhall made a welcome return to the ring after an agricultural lay-off, and he was in fine fettle. In the 11½ st Final he reminded John Harrington how he deals with the hank, by throwing himself and his opponent backwards with arched back in a freestyle salto; then he buttocked him for the next fall. Richard Fox, fresh from sheep-shearing and an appropriate hair-cut, had the last laugh with his trade-mark power and skill when he felled John Harrington in the 13st final, firstly with a back-hel and then with what my father used to call "a twist off the breast". One of the best bouts of the day was in the 13st semi-final when Andrew Carlile swinging hiped John Harrington from a standing start for the first fall, and just failed to do the same in the next two bouts as Harrington countered the attacks. David Atkinson, after a bit of sweaty running, was still unable to beat the scales for the 13 stones, so he could only compete in the All Weights. All was going fine until he met Joe Threfall in the final and succumbed to the weight and power. Threfall chested down as Atkinson attacked for the first fall and felled him with his trade-mark twist over the knee for the second. Local wrestler Thomas Gibson won the Under 13 Years from a good turnout of youngsters ahead of two other Thomases: Messrs Wales and Greenbank. After that the boys wrestling was dominated by the fine contingent from South Cumbria . In the Under 16 Years, William Hayhurst twisted and screwed Matthew Atkinson into the ground. And Jimmy Hall, with his Milnthorpe Academy vest, flung everyone around in the Under 18 Years.



The trip to Langdale Gala the next day took me past a shrunken Thirlmere reservoir to a soggy field at Chapel Stile. Kendal Academy was there in force and did themselves and their coach, John Wilso, credit with their spirited and skilful wrestling in wet conditions. Best of all was Graham Brocklebank with his hoists and hipes and a double win. William Atkinson, too, had a double by winning an age event and then the 11 stones.

The 12st CWWA World Championship, held by John Harrington, is top of the bill at Haltwhistle Carnival this Sunday, so that is the focus for wrestlers and fans this week-end.

Results:
Skelton Show

Under 13 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, T Wales ; 3, T Greenbank. Under 16 Years 1, W Hayhurst ; 2, M Atkinson; 3, P Potts. Under 18 Years 1, J Hall; 2, W Hayhurst ; 3, S Mason. 11 ½ st 1, R Dixon; 2, John Harrington; 3, A Carlile 13st 1, R Fox; 2, John Harrington; 3, R Dixon . All Weights 1, J Threlfall; 2, D Atkinson; 3, John Harrington.

Langdale Gala

Under 12 Years 1, S Wilson ; 2, J Wilson; 3, T Hayhurst. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, S Wilson ; 3, J Hayhurst. Under 18 Years 1, W Hayhurst ; 2, M Atkinson; 3, W Atkinson. Girls 1, C Hodgson; 2, A Beswick; 3, E Hayhurst . 11st 1, W Atkinson; 2, B Brocklebank; 3, J Hayhurst. 13st 1, G Brocklebank; 2, M Atkinson; 3, G Benson. All Weights 1, G Brocklebank; 2, M Atkinson; 3, W Hayhurst .

(The wrestling at **Distington** was cancelled because of stormy weather)

Dates:Sunday, 11th July 2pm - Haltwhistle Carnival U12/U15/U18/Nov/12st Ch'ship/13 ½ /AW/2xGirls
Saturday, 17th July 3.15pm - Cumberland Show U12/U15&7st/U15/GirlsU15/U18 Ch'ship/12/14/AW

Sunday, 18th July - Coniston

- Great Ecclestone

July 15th 2010

12 STONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP AT HALTWHISTLE

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)



Andrew Carlile is the new Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling 12st World Champion. He adds the title to two others won last season, the 10 ½ stones, which he soon defends at Penrith Show, and the 11 stones. He previously won the 12 stone championship in 2006. Andrew Carlile is one of wrestling's best assets. At thirty years of age he can look back on a fine career both at home and abroad. He competed in the European Championships as a senior wrestler fourteen years ago, and has been involved as a competitor or coach ever since. Each Winter he is a key part of the coaching team at Carlisle Wrestling Club, bringing on the next generation to higher levels of skill. He is also an organiser, not afraid of taking teams abroad or sorting out sweat shirts and trophies for the club. AND, best of all, he wrestles brilliantly. As a lightweight, he cannot rely on power and endurance, so he has to be adept at using the right technique at the right time with the right wrestler. All that was on show at Haltwhistle Carnival in the 12st Championship. In the first round he met the young Kendal wrestler, William Atkinson, felled him with an outside-hipe for the first fall then saved his energy in the second by feinting to go in one direction and then smartly twisting back and down when the lad least expected it.

The semi-final was a stern test for it brought him up against the holder, John Harrington. Carlile realises that if the bout settled down, he would be brought under control by Harrington's extra power, weight and clever technique, so he launched himself into an immediate attack, and swung his opponent up and round on an inside-hipe. In their second bout, Harrington gained the sort of hold that Carlile feared but he immediately attacked with a back-heel and twist to gain the fall. The final brought Carlile up against

Richard Dixon, another of the young stars from Carlisle Wrestling Club. Dixon had been on great form the previous week at Skelton Show, and was as fit and lean as I have ever seen him. Despite Dixon 's long legs, Carlile again went for the swinging inside-hip and cleaned his opponent, just beside the table with the trophies. The second hold was completely different, for Dixon attacked with the buttock, but Carlile was waiting for it, stepped in front and rushed Dixon to the grass off the right hip.

The wrestling at Haltwhistle was great from beginning to end. Thomas Gibson was too good for the locals in the Under 12s, Joe Thompson was back to top form when he buttocked James Hall twice and then felled Stuart Mason in the final of the Under 18 Years, and then went on to win an excellent Novice competition. Richard Fox beat David Atkinson in a three fall final of the 13 ½ stones, and Andrew Ord contained a rampant Jack Hale to add to his growing list of All Weights wins.

Results: Haltwhistle Carnival

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, C Baluch; 3, J Kent. Under 15 Years 1, K Kennedy; 2, W Atkinson; 3, J Hayhurst. Under 18 Years 1, J Thompson; 2, S Mason; 3, J Wragg. Girls Under 15 Years 1, M Gibson; 2, A Marsden. Ladies Open 1, A Henry. 2, M Gibson; 3, C Payne. Novices 1, J Thompson; 2, L Crawford; 3, K Kenny. 12st World Championship 1, A Carlile; 2, R Dixon ; 3, John Harrington. 13 ½ st 1, R Fox; 2, D Atkinson; 3, John Harrington. All Weights 1, A Ord; 2, J Hale; 3, John Harrington.

Dates:

Saturday, 17th July 3.15pm Cumberland Show U12/U15&7st/U15/GirlsU15/U18 Ch'ship/12/14/AW (£900+ prizemoney)

Sunday, 18th July 3pm Coniston U12/U15/U18/11 ½ /13/AW/Girls

Great Ecclestone.

Saturday, 24th July Penrith including 10 ½ st World Championship

Sunday, 25th July Flookburgh

Thursday, 29th July Ambleside Sports

Friday, 30th July Langholm Common Riding

July 22nd 2010

CUMBERLAND SHOW

(CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page)



The Cumberland Show's new venue at Carlisle Racecourse proved a winner for Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling. The bouts took place in the Saddling Enclosure on one of the best surfaces of the season so far, without rain, and closely surrounded by a keen and knowledgeable crowd. The only downside was that the ring was away beyond the outer limits of the main show. The actual wrestling was a vintage display with numerous close decisions and many bouts going to the full three falls because the protagonists were so well matched. Two young and rising wrestlers could be particularly pleased with their performance: Joe Thompson of Alston won the Under 18 Years Championship from a classy field, and Andrew Ord of Morpeth won the Guinness Trophy for the best wrestling performance of the day. In the first round of the Under 18s, David Miller's subtle skills were negated by Joe Thompson's power, and much the same happened in the second round when Craig Ridley made much of the running, but Thompson had the last twist. Kendal's Matthew Atkinson has been winning widely, but in the semi-final Thompson twice felled him with a counter to the back-heel. In the other half of the draw Stuart Mason of Milnthorpe had been fighting his way through the heavier end of the entry. Having lost his first fall when Patrick Payne of Waberthwaite stepped right across him, he made amends by gaining hold and using it wisely to fell both Payne and the weighty and skilful James Hall. Having reached the final he then took the first fall by stepping right across his man as Payne had done to him. Usually this move is suicide, but Thompson wobbled, Mason persisted desperately and Thompson crashed down. A Thompson big back-heel equalised the score, and when Mason tried to repeat his first bout strategy it came unstuck and Thompson hoisted him up and back. At sixteen years of age Thompson will almost certainly set the standard for next year, too. Heavyweight Andrew Ord had very little wrestling to do, but he nevertheless, he was

John Richardson's choice for the Guinness Trophy. The All Weights was a sort of remix of the Championship at Alston, but this time roles were reversed. Darren Whitfield, the new champion, was carefully marshalled and felled by Joe Threlfall, who then moved on to the final against Andrew Ord. The weight difference between the two is significant. Ord may weigh in at a tall fifteen stones, but he looked decidedly fragile once Threlfall clamped him in. At Alston when the two met in the championship, Ord had crumbled, but this time he hiped. The lock-hipe allows a pressured wrestler to use his opponent's hold to lift him. Ord went close, locked knee and foot either side of Threlfall's leg, leaned back, lifted with arms and leg, and twisted him down. Threlfall pulled back a fall, but for the decider Ord went for the lock-hipe again, successfully. Other eye-catchers were: Matthew Atkinson flattening Watchai Noimai with a flying, swinging inside-click; John Harrington cross-buttocking Matthew Atkinson in mid-air: David Atkinson winning at 14st with a mixture of caution and his usual bravado.

Great Eccleston Show was dominated by David Parson's Milnthorpe wrestlers, and the unbeatable Graham Brocklebank.



At soggy, soggy Coniston Matthew Atkinson had a marvellous pay-day being the best of the young guns. He swung and hiped with gusto or possibly to keep warm. And Sam Wilson, on the last day before his disqualifying birthday, won the Under 12 Years in great style.

Results:

Cumberland Show - Under 12 Years 1, Joe Hale; 2, T Gibson; 3, M Wharton. Under 15 Years/7st 1, Joe Hale; 2, S Wilson ; 3, C Whitfield. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, Jack Hall. Under 18 Years World Championship 1, J Thompson; 2, S Mason; 3, M Atkinson. 12st 1, John Harrington; 2, C Ridley; 3, R Dixon . 14st 1, D Atkinson; 2, J Hale; 3, John Harrington. All Weights 1, A Ord; 2, J Threlfall; 3, D Whitfield. Girls Under 15 Years 1, M Gibson; 2, E Hayhurst ; 3, A Beswick.

Great Eccleston Show - Under 12 Years 1, K McNally; 2, T Hodgson. Under 15 Years 1, I Hammond; 2, A Holland ; 3, J Collins. Under 18 Years 1, S Mason; 2, B Brocklebank; 3, K McNally. 13st 1, G Brocklebank; 2, S Mason; 3, B Brocklebank. All Weights 1, G Brocklebank; 2, S Mason; 3, L Derbyshire. Girls 1, C Hodgson; 2, E Fox.

Coniston - Under 12 Years 1, S Wilson; 2, J Wilson ; 3, T Gibson. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, J Wilson . Under 18 Years 1, M Atkinson; 2, J Brown; 3, W Atkinson. Girls 1, M Gibson; 2, A Beswick; 3, E Hayhurst. 11 ½ st 1, M Atkinson; 2, J Brown; 3, W Atkinson. 13st 1, M Atkinson; 2, J Brown; 3, W Atkinson. All Weights 1, M Atkinson; 2, J Brown; 3, J Hayhurst. Guinness Trophy: A Ord.

Dates:

Saturday, 24th July 1pm Penrith Show U12/U15/U18/10 ½ st Ch'ship/11 ½ /13/AW

Sunday, 25th July 12.30pm Flookburgh U12/U15/U18/Girls/11 ½ /13/AW

Thursday, 29th July 1pm Ambleside Sports U12/U15/U18/GirlsU14/11 ½ /12 ½ /14/AW/Ladies open

Friday, 30th July 2.30pm Langholm U12/U16/Girls/11 ½ /13/AW

Saturday 31st July 2pm Beetham Sports U12/U14/U16/U18/12 ½ /AW

1pm Cockermonth Show U12/U15/U18/Girls/11 ½ /13/AW

Thursday, 5th August 3pm Ings U12/U15/U18/Girls/12/AW/Costume

July 29th 2010

PENRITH SHOW

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)



Andrew Carlile was a triple champion when he defended his 10½ st World Championship Cumberland and Westmorland style at Penrith Show, and he remained so at the end.

Entries in lightweight wrestling are light in more ways than one with the average weight of young men so much greater than fifty years ago. When the first CWWA champions were introduced before the First World War, the weights were 8½ st , 9½ st, 11st and All Weights. Last year's 10½ st event was enhanced by the Bretons; this year two Scots, Davy Blair and George Temple, travelled down from Dundee. They had the misfortune to be drawn against each other in the first round where Temple won. In the semi-final Temple gave Carlile, the holder, a big fright when each wrestler went all-out to swing. Amongst the blurring action, Carlile just managed to swing under his man and out at the other side before the crash-landing. Thereafter, Carlile, and his tactical nous was always in control and he back-heeled the young Scot to reach the final. His opponent, Adam Ridley, has held the Under 18 Years/10st title for three years, but wrestles much less frequently than his younger brother, Craig. He is a cagey wrestler usually, and that is how he began with Jack Brown before opening up more confidently. Carlile was enjoying the luxury of meeting wrestlers his own weight, but he used a minimum of effort to win the first fall against Ridley, when Carlile suddenly twisted the "wrong" way, round and down, helped by a right leg outside-stroke. In the second and last bout Carlile finished with a flourish, swinging Ridley away on an inside-hipe, to win the 10½ st title for the tenth time, a new record. The previous holder had been another Carlisle man, Jimmy Atkinson, who held that title nine times between 1961 and 1987.

The big crowd round the Penrith ring was kept fully entertained for the length of a football match as Thomas Gibson had to go for his "chips" to win the Under 12 Years against Sam Brown, ending with a cross-click which saved the day. His big sister, Megan, felled his even bigger sister Dawn in the final of the Open Ladies. William Atkinson continued his great form this year in winning the Under 15s, and the new Under 18 Years champion, Joe Thompson, survived the clever wiles of Craig Ridley, to win his age group.

Amongst the men it was more or less business as usual with John Harrington struggling with the weights then hipping his way to another 11 ½ st win against the much improving Jack Brown in the final. This was the first of three finals for Harrington. He took the first fall against Richard Fox in the 13st final when after some balletic moves from one side to the other, he finished it with a leg-up buttock. After that Fox kept more control and in front of his man, and won with an outside-hipe and a back-heel.

At this point the unusual happened, when a rare visitor to our rings, John Hirsch of Dundee, won the All Weights. Although he is a positive wrestler, most of his falls came when Cumbrian wrestlers went for their chips and bounced off him to the ground, helped on their way by a Hirsch counter. Richard Fox failed with a leg-up buttock in the semi-final, and so did John Harrington in the final, twice.

At Flookburgh, Graham Brocklebank was once more completely dominant in the top men's weights. David Parsons beat his brother Joe in the 11½ st final. And Thomas Gibson chalked up yet another win.

Results:

Penrith Show - Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, S Brown; 3, T Wailes. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, P Potts. Under 18 Years 1, J Thompson; 2, C Ridley; 3, M Atkinson. Open Ladies 1, M Gibson; 2, D Gibson; 3, A Laing. 10 ½ st World Championship 1, A Carlile; 2, A Ridley; 3, G Temple . 11 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, J Brown; 3, A Ridley. 13st 1, R Fox; 2, John Harrington; 3, W Atkinson. All Weights 1, J Hirsch; 2, John Harrington; 3, R Fox.

Flookburgh - Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, T Hayhurst; 3, J Gibson. Under 15 Years 1, I Hammond; 2, T Gibson; 3, S Wilson . Under 18 Years 1, J Hall; 2, M Atkinson; 3, I Hammond. Girls 1, M Gibson; 2, E Hayhurst. 11 ½ st 1, D Parsons; 2, J Patsons; 3, M Atkinson. 13st 1, G Brocklebank; 2, M Atkinson; 3, D Parsons. All Weights 1, G Brocklebank; 2, M Atkinson; 3 J Hall.
Friday, 30th July 2.30pm Langholm U12/U16/Girls/11 ½ /13/AW

Saturday 31st July 2pm Beetham Sports U12/U14/U16/U18/12 ½ /AW

1pm Cockermouth Show U12/U15/U18/Girls/11 ½ /13/AW

Thursday, 5th August 3pm Ings U12/U15/U18/Girls/12/AW/Costume

August 12th 2010

5 EVENTS, LONG DISTANCES TO TRAVEL, AND DODGY WEATHER

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

With five events, big distances to travel, and dodgy weather, the keenness of wrestlers and followers was fully tested last week, but each event, in its own way kept the crowds well entertained with skilful and competitive wrestling.

At Lunesdale Show, Kirkby Lonsdale, the Under 18 Years 10st World Championship gave the lighter lads a chance to shine. Ben Brocklebank of Warton had the hardest route to the final for he had to beat two clever lightweights, David Miller of Wigton and Bradley Thompson of Kendal. In the final against Jack Brown of Haydon Bridge his good form continued when he took the first fall with a back-heel which became a twist over the knee. This was a wake-up call for Brown and he equalised with his own chopping right-leg back-heel. For the decider, Brown went for attack, hiped Brocklebank into a bad position and finished him off with a back-over twist. The championship win was well deserved for a lad who has followed the ring all year, and is showing greater and greater skill.

The biggest problem at Ings was a lack of officials and a microphone, but a good appreciative crowd stayed behind to see the Wilson/Atkinson and Hodgson/Brocklebank families battle it out.

At Powburn Jack Brown revved up for the Championship with a win at Under 16. Jacob Wragg hanked his way to a first victory in the 11 ½ stones, Jack hale swung and hiped for the 14st, and Richard Younger leaned on and outside-stroked all-comers in the All Weights.

Gilsland was the Richard Fox show, his best fall an inside-click in mid air set up by a hipe. John Harrington won the 11 ½ st final against Watchai Noimai, then travelled on to Forestburngate to fell the same opponent in the final of the same weight.

At Forestburngate Andrew Ord was the main man, winning the Under 21s and at 15 ½ st. He also pressed the All weights Champion, Darren Whitfield hard in the All Weights final, taking the first fall. In the end we saw the unlikely use of a full-blooded hank from Whitfield to dispatch Ord for the decider.

And then there is the Gibson family: Thomas won at four different venues, John won the midge-weight event of Under 8 Years at Kirkby Lonsdale, and Megan travelled to Bridge of Allan Highland Games where she had 65 bouts, won the 7 ½ st against male opposition, and was second in the Scottish Ladies 8 ½ st Championship. The biggest martyr to the wrestling cause was Megan's grandfather, John Armstrong, who thinks Scottish bagpipes should remain a distant whisper. At one point the wrestling continued as 59 pipe bands played together at full throttle nearby.

Results:

Ings Sheepdog Trials

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, J Wilson ; 3, N Newman. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, D Hodgson; 3, S Wilson . Under 18 Years 1, M Atkinson; 2, B Brocklebank; 3, D Hodgson. Girls 1, C Hodgson; 2, M Gibson; 3, E Newman. 12 ½ st 1, M Atkinson; 2, D Hodgson; 3, W Atkinson. All weights 1, T Hodgson; 2, S Robson ; 3, M Atkinson.

Powburn Show

Under 10 Years 1, H Bertram; 2, T Davidson; 3, E Robson . Under 13 Years 1, A Singer; 2, Joe Hale; 3, T Gibson. Under 16 Years 1, J Brown; 2, C Liddel; 3, C Carlyle. Novice 1, J Stephenson; 2, R Dodds; 3, J Wragg. 11 ½ st 1, J Wragg; 2, J Brown; 3, W Robson . 14st 1, Jack Hale; 2, J Wragg; 3, E Coxon . All Weights 1, R Younger; 2, J Davidson; 3, J Stephenson.

Gilsland Show

Under 14 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, S Wilson; 3, G Wilson . Under 18 Years 1, C Ridley; 2, W Atkinson; 3, J Brown Girls Under 15 Years 1, C Hodgson; 2, G Mitchell; 3, A Marsdaen. Ladies Open 1, C Hodgson; 2, A McGregor; 3, H Hodgson. 11 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, W Noimai ; 3, J Brown. 13 ½ st 1, R Fox; 2, M Laurie; 3, G Nichol. All Weights 1, R Fox; 2, G Nichol; 3, John Harrington.

Forestburngate

Under 10 Years 1, H Bertram; 2, J Nellis 3, D Wilson. Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, H Bertram; 3, C Whitfield. Under 15 Years 1, C Carlyle; 2, C Mason; 3, M Dixon . Under 21 Years 1, A Ord; 2, Jack Hale; 3, D Crane. Ladies Open 1, C Hodgson; 2, H Hodgson; 3, E Davidson. 12 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, W Noimai ; 3, M Old. 15 ½ st 1, A Ord; 2, Jack Hale; 3, J Davidson. All Weights 1, D Whitfield; 2, A Ord; 3, Jack Hale.

Kirkby Lonsdale

Under 8 Years 1, J Gibson; 2, T Hodgson; 3, A Hodgson. Under 12 |Years 1, T Gibson; 2, G Wilson; 3, J Wilson. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, T Gibson; 3, D Hodgson. Under 18 Years/10st Championship 1, J Brown; 2, B Brocklebank; 3, B Thompson. Under 18 Years 1, S Brocklebank ; 2, M Atkinson; 3, J Brown. Girls 1, C Hodgson; 2, M Gibson; 3, A Beswick. 13st 1, G Brocklebank; 2, M Atkinson; 3, J Brown. All Weights 1, G Brocklebank; 2, S Brocklebank ; 3, M Atkinson.

Dates:

Saturday 14 th August 12 noon Dalston U12/U15/U18/11 ½ /13/15st Ch'chip/AW

Sunday 15 th August 2pm Torver U12/U15/U16/11 ½ /13/AW/Ladies/Costume

Saturday 21 st August Rusland, Gosforth, and Allendale.

August 18th 2010

DALSTON SHOW - PICTURES ONLY

(*CLICK* on thumbnail to see a larger picture - *CLICK* anywhere *EXCEPT* on the larger image to return to this page)



September 2nd 2010

7 EVENTS IN 5 DAYS; 50 WRESTLING CATEGORIES

(*CLICK* on thumbnail to see a larger picture - *CLICK* anywhere *EXCEPT* on the larger image to return to this page)

Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling had its madly busy spell of the season last week when there were seven events in five days with more than fifty wrestling categories. So, in no particular order, what registered in my little brain?



Hordes of kilted Scots boosted entries at Grasmere and raised the decibels. Ten Bretons were there, too, giving our wrestlers and commentators plenty of problems with cunning trips and pronunciation. The Wrestling Manager for the London Olympics 2012, Daniel Robin, looked on as women's wrestling reached a new high for us with a big entry and big skills; Katie Brown's final with Fiona Laurie would have graced any ring. Watchai Noimai, after a season of tough draws and near misses, proved an escape artist when the Breton, Martin Maussion, tried to trap him in the final of the 11 stones, and gained his first Grasmere Championship. John Harrington wrestled with his usual skill for the 12 stones. Would Christian Salaun award him the Guinness Trophy for the best performance? No, he wouldn't, for Richard Fox lit up the arena with his athleticism, speed of attack and Houdini defence to win the next two weights, the 13 and 14 stones. Joe Threfall looked good all the way to the All Weights final, but Richard Younger strewed him down just as he had done everyone else he met over the week-end.



At Grayrigg, Kieron Miller won the Under 15 Years/8st Championship on one of the few occasions when he was able to wrestle on equal weight terms with the opposition. At Millom and Broughton Show, Andrew Carlile, again won the 11st Championship. In the final against Richard Dixon he wrestled cagily and took two falls with counters. In the winning fall he made Dixon miss with an outside-stroke and then caught him with one of his own. Earlier, after some excellent wrestling, Ben Brocklebank broke a collar-bone.

Crosby Ravensworth had unprecedented prize-money and entries, thanks to Ian Parsons, but he was absent, in hospital with a blood clot on his lung and pneumonia.

Grayrigg on its new date and with enhanced prize-money had its best wrestling for years.

At Silloth John Harrington and Connie Hodgson were unbeatable. Connie was pushed harder than ever before in her wrestling career and she came up smiling at Crosby Ravensworth, Grayrigg, Newcastleton, Bellingham, Grasmere and Silloth.

And my favourite moment? That was at Newcastleton when Richard Fox, giving away several stones in weight, got Richard Younger on the move and brought him over high and handsome for a fall that set the locals cheering.

Results:

Crosby Ravensworth

Under 13 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, S Wilson; 3, J Wilson. Underv 16 Years 1, J Brown; 2, B Brocklebank; 3, S Wilson. Under 18 Years 1, J Hall; 2, S Mason; 3, B Brocklebank. Ladies 1, C Hodgson; 2, M Hirsch; 3, M Gibson. 13st 1, F Hirsch; 2, S Mason; 3, G Temple. All Weights 1, F Hirsch; 2, S Mason; 3, J Hall.

Grayrigg

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, G Wilson; 3, J Wilson. Under 15 Years/8st Championship 1, K Miller; 2, S Wilson; 3, T Gibson. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, T Gibson. Under 18 Years 1, S Mason; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, M Atkinson. Girls Under 15 Years 1, M Gibson; 2, E Hayhurst; 3, L Wilson. Ladies Open 1, C Hodgson; 2, M Hirsch; 3, M Gibson. 11 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, W Atkinson; 3, J Brown. 13st 1, G Brocklebank; 2, John Harrington; 3, S Mason. 15st 1, G Brocklebank; 2, F Hirsch; 3, W Atkinson. All Weights 1, T Brocklebank; 2, John Harrington; 3, G Brocklebank.

Holm Show, Newcastleton

Under 13 Years 1, Joe Hale; 2, E Robson; 3, G Robson. Under 15 Years 1, Joe Hale; 2, E Robson; 3, S Clegg. Under 18 Years 1, J Brown; 2, Joe Hale; 3, S Clegg. Ladies 1, C Hodgson; 2, M Gibson; 3, A Marsden. 12 ½ st 1, G Nichol; 2, J Brown; 3, D Crane. All Weights 1, R Younger; 2, R Fox; 3, Jack Hale.

Bellingham Show

Under 9 Years 1, G Singer; 2, J Clayton; 3, T Hodgson. Under 12 Years 1, Joe Hale; 2, H Bertram; 3, G Robson. Novices 1, E Donald; 2, D Crane; 3, W Loden. Ladies 1, C Hodgson; 2, L Singer; 3, E Cook. 12st 1, J Brown; 2, D Crane; 3, W Noimai. 14st 1, Jack Hale; 2, D Crane; 3, W Noimai. All Weights 1, J Davidson; 2, A Ord; 3, Jack Hale.

Grasmere Sports

Under 12 Years 1, Joe Hale; 2, T Gibson; 3, G Wilson. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, Joe Hale; 3, C Carlyle. Under 18 Years 1, J Thompson; 2, M Atkinson; 3, S Mason. Girls Under 15 1, C Hodgson; 2, M Hirsch; 3, J Carson. Girls Under 18 Years 1, C Hodgson; 2, J Carson; 3, H Hodgson. Ladies 10st 1, K Brown; 2, F Laurie; 3, J Thompson. Ladies Open 1, D Thompson; 2, C Hodgson; 3, O Burgaud. 11st 1, W Noimai; 2, M Maussion; 3, G Reid. 12st 1, John Harrington; 2, W Atkinson; 3, H Maloeuvre. 13st 1, R Fox; 2, D Atkinson; 3, F Hirsch. 14st 1, R Fox; 2, G Brocklebank; 3, Jack Hale. All Weights 1, R Younger; 2, J Threfall; 3, J Hirsch.

Silloth

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, J Wilson; 3, G Wilson. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, G Wilson; 3, J Kirkpatrick. Under 18 Years 1, M Atkinson; 2, D Miller; 3, J Brown. 11 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, P Barnes; 3, D Miller. 13st 1, John Harrington; 2, W Atkinson; 3, J Brown. All Weights 1, John Harrington; 2, J Ewart; 3, M Maussion. Girls Under 15 Years 1, C Hodgson; 2, M Gibson; 3, R Hodgson. Ladies Open 1, C Hodgson; 2, D Thompson; 3, E Le Tort

Dates:

Saturday 4 th September 2pm Harbottle U10/U12/U16/U21/Nov/12/AW

3pm Lowick U12/U15/U18/12 ½ /AW

3.15pm Heskett New Market U12/U15/U18/Nov/Girls/12 ½

Sunday 5th September 1.45pm Wolsingham U12/U15/U18/Ladies/11/12/14/AW

3.30pm Loweswater U12/U15/U18/Ladies/12 ½ /AW

Thursday 9th September 2pm Westmorland Show Girls/U14/Ladies Open/U12/U15/U18/11/12/13/14/AW

Sunday 12th September 12.30pm Stanhope U12/U15/U18/11 ½ /13/AW/Ladies

3pm Whitfield U12/U15/U18/12 ½ /AW/Ladies

September 16th 2010

WESTMORLAND SHOW

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

The Westmorland Show has become one of the showpiece events of the wrestling calendar, with big prizes, big ring and big crowd. With so many wrestling categories and limited time, the organisers have to resort to "sudden death" as it always used to be: one slip and you're out. This increases the tension for each bout and means that a clever stratagem which works once is sufficient to take a wrestler to the next round.



In the 12 stones semi-final John Harrington lost to Graham Benson who bundled him forward off hold, and that was that. Benson went through to the final with Andrew Carlile, and Harrington was left to regroup for the heavier weights. Carlile, the holder of three championships, was on his best form, and won both the 11 stones and the 12 stones. Twice, and with difficulty, he had to beat Richard Dixon in the early rounds. By the time of the 12st final, he was in full flow and took Benson away on swinging hipes. In the 13 stones, John Harrington again fell by the wayside, but only to come out in the 14 stones full of determination and leg-up buttocks. His opponent in the final, Sam Wilkinson, always seems to do well at this venue, but even his height, strength and long legs were unable to stop John Harrington. The big shoot-out of the day, though, was between Graham Brocklebank and Richard Fox who contested two finals with a blur of fast action and close falls. Fox won the 13 stones; Brocklebank gave the last word to the Kendal wrestlers when he won the last bout of the day, the final of the All weights.

The wrestling at Stanhope and Whitfield was much lower key, with a smattering of trained wrestlers in all categories enhanced by enthusiastic local lads who were vocally received by the crowd. At Whitfield in particular lots of young lads were local heroes until Thomas Gibson cleaned up. He won five events over last weekend, as did John Harrington.

Just as I write this, I have received news of the death of a neighbour, Jimmy Nichol of Knightsledge. He was a tough competitor in his day, and his father and uncle, Billy and Tommy Nichol were amongst the best wrestlers of their day, a hundred years ago.

Results:

Westmorland Show

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, G Wilson; 3, H Mason. Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, T Gibson. Under 18 Years 1, S Mason; 2, J Hall; 3, J Thompson. Girls Under 14 Years 1, M Gibson; 2, L Wilson; 3, E Hayhurst. Ladies 1, C Hodgson; 2, H Hodgson; 3, M Gibson. 11st 1, A Carlile; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, D Miller. 12st 1, A Carlile; 2, G Benson; 3, John Harrington. 13st 1, R Fox; 2, G Brocklebank; 3, G Nichol. 14st 1, John Harrington; 2, S Wilkinson; 3, R Dixon. All Weights 1, G Brocklebank; 2, R Fox; 3, T Brocklebank.

Stanhope

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, D Butterfield; 3, T Hodgson. Under 15 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, L Richardson; 3, A Grey. Under 18 Years 1, J Thompson; 2, J Brown; 3, L Richardson. Ladies 1, C Hodgson; 2, H Hodgson; 3, M Gibson. 11 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, J Brown; 3, T Gibson. 13st 1, John Harrington; 2, D Parker; 3, J Brown. All Weights 1, John Harrington; 2, D Parker; 3, J Brown.

Whitfield

Under 15 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, J Rutherford ; 3, M O'Neil. Under 15 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, S Reid; 3, J Rutherford . Under 18 Years 1, J Thompson; 2, J Brown; 3, T Gibson. Ladies 1, C Hodgson; 2, M Gibson; 3, H Hodgson. 12 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, A Ridley; 3, J Brown. All Weights 1, J Thompson; 2, John Harrington; 3, A Ridley

Dates:

Saturday 18th September 11.30pm Walton, nr Morpeth U10/U13/U18/12/14/AW

2.30pm Egremont Crab Fair U12/U15/U18/11½/13/AW/Girls

Sunday 19th September 2pm Borrowdale U12/U15/U18/11½/13/AW/Girls/Costume

September 25th 2010

EGREMONT SHOW

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

After the packed wrestling programme and constant action of the past month, the Grass Season starts to ebb away now as injuries, exhaustion and University places keep wrestlers away from the ring. A puncture did not help much either when the Wilson bus came to a standstill under a motorway bridge on the way to Egremont. Nothing daunted John Wilson set out to change the tyre, while his team of Kendal wrestlers waved to lorries from behind the crash barrier, only to find that the spare tyre was only marginally bigger than a cycle wheel.



They would have made an interesting day at Egremont even better, but their absence gave Thomas Gibson the chance to shine amongst a group of locals. Gibson was smaller than many of them, but none had enough weight advantage to offset the experience and skill of the lad from Southwaite. The men's wrestling began with a brilliant throw from Craig Naylor when he was ahead of John Harrington all the way and finished his hipe with a splattering cross-buttock. This was the wake up call that Harrington needed and he then went on to fell Naylor with two hipes, one of which was so complete that it would have been awarded a "Lamm" in Breton wrestling when both Naylor's shoulders touched the ground while his feet were still in the air. In the heavier weights a three way struggle developed between Harrington, Richard Fox and Gordon Nichol. All had their moments, but it was Fox who dominated. He was so confident of his powers that he was holding wrestlers in the air till he manoeuvred them into a throwing position. He defended and countered against determined attacks, and occasionally launched the opposition skyward

on a buttock which put opponents' feet well above their head.

On the same day in Northumberland, Whalton village fair had a thin time, and Jack Brown and Andrew Ord had an easy and successful day.



By all rational standards the wrestling at Borrowdale Show should also have been a thin affair: it was raining and there was a low turn-out of wrestlers, yet a large, umbrella-ed crowd circled the ring and cheered the action throughout. The main bonus was that this time the Wilson bus did arrive intact and they put on an exhibition of competitive wrestling which was a credit to their trainer and themselves. Thomas Gibson of Carlisle won the Under 12s in some style; a local lad, Jacob Tonkin, surprised everyone by twisting his way to a good win in the Under 18s; a martial art expert on holiday from Bath gave problems in the men's weights; but, otherwise, it was the Wilson/Atkinson families, all cousins together, who gave the crowd what they wanted, including a smart turn-out for the Costume competition. Matthew Atkinson showed the way by winning the 11 ½ and 13 stones, but it was younger brother, William who had the last laugh and this week's bragging rights when his twists-off-the-chest did for brother Matthew in the final of the All Weights.

Results:

Egremont Crab Fair

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, C Doran; 3, J Green. Under 15 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, C Doran; 3, A Callendar. Under 18 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, A Callendar; 3, S Cruz. Girls 1, M Gibson; 2, B Dempsey; 3, A Marsden. 11 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, C Naylor; 3, T Gibson. 13st 1, R Fox; 2, G Nichol; 3, John Harrington. All Weights 1, R Fox; 2, John Harrington; 3, G Nicho; Guinness Trophy: R.Fox

Whalton

Under 10 Years 1, H Bertram; 2, O Hornsby; 3, C Brodie. Under 13 Years 1, Joe Hale; 2, A Singer; 3, A Wragg. Under 18 Years 1, J Brown; 2, Joe Hale; 3, M Charlton. 12st 1, J Brown; 2, Joe Hale; 3, M Charlton. 14 ½ st 1, A Ord; 2, T Reynolds; 3, J Brown. All Weights 1, A Ord; 2, J Brown; 3, T Reynolds.

Borrowdale

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, J Wilson ; 3, G Wilson . Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, S Wilson ; 3, T Gibson. Under 18 Years 1, J Tonkin; 2, M Atkinson; 3, G Wilson . 11 ½ st 1, M Atkinson; 2, C Naylor; 3, S Wilson . 13st 1, M Atkinson; 2, C Naylor; 3, W Atkinson. All Weights 1, W Atkinson; 2, M Atkinson; 3, J Tonkin .

Dates:

Saturday, 25th Sept. 12 noon Langholm Show U12/U15/U18/12 ½ /AW/Girls
3pm Eskdale Show U15/U18/10 ½ /AW

September 30th 2010

ESKDALE SHOWS

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

With the right equipment, a helicopter, wrestlers could have competed at two Eskdale Shows last week, one North of the Scottish Border at Langholm and the other in the South West Lakes .



The Langholm version had a High Noon start time, but few wrestlers and spectators were about. Fortunately, a group of youngsters put their hats into the ring and the wrestling began with loud shouts of support for the local successes, the crowd grew, entries mounted, and the crowd grew some more. Thomas Gibson was in his element, wrestling keen lads his own size, but without his wealth of experience and training. Two more victories were added to his impressive list for the season. Another far traveller, Jack Brown of Haydon Bridge , then won the Under 18 Years at a canter. The Ladies event was a tougher proposition for Megan Gibson who met older and heavier opposition, but won in style. Particularly good was a cross-buttock in the final against Emma Austen. As at Egremont the wrestling climaxed in a series of intense bouts involving John Harrington, Richard Fox and Gordon Nichol. Harrington and Nichol met in both the 12 ½ stones and the All Weights and each bout was on a knife-edge. Nichol struck first with the classic combination of what my notes called “hold-lift-back”. In trying for the same route in the next bout he left himself open for the cross-click and down he went. So their bouts went on: Nichol winning some but Harrington winning the deciders. The growing crescendo of the wrestling was maintained till the end as Richard Fox and Harrington fought an intense bout of hiping action until Fox brought it to an end with a buttock.

At the Lakeland Eskdale Show, the Atkinson brothers again carved up the spoils between them. Only Jack Ewart prevented a clean sweep, when he felled Matthew Atkinson in the final of the All Weights. The win was a fitting reward for the big lad from Westward who has been such a keen follower of the ring. To reach the Eskdale wrestling he had to hitch a lift. In the previous week he travelled to the Westmorland Show by train.

Only three events, Alwinton, Wasdale Head and Buttermere, remain before the season ends.

With Winter in mind the AGM of the **Carlisle Wrestling Club** will be held at 8pm at **Currock House** on Wednesday, 6th October. Anyone with an interest in our local wrestling style is invited to attend.

Results:

Eskdale Show

Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, M Tyson; 3, S Wilson . Under 18 Years 1, M Atkinson; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, W Atkinson. 10 ½ st 1, W Atkinson; 2, J Hayhurst; 3, C Naylor. 12st 1, M Atkinson; 2, W Atkinson; 3, J Hayhurst. All Weights 1, J Ewart; 2, M Atkinson; 3, C Naylor.

Langholm Show

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, J McKenzie; 3, P Gaskell. Under 15 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, J McKenzie; 3, R Gaskell. Under 18 Years 1, J Brown; 2, T Gibson; 3, R Gaskell. Ladies and Gentlemen: 1, M Gibson; 2, E Austen; 3, E Gough. 12 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, G Nichol; 3, J Brown. All Weights 1, R Fox; 2, John Harrington; 3, G Nichol

Dates:

Saturday, 9th October 1pm Alwinton Show U10/U13/U15 Ch'ship/U21/11 ½ 14/AW

Wasdale Head

October 7th 2010

BILLY NICHOL

([CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture](#) - [CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page](#))

"Tommy and Billy Nichol of Knightslodge"The poetic ring of the title appealed to my Junior School mind as my father recounted to me the heroes of his youth in the best traditions of oral history. For twenty years I had the words in my head, but had no idea where Knightslodge was, until I bought some land and found myself a neighbour of Tommy's son Jimmy Nichol who died recently. Tommy Nichol had been a phenomenal wrestler in times of huge entries. Forty-five men entered for the 11st World Championship at Egremont Crab Fair in 1911 when T J Nichol felled J Williams of Kentmere in the final. He won the title twice more before World War I, served in the trenches, and then won the title five more times, the last being in 1926 at Wearhead. As a wrestling judge he made his mark, too. John Williamson of Bootle was puzzled when he was awarded a fall that should not have been his. When he saw Tommy in the pub afterwards, he asked about it. "Well, lad, I was in the trenches with thee father". At the Cumberland Show, Tom Harrington remembers an opponent hanging on for dear life even though well beaten. "Leave go, man, you were felled a fortnight ago," said Tommy. His son Jimmy was not in the same league as a wrestler, but Cyril Bragg remembers meeting him in the final of the lightweights at Wigton Show in 1949. All was going well for Cyril till his feet slipped from under him as he tried to hipe. Then Jimmy clinched the decider with the buttock. In 1949, too, he was a member of Carlisle Academy .



A contemporary photograph shows him crouched down at the extreme right of the front row, with an array of champions, Tommy Little, Ted Dunglinson, Billy Bragg, Robert Carter (still a Governing Board Member) and the Carr brothers behind him. Behind them all is the paint peeling off the walls, a symbol of wartime belt tightening. He was part of the groundswell of enthusiasm for wrestling in the Post War years. Always well turned out, he won many costume prizes and was a regular and cheerful competitor in all the sports meetings and shows in the Carlisle area.

Carlisle Academy ground to a halt at the end of the fifties, and the area was without a centre for wrestling training, until Tom Harrington, Ted Dunglinson and I started Carlisle Wrestling Club in 1970. At this week's AGM the Club decided to mark its fortieth birthday with a celebration night on 11 th December. Details are still to be confirmed, but it is planned to have a sentimental slide show and have youngsters demonstrating that the old skills are still well alive, and that girls are stronger than ever before.

The Club's Winter programme starts next week at the slightly earlier time of 7.30pm on Wednesday evening, 13 th October, in the Gym at Currock House.

Only three wrestling events remain this season, and two of them are on Saturday: Wasdale Head Show is one of those events which usually relies on enthusiasts from the crowd. Alwinton Show in Northumberland hos ts the Under 15 Years Championship and early at 1pm. Travel early to avoid rural grid-lock.

Saturday, 9th October 1pm Alwinton Show U10/U13/U15 Ch'ship/U21/11 ½ 14/AW

Wasdale Head

Wednesday, 13th October 7.30pm **Carlisle Wrestling Club in Currock House Gym.**

October 14th 2010

WILLIAM ATKINSON

([CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture](#) - [CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page](#))



William Atkinson has been a real asset for wrestling. Last year he provided big brother Matthew with testing opposition in the Under 15 Years class at all the events they travelled to, and they travelled widely. This year that apprenticeship has paid off, for he has been virtually unbeatable in his own age, which, of course, is Under 15 Years. At Alwinton Show the culmination of his season came with his inevitable winning of the Under 15 Years World Championship, Cumberland and Westmorland style. Always immaculately turned out in the traditional wrestling strip, he is a slim athletic lad who is mature beyond his years and able to take falls from senior wrestlers. At Alwinton he strode easily through the best that Northumberland could muster, ending up with Charlie Carlyle in the final. Carlyle had no answer to Atkinson's efficient back-heels. William Atkinson is a Year 10 pupil at Queen Katherine's School, Kendal. He has the advantage of being the nephew of the Kendal Academy coach, and well known chauffeur, John Wilson, who takes his tribe round so many events. William's wrestling strip has Suffolk sheep embroidered on the back of his vest, so the excellent prize-money on offer at Alwinton for the championship may stretch to purchase half a leg of a good Suffolk tup.



There was a good end-of-season turn-out of wrestlers at Alwinton. In a host of youngsters Harry Bertram and Joe Hale shone against bigger opposition. A strong Carlisle contingent carved up the lightweights and middleweights, and Richard Younger was unstoppable in the All Weights. Richard Fox took some spectacular falls on his way to winning the 14 stones, but made no mark on the mighty Younger in the All Weights final. Simultaneously, in Herdwick country in the Western Lakes, another horde of Youngsters descended on a wrestling ring. Only in the men's weights did trained wrestlers come to the fore. Craig Naylor won both the 10 ½ and 12 stones in this his native dale, and Jack Ewart continued his late flourish by winning the All Weights.

Carlisle Wrestling Club's indoor season kicked off this week with an excellent turnout of all ages and sizes, boys and girls. It meets throughout the Winter at 7.30 prompt in the Gym at Currock House.

Results:

Alwinton Show:

Under 8 Years 1, T Davidson; 2, G Singer; 3, K Stewart. Under 10 Years 1, H Bertram; 2, C Brodie; 3, T Davidson. Under 13 Years 1, Joe Hale; 2, D Brown; 3, K Smith. Under 15 Years Championship 1, W Atkinson; 2, C Carlyle; 3, D Brown. Under 21 Years 1, A Ord; 2, J Hale; 3, M Atkinson. Girls 1, M Gibson; 2, L Singer; 3, A Marsden. 11 ½ st 1, R Dixon; 2, C Carlyle; 3, J Wragg. 14st 1, R Fox; 2, D Atkinson; 3, G Nichol. All Weights 1, R Younger; 2, R Fox; 3, A Ord.

Wasdale Head Show

Under 11 Years 1, A Atkinson; 2, J Askall; 3, J Gibson. Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, A Stamp; 3, A Atkinson. Under 13 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, L Stamp; 3, S Baines. Under 15 Years 1, A Hilton; 2, T Gibson; 3, L Stamp. Under 18 Years 1, A Hilton; 2, T Gibson; 3, L Stamp. 10 ½ st 1, C Naylor; 2, T Gibson; 3, J Nichol. 12st 1, C Naylor; 2, T Gibson; 3, S Baines. All Weights 1, J Ewart; 2, A Hilton; 3, C Naylor.

Saturday, 23rd October 2pm Buttermere Show U12/U15/U18/Girls/12 ½ /AW

Friday, 5th November CWWA Presentation Dinner. Tickets available from Alf Harrington and Board Members £20 (Juniors £10)

October 21st 2010

WINTER PROGRAMME AHEAD

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is well nigh spent and outright Winter and dark nights are looming, but one group of people think it is a good idea to hold a sheep show, hound trails, fell races, and wrestling in a boggy field half way up a mountain, tomorrow. Buttermere Shepherds' Meet and Show defies logic and common sense in its choice of place and date, and I must be mad to go there, as I do, so enjoyably every year. The Winter wrestling programme is in full swing. Five academies are in action, the Presentation Dinner is on bonfire night, and a week later, on Saturday, November 13th, Milnthorpe hosts the Academy Shield at Leasgill Atheneum, a village hall near Heversham.

In the far West of the Lake District, **Waberthwaite Academy** meets each Tuesday except next week when the hall is being painted. Governing Board member, Tom Porter is in charge, and Ashleigh Killip is the coach. They hope to have a full team for the Academy Shield although they are struggling at 14 and 15st.

The Kendal area is served by two academies: Milnthorpe and Kendal. David Parsons runs the **Milnthorpe Academy** each Thursday at 6.45pm. At first they had the same wrestlers as last year, but some newcomers have now arrived. The academy is dominated by the younger wrestlers and is without one of its coaches, Ian Parsons, who is recovering from illness. **Kendal Academy** meets on Fridays in the South Lakes Leisure Centre, from 8 to 10pm. Their main coach is John Wilson, but in his absence Chris Bland has been in charge. In the past a feature of the Kendal Academy was the weekly competitions, but that has been changed to a monthly session, when round robins provide a full session of wrestling action.

The Rothbury Academy is the only one to continue throughout the year. At present they meet at **Rothbury Middle School** on Wednesdays at 6.30pm for Under 11s and 7.30 for the older ones. At present they have about 15 in the younger age group and 20 in the second section. Expertise is provided by Jason Davidson and Darren Whitfield.



Meanwhile **Carlisle Wrestling Club**, celebrating forty years of action, is best endowed with coaches. How can a wrestler fail to improve if Tom Harrington, Alan Jones, Andrew Carlile and David Atkinson are mentoring him, and of course, her? The club is starting promptly at 7.30pm each Wednesday this year and has a wide range of wrestlers taking part. The first Points Nights are on the 3rd (Juniors) and the 10th November (Seniors), only just in time for the selection of the team for the Academy Shield which is so frequently retained by the club.

It goes without saying that anyone of any age, male or female who wants to train in our great Northern traditional sport will be welcomed at any of the academies. (Phone me on 016974 73559 for further details)

Dates

Saturday, 23rd October 2pm, Buttermere Show U12/U15/U18/Girls/12½/AW

Friday, 5th November CWWA Presentation Dinner. Tickets available from Alf Harrington and Board Members £20 (Juniors £10)

Saturday, 13th November, Academy Shield at Leasgill Atheneum, Near Heversham

October 28th 2010

END OF SEASON - BUTTERMERE SHOW

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)



Buttermere Show brought to an end the longest wrestling season that I can remember, for it began in March with a ring beside the finishing straight at Carlisle Racecourse, and ended with a ring beside a big crowd of Herdwick pens in the Buttermere fells. Although for wrestling the date is very late, apparently it has been moved forward in recent years, for the Show is in fact a Shepherds Meet when stray sheep could be returned to their owners. From there it was a small step to see who had the best sheep, the fanciest stick, the fastest hound, could run up hills better than anyone else, and could fell all comers in the wrestling ring. The event is for local people doing what they have always done so well and if anyone wants to come along and see, that is fine by them. The wrestling, though, brought together a select band of experts from a wide area to join the locals. Gordon Nichol of Newcastleton and Jack Ewart of Westward met in the final of the All Weights as

the last bout of the season, and continued the battling bouts that pounded the Carlisle Wrestling Club mats earlier in the week. The suspense continued as Nichol went ahead with a backover twist, Ewart equalised and then Nichol won the day by getting in the last twist in a closely contested bout.



Some of the best bouts of the day came in the semi-finals of the All Weights when John Harrington of Bewaldeth was on the receiving end of two startlingly good throws from two rising stars. Firstly, Ewart, who is significantly bigger, used his physical advantages to devastating effect, especially for a left-leg inside-hipe. Then, in the consolation bout for third place, Matthew Atkinson swung Harrington and inside-clicked him in mid-air for the first fall. Harrington gathered himself to win the next two bouts and he had already won the 12 ½ stones, so the day was certainly no disaster for him. All the other winners were to be expected. Thomas Gibson has won everywhere at Under 12 Years. The Atkinson brothers William and Matthew duly won their age groups, and Megan Gibson beat a strong local girl, Lily Hodgson, to finish the season on a high note.

The Academy Shield is now imminent with the early date of Saturday, 13th November, hosted by Milnthorpe Academy. The various academies will have to get swiftly into action to organise teams of thirteen wrestlers for the event.

Next Friday night November 5th, is the Presentation Dinner at the Auctioneer, Rosehill, Carlisle, **(Click on name to see location)** when the most successful wrestlers on the CWWA circuit will receive trophies. All those interested in our traditional sport are invited to attend.

Results:

Buttermere Shepherds' Show

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, J Wilson ; 3, G Wilson . Under 15 Years 1, W Atkinson; 2, G Wilson ; 3, S Wilson . Under 18 Years 1, M Atkinson; 2, W Atkinson; 3, T Gibson. Girls 1, M Gibson; 2, L Hodgson. 12 ½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, M Atkinson; 3, W Atkinson. All Weights 1, G Nichol; 2, J Ewart; 3, John Harrington

Dates:

Friday, 5th November CWWA Presentation Dinner. **Tickets available from Alf Harrington and Board Members £20 (Juniors £10)**
Wednesday, 10th November Currock House Gym Carlisle Wrestling Club Junior Points Night

Saturday, 13th November Academy Shield at Leasgill Atheneum, Near Heversham.

November 4th 2010

GEORGE STEADMAN'S TROPHIES

(CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page)

"Primogeniture"....not a common word on the Sports pages... is the principle of first-born son inheriting all, and served to keep the great estates intact over the centuries, unless Lord Hardly-Able had a brain the size of a pea and a gambling addiction. For ordinary folk the problem of keeping a family heritage intact is a problem generation by generation. How many of great grandad's proud collection of wrestling belts and silver trophies are still together in one household? Families seek to be fair and share out the valuables as each generation passes and before long, odds and ends are in a dozen houses

Earlier this year Mrs Pollock travelled up from Kent to watch the wrestling at Penrith Show, and brought with her two medals and a belt buckle that had been won in the 1860's by her ancestor, James Scott of Canonbie. She liked what she saw of the wrestling and handed over to the Wrestling Association her precious family relics. What was tantalising was that she also had a photograph of James Scott's full collection of trophies in a display case which had been dispersed through her family. Not all trophies are worth much: plastic silver these days and mass-produced cheap metal tat from previous generations is and was important to the winner as he comes out of the ring, but has no lasting value, but some collections of trophies of major players are part of this regions heritage.

Not all trophy collections are broken up, sold on e-bay, stolen or generally lost. The James Scott medals and buckle give a taste of what a quality wrestler could win in Victorian times. A Longtown businessman bought Richard Wright's fine collection when they popped up at Christies in London , and returned them to his home town. Hexham Clark's major trophies are still together in West Cumbria .



And most important of all, George Steadman's trophies are now owned by the Wrestling Association and permanently vested in the County Archives .At present they are all in boxes on shelves in Carlisle Castle , but the potential is there for display in the new Archive building in Old Harraby, Carlisle . Local heritage is important to define who we are in wide world. George Steadman's belts and cups tell a story of a popular, well-funded traditional sport unique to this area

And that story continues with five academies in winter action. The Academy Shield date has had to be changed because of booking problems, so the academy coaches now have an extra fortnight to pick their teams.

Dates:

Wednesday, 10 th November Currock House Gym Carlisle Wrestling Club Junior Points Night

Saturday, 13 th November Academy Shield at Leasgill Atheneum, Near Heversham.

Saturday, 20 November Scottish Junior Championships Molendinar Community Centre, 1210 Royston Road , Glasgow G33 1HE .

Saturday, 27 th November Academy Shield

November 11th 2010

THE CWWA ANNUAL PRESENTATION DINNER

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)



The CWWA Annual Presentation Dinner brought together a hundred followers of wrestling to applaud the exploits of the most successful and consistent wrestlers of the 2010 Grass Season.

With three points for a win and lesser points for places, Thomas Gibson's score of a round hundred points for the Under 12 Years category was a testament to his dominance in the ring and his father's fuel bill. This season has seen him develop his style so that hipes, both inside and outside varieties, are a major part of his repertoire of chips. His fellow wrestlers at the Dinner obviously appreciate his approach to the sport for they voted him winner of "The Wrestlers' Wrestler" trophy.

The Victor Ludorum Trophies for Under 15 and Under 18 went to the Atkinson brothers, William and Matthew. Once more the theme behind their wins was a mixture of style, athleticism and mileage. A high point for William was to win the Under 15s and then

wrestle up to John Harrington in the Senior 12 stones at Grasmere Sports. Matthew could have had a quieter year because he has moved up an age-group, but he hasn't, for he is capable of handling himself well in any competition.

The Victrix Ludorum trophy once more went to Dentdale. Connie Hodgson's quality was again well demonstrated at Grasmere where the female wrestling attracted unprecedented numbers. In this numerous entry Connie Hodgson shone brightly winning at Under 15 and Under 18 and coming second in the Open Ladies from an entry of 18 wrestlers. For the rest of the year, wherever there was Ladies' wrestling, she would be there and winning.

John Harrington is a wrestler who puts a foundation into the Grass Season, for he is light enough to wrestle in several categories, and skilful enough to compete with heavier men. This, added to his widespread participation meant that he won two categories, the 11 ½ and 13 stones.

The closest category was the Heavyweights, for all competitions over 13 stones. Graham Brocklebank scored 43 points, Andrew Ord scored 45, but the winner was Richard Fox with 47 points. Significantly, he had fewer wins than the others but amassed more points.

Carlisle Wrestling Club's first Junior Points Night saw some fine wrestling as the team for the Academy Shield was being chosen. Falls which stood out for me were the hipe with which Megan Gibson caught Kieron Miller, Thomas Gibson hiping his sister Megan, and David Miller catching Jack Brown with a killer back-heel in the 10 stones. I also liked Charlotte Wilson's back-heeling and general wrestling nous. The Best Performance Trophy went to David Miller.

Tickets are now available for the Fortieth Birthday Celebration of Carlisle Wrestling Club on Saturday 11 th December.

Results:

Carlisle Wrestling Club Junior Points Competition

6st 1,C Wilson; 2, W Wilson ; 3, A Marston; 4, J Gibson.

7st 1, K Miller; 2, C Wilson; 3, W Wilson ; 4, M Wharton.

Girls 7 ½ st 1, C Wilson; 2, A Marston; 3, E Wilson .

8 ½ st 1, M Gibson; 2, T Gibson; 3, C Wilson; 4, O Burbury.

10st 1, D Miller; 2, M Gibson; 3, J Brown; 4, K Miller.

Girls Open 1, K Brown; 2, M Gibson; E Wilson; 4, C Wilson .

Under 12 Years 1, T Gibson; 2, W Wilson ; 3, A Marston; 4, J Gibson.

Under 15 Years 1, K Miller; 2, T Gibson; 3, W Wilson ; 4, M Gibson.

Under 18 Years 1, J Brown; 2, D Miller; 3, K Brown; 4, O Burbury.

Best Wrestler: D Miller

Dates:

Wednesday, 17 th November Currock House Gym Carlisle Wrestling Club Senior Points Night including a Ladies section.

Saturday, 20 November Scottish Junior Championships Molendinar Community Centre, 1210 Royston Road , Glasgow G33 1HE .

Saturday, 27 th November Academy Shield at Leasgill Atheneum, Near Heversham

November 18th 2010

CARLISLE WRESTLING CLUB'S 1ST WINTER POINTS NIGHT

(CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page)



Carlisle Wrestling Club's first Senior Points Night of the Winter Season was low in numbers but high in quality. Richard Fox was the dominant wrestler winning both the middleweights and the All Weights. With their round-robin format young wrestlers get a chance of testing themselves out against the established Champions. Jack Brown in particular threw himself into the occasion, and came within a whisker of felling Richard Fox in the 13 stones. His best moment was in the last bout of the All Weights when he and that other keen young wrestler, Jack Ewart, were caught in a point of balance as Ewart tried to leg-up and Brown's long legs stretched skyward to avoid being turned. Locked together, they hopped around the mat, a two-legged, two-headed beast. Finally, Ewart hopped slightly off-course and he fell forward just ahead of Brown.

The evening began with back-heels and ended with buttocks and twists. The three master wrestlers, Andrew Carlile, John Harrington and Richard Fox provided a feast of skill and speed in the competition, But I particularly enjoyed watching John Harrington, besting Richard Fox in the relaxed training session after the serious wrestling finished.

For the first time the Seniors held a Ladies Open Points competition. Only two turned up and Katie Brown duly dispatched the younger Megan Gibson, but a first step has been taken.

Megan Gibson will be more likely to shine tomorrow at the Scottish Open Under 21's Backhold Wrestling Championships 2010 where there is a huge range of categories, so that she will be competing on an equal footing. Usually she wrestles against heavier and older opposition, but tomorrow there are seven weight categories for girls Under 13, seven at Under 18 and four at Under 21. And the same applies to the lads.

The Scots always wrestle in a round-robin system, so all wrestlers will have plenty of action to justify travelling up to Glasgow for the weigh in at 9.30am.

Carlisle Wrestling Club will celebrate it's Fortieth Anniversary with an event at Currock Community Centre, Carlisle , on Saturday, 11 th December, with a demonstration training session for the youngsters, a buffet meal and bar, a slide show of the 2010 season and older photos, and lots of craic. Tickets are available from Linda Scott, Alan Jones and me (tel: 016974 73559.)

Results:

Carlisle Wrestling Club Senior Points - Ladies Open 1, K Brown; 2, M Gibson. 11 ½ st 1, A Carlile; 2, J Brown; 3, C Naylor. 13st 1, R Fox; 2, J Harrington; 3, A Carlile; 4, J Brown. All Weights 1, R Fox; 2, J Harrington; 3, A Carlile; 4, J Brown.

Dates:

Saturday, 20th November Scottish Junior Championships Molendinar Community Centre, 1210 Royston Road , Glasgow G33 1HE .

Saturday, 27th November Academy Shield at Leasgill Atheneum, Near Heversham

Sunday, 28th November Lakeland Sports Promoters Association Presentation Luncheon at Heaves Hotel, Levens.

Saturday, 11th December Carlisle Wrestling Club Fortieth Year Celebration.

November 25th 2010

SCOTTISH JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

(CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page)



Five wrestlers from Carlisle Wrestling Club competed in the Rikon Maintenance Scottish Junior Championships in Glasgow, and came South with an impressive haul of trophies. The two female wrestlers Megan Gibson and Abigail Marston are used to wrestling against heavier opposition in our home rings because of the limited nature of the female classes. Only Grasmere has a weight restricted class for female wrestlers. We at the Carlisle Club know how skilled they are, but that quality is all too often snuffed out by weight. Megan Gibson, after years of trying, is becoming strong enough to prosper in open competitions, but Abigail Marston is a wisp of a lass, and finds it hard in the grass rings. In Glasgow, Abbie took full advantage of wrestling against girls roughly her own size and age, and won at both 5 ½ st and 6 ½ st Under 13 Years. Megan Gibson, too, was unstoppable in her own weight and won the 8 ½ st category at both Under 18 and Under 21. She also came second in the heavier weights. Brother Thomas Gibson continued his fine season in our rings with a win at 7 ½ stones. The other two wrestlers from England were older and much heavier, used to travelling far for only a few chances to compete. Most restricted of all was Jack Ewart who enjoyed the round-robin system and came second in the Under 21 Opens. His conqueror was that other substantial Englishman, Joe Thompson, who was unstoppable in both the Under 18 and Under 21 Open categories.

High tension on the indoor mats continues tomorrow, when Milnthorpe Academy hosts the Academy Shield. Teams from Rothbury, Waberthwaite, Carlisle, Kendal and Milnthorpe are expected to do battle for the silver shield which was originally given for the Academy League in the forties and fifties. After a lapse of more than a decade when all the academies, except Kendal closed their doors, the shield is now given for a one-off event when thirteen wrestlers from each academy compete with each other in a round robin. The format means that the full range of wrestlers, from 6st to heavyweight, and two female categories, have an equal chance to gain points for their team. The venue is Leasgill Atheneum, a village hall, near Heversham in the Kendal area. (Post-code LA7 7ET, for those of you with sat-nav) and industrial quantities of meat-and-tatie pies have been ordered, so all are welcome. A veteran of the old Academy League has died recently at the age of 81 years. Tom Nicholson of Roweltown was in the famous Gilsland team. In 1950 he won the 11st Championship and reached the final in the following year when he was felled by Cyril Bragg. He was one of the main men for a number of years with his inside-hiping, and for all his life he was noted for his droll sense of humour.

The present Academy Shield Competition is directly linked to the opening of **Carlisle Wrestling Club**.

Now, forty years on, the club is to hold a celebration evening with wrestling, pictures, a meal, a bar and lots to talk about, at 7pm on Saturday, 11th December. We want as many of the wrestlers of the past forty years to return and see how the Club is still producing the best of wrestlers.

Tickets are available from Alan Jones, Linda Scott and me (016974 73559).

December 2nd 2010

LAKELAND SPORTS PERSONALITY PRESENTATION

(*CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page*)

So, how was the Academy Shield? It should have been the zenith of winter wrestling, a great gathering of wrestlers from our Northern Counties. But, Rothbury coach Jason Davidson, a hundred mile away from Milnthorpe, already had a foot of snow on his car roof; Tom Porter in Waberthwaite worried about transporting other folks' children on dubious roads in temperatures fit to freeze up the Atlantic sea-ways; so the decision was made to postpone the event, and Milnthorpe coach, David Parsons, was left with the problem of what to do with a hundred meat pies.

What seemed like a different tale saw the Lakeland Sports Personality Luncheon go ahead in the same area on the following day, but with daylight on the side of the travellers. The Lakeland Sports Promoters Association, which holds the awards ceremony, was set up in the sixties when a determined attack was made by elements of the Amateur Athletics Association to outlaw "professionalism". For them this included winning a couple of shillings in the egg and spoon race at the local gala, and all our local wrestling events. The LSPA affiliated to the AAA and provided a mechanism which allowed children to run or wrestle at Grasmere and also take part in school sport. The professional/amateur debate is dead but the LSPA still continues to provide a framework for runners and wrestlers at the traditional Lakeland sports.



The Lakeland Sports Personality Trophy, presented this year by Fell-Running legend **Tommy Sedgwick**, was won by a veteran runner, **Gordon Eland**, a stalwart of the track running circuit and someone who is bringing on the next generation of runners in his area. Also nominated in the Senior category was wrestler, **Graham Brocklebank**, who weighs in at 13 stones but is well capable of winning against heavier opposition.

In the Junior sections, wrestling had four nominees. **Connie Hodgson** has moved on from being the little limpet, impossible to shake off, to a strong and confident wrestler able to attack positively. She had a wonderful day at Grasmere where she won two girls' events and came second in the Open Ladies category. **Stuart Mason** is a worthy product of the Milnthorpe Academy. Always a clever wrestler, this year he has bigger shoulders to hold his own against bigger competitors. **William Atkinson** has had a fine year, unbeatable in the Under 15 wrestling at eight of the LSPA events. **Thomas Gibson**, at Under 12 set his stall out to attend as many LSPA events as possible, and he amassed victories at ten events. The quantity and quality of his result brought him a share of the Junior Sports Personality Trophy. His co-winner was **James McGlincy**, an Under 17 track-runner.

In the morning, the McGlincy family had left sunny Grassington in West Yorkshire to attend. Returning home was more difficult. They found their home route entirely blocked and spent the night in Skipton.

And who did eat all the Milnthorpe pies? The family of John Wilson the Kendal Academy coach easily browsed through half of them, and the others were frozen for the Academy Shield on a new date.

If you want a ticket for the Carlisle Wrestling Club Fortieth Anniversary Celebration on Saturday 11th December (7pm at Currock Community Centre) please let me know today (Tel 016974 73559) or you may not be fed.

December 9th 2010

CARLISLE WRESTLING CLUB'S ORIGINS

(CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page)

"A Carlisle schoolteacher's bid to revive the traditional Cumberland and Westmorland style wrestling in Carlisle made a modest but promising start at an inaugural meeting in the Strand Road Sports Centre, Carlisle, last night. Mr Roger Robson, member of a well-known Northumberland wrestling family near Alnwick, came to Carlisle Trinity School this Autumn on the heels of his biggest success of the summer wrestling, a middleweights win at Grasmere. He called last night's meeting of wrestlers old and new in the hopes of starting a city club again which might blossom out into a fully-fledged "academy" again." (Cumberland News October 1970.)

That "modest" meeting was the seed for the creation of Carlisle Wrestling Club which marks its fortieth anniversary with a celebration night tomorrow at 7pm in Currock House Community Centre.



The sixties had seen a devastating crash of all the many Academies that formed in the post-War years, and I was determined to make a new start virtually outside the existing academy rules. There were no committee, and no bank balance. Instead, it ran as a sort of informal syndicate, with three great wrestlers, Ted Dungleinson, Jimmy Atkinson and Tom Harrington as the engine room and me as co-ordinator. At first we shared with Carlisle Judo Club for a few weeks before we ventured to have our own night in the Judo

Room at the Strand Road Sports Centre, opposite Trinity Upper School, and run by the County Council. I remember when we first inspected the room with wall-to-wall wrestling mat. Ted Dunglison, weighing sixteen stone, no longer a youngster but still as daft as ever, took one look and launched himself across the mat to execute a full somersault. The Strand Road facility was especially suitable for we did not need to find money for mats, and I was able to hold lunch-time wrestling sessions for Trinity pupils who then came to the club on Thursday nights. For some years the first hour of each week was run as an Evening Class with me as tutor. At times we struggled. One year we were on the point of closing as for some weeks we only attracted a couple of mismatched youngsters, different ones each week. On the last chance night, there was a rumble on the stairs and the four Potts brothers piled through the door, and the Gardhouse brothers, too, were part of one of the most successful periods of the club.

Girl's wrestling is part of the wrestling scene these days, but when Barbara Prudham came along with her brothers, and started wrestling she proved a match for the lads. Only when Robert Tomlinson and Simon Robson gained adult muscles could they guarantee to fell her. Our lads were used to being felled by her and took her participation as normal, but she probably caused the change in the rules which forbade mixed wrestling. Coaches from other areas thought that they lost from the sport lads whom she felled in the ring, and the CWWA rules were amended. When the Strand Road Sports Centre closed, a new venue was needed, and once more we found somewhere with their own mats, Carlisle College. The College served its purpose, but we missed the focus and control of a smaller dedicated space. Tom Harrington suggested that Currock Community Centre had judo mats in a small gym, and that was where we moved and where we now meet each Wednesday night of Winter. Our three main coaches are multi-champions: young Andrew Carlile, just retired Alan Jones, and remarkably, Tom Harrington, who was there when it all began.

Come along on Saturday Night and see us in action - 11th December (7pm at Currock Community Centre)

December 16th 2010

TEXT

(**CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture - CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page**)

At a time when driving into town can involve weather forecasts and a shovel in the car boot, it is good to think of wrestling in the Canary Islands in the Spring or even Brittany in February.

The following invitation goes to any of our wrestlers and academies:

" Dear friends,

La Fédération de Gouren et skol Gwipavaz organise the BACK-HOLD BRETAGNE CHAMPIONSHIP in GUIPAVAS (near BREST) Saturday february 26 2011. The competition is open to the IFCW members and other invited. We will be pleased to receive your delegation in Guipavas Friday, February 25 in late afternoon to Sunday morning February 27. Friday night and Saturday meals, as well as accommodation from Friday to Sunday will be borne by the organizers for 1 referee or official and 5 wrestlers (boys and girls) by delegation. Additional persons will be housed in the same place for 30 euros per day (night, breakfast, lunch) and if you return register before January 15. (Note that after this date, we can not guarantee accommodation)."



The story behind this invitation is that over many years the Breton Wrestling Federation (Gouren) has used our more basic back-hold style to initiate youngsters into the world of wrestling at schools and in their many clubs (Skols). They are also aware that half the points in the European Championships are awarded for the back-hold style. To this end they encourage their wrestlers to "tek hod" on their club mats, and a dozen or so of their best young wrestlers come to the North of England for the busy Grasmere period. With so much interest and with their usual efficiency, the Bretons each year organize the Breton Championship of our style of wrestling, with over a hundred wrestlers competing. Attendance from this side of the Channel has been variable. I once took Russell Housby as our sole representative to a dangerously snowy Brittany many years ago.

Milnthorpe Academy, under the aegis of their coach David Parsons, lifted our representation for a few years, and then much bigger numbers from Carlisle and Rothbury and Kendal led to coach trips which were successful both socially and athletically. Unfortunately, that level could not be sustained and no-one attended last year.

In early January, too, there will be a Special General Meeting of the International Federation in St Malo to resolve some damage issues from the last European Championships and to prepare for the next event which takes place in The Canary Islands in late

March. The Canarians want to have their own wrestling style as part of the championships, but a third style would create all sorts of problems for wrestlers and organizers.



Carlisle Wrestling Club's Fortieth Birthday Celebration brought together the wrestling generations to eat, talk, and watch the youngsters in action and a slide show of wrestling action at more than forty of our affiliated events. A CD is available from me (016974 73559)

December 23rd 2010

ARCHIVIST'S CHRISTMAS DOSSIER

([CLICK on thumbnail to see a larger picture](#) - [CLICK anywhere EXCEPT on the larger image to return to this page](#))

My Christmas dossier of Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling snippets and articles from the Northern local papers arrived with a card from archivist Jeremy Godwin of Penrith. His analysis of all the articles on wrestling in the period 1909 to 1911 shows how the sport was constantly in the news. That period seemed to be a rich time for academies and there are regular accounts of the public sessions of the academies at Penrith, Keswick and Appleby (North Westmorland).

At one of these *"while practising before the competitions at the Oddfellows Hall at Keswick, one of the 'crack' members of the academy, Andrew Lowther, fractured his leg. He was engaged in a bout with a young man called Bennet of Thornthwaite."* Fifty years ago Whitehaven magistrates commended PC John Rule, formerly a well-known heavyweight wrestler for the way he handled a Saturday night outbreak of fighting in the Bigrigg area, following which 23 youths and men appeared on charges.

Much less exciting were the items for 2010 when at a meeting with only a moderate attendance, Lord Lonsdale was re-elected President of Penrith Wrestling Academy and the winners of the wrestling at Musgrave Rushbearing were duly listed.

The Hexham Courant looks back to 1885 when sixteen men took part in a wrestling competition at Halfway House, Prudhoe in an attempt to win a silver cup.

In 1860 Egremont Crab Fair was going strong with loaves and money as the main reward for winning. Health and Safety had yet to ban the greasy pole climbing and Robert Tomlinson easily carried off the *"leg of mutton affixed to a long pole"*. *"The belt wrestled for was a superb one; on one side in letters of gold was 'To the Hero of Crab Fair Sports' and on the other 'Palmum qui meruit ferat'."* (Let him who has earned it bear the reward.)

In the same year at Cockermouth in the Deer Orchard, *"the wrestling for which most of the local celebrities were entered, was exceedingly good and many falls were watched with great eagerness, especially towards the last."* At the end Ashworth felled Hodgson by *"putting in his well-known back heel."*

And most floridly of all that year the Whitehaven News commented on the *"chequered career"* of William Litt, whose novel **"Henry and Mary"** (catchy title!) they had republished in parts. The novel has smuggling and wrestling as main themes, and is worth digging out even now for its curiosity value. Litt, *"whose memory will be long cherished in his native country, not only on account of his writings but also as the prime patron and promoter of a noble and manly sport and as the man who by his example, no less than by the eloquence of his advocacy elevated a local pastime to a consideration and position that remind us not unworthily of the most palmy days of the Olympian age."* (You don't get sentences like that these days.)

Much sadder was a clump of cuttings from this year's Hexham Courant detailing the court case against Network Rail over the death of Chris Walton early in 2008. They were fined £75,000 and met costs of £36,000 for failing to implement safety recommendations from a 2005 assessment. The sad case and Chris's photo brings back the vibrant young man who stirred the wrestling world with his winning return to the ring at Grasmere in 2007 after serious injury, when he won the Under 18s. His parents gave a dignified and moving interview. Michelle said, *"We want to remember Chris before the accident and try not to dwell on the negatives. The sad thing is the accident has overshadowed the positive things we had as a family. I hope Network Rail is ashamed of itself."*

After a long and fulfilled life, Jock Hall has died at the age of 94. He was famous in two sorts of ring: showing his Blackface sheep and wrestling. He came to the sport at thirty when most athletes are considering retirement, and I remember his inside and cross-clocks which dumped opponents on the backside. Peter Hunter remembers him waiting his moment, before pouncing with minimum effort and maximum effect. Although he lived above Rothbury, he was a member of Gilsland Academy and would motor-

bike over with Ian Potts to Low Row where they could catch the coach to a match at Gosforth or Bootle a world away from Coquetdale. He was the sort of gentle, humorous man who shaped my childhood.

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