

2nd January 2004

WILLIAM LITT WAS THE FIRST

ANYONE interested in the history of Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling knows the name of William Litt, for in 1823 he published *Wrestliana*, the first book about the sport. In it he traced the history of wrestling from ancient times, looked back to 18th-Century wrestling traditions in Northern England, gave a detailed account of his contemporary wrestlers, and proposed a set of rules to regularise the sport. Even in a book on wrestling the character of the man shines through, for his egocentric style leads him to boast about his wrestling career, express opinions on all subjects and flaunt his education.

A more objective assessment of Litt and his life is published in *The Cumbrian Family History Society Newsletter* (No 109, Nov 2003). William and Margaret Hartley of Egremont in tracing their own family name found a link to Litt whose daughter had married Robert Hartley in 1847. Exploration of this connection has led to a detailed account of Litt's origins and achievements, and ends with a mystery about his death. He was baptised at Cleator Church in 1785 and brought up with all the advantages of a wealthy childhood for his father was "Commissioner for the Inclosure of Waste Lands in the area and he also owned coal and iron mines. His classical education was supposed to lead to Ordination in the Church of England, but his real interests lay in writing poetry for the local newspapers, horse racing and wrestling. The result was that he led a life where he did not settle to anything for long: in turn he was an agricultural labourer, collector of king's taxes, victualler of the King's Arms, Hensingham, author not only of *Wrestliana*, but also a novel *Henry and Mary* written in 1825. The money he made from his books he invested in a brewery in Whitehaven but lost 3000 in just over a year.

The Hartley family's long-held understanding was that Litt then turned to smuggling. His novel, *Henry and Mary*, shows detailed knowledge of smuggling and in the preface Litt claims that 'This work was more truth than fiction'. A book on John Peel refers to Litt making "a great deal of money by dealing in illicit spirits". And in 1832 he hastily emigrated to Canada leaving behind his wife and seven surviving children, the youngest only months old.

In Canada he tried to make a living as a contractor in the cutting of canals, then as a writer for the press before finding a more successful role as a schoolmaster. While in Canada in 1840 he wrote long articles for the *Cumberland Pacquet* about his new country.

Officially he died in 1847 in Canada, but the Hartleys' research indicates that he may have returned incognito and lived in a daughter's house with his blind wife under the name of Thomas Bousfield.

9th January 2004

GRIPPING STUFF

TWO special international events could add some spice to the winter training in Cumbria's four wrestling academies. The European Espoirs Championships, for wrestlers between the ages of 16 and 21 years, takes place in Salzburg, Austria over the Easter weekend (April 9-12).

The second Brittany Backhold Championship will be held in Carhaix, Brittany on Sunday, February 29. In addition there is wrestling for women at both events, with Salzburg staging the European Championship for women over 16 years in backhold and Gouren. Specialist training sessions are needed for the Austrian event as everyone has to compete in two styles, including the highly technical Breton Jacket style, Gouren.

Andrew Carlile and David Atkinson, two Carlisle wrestlers with proven records in both styles, are keen to set up a weekly training session especially to coach potential team members in the art of Gouren, whilst also keeping up their sharpness in the C&W Style. A meeting at Currock House at 8pm on Wednesday January 14 will set up the programme and review the existing training schedule at Carlisle Wrestling Club. Participation at Salzburg depends on team training and selection, but anyone can take part in the Brittany Backhold Championships in Carhaix.

Last year only David Atkinson from this area competed in the inaugural event in Rostrenen, Central Brittany, when he won his section. Roughly 130 wrestlers took part last year, all divided up into many classes. There are thirty-one sections for boys and men, comprising five age ranges each with six weight categories. Classes may be amalgamated if there are insufficient wrestlers. Individual wrestlers can make their own arrangements to travel and take part, but entries have to be made before 15th February. Anyone interested in taking part should contact me for more details (Tel: 016974 73559)

Meanwhile the invaluable work of the Wrestling Academies continues in a New Year: Carlisle Wrestling Club meets each Friday 7.30 for Juniors, 8.30pm for Seniors in the Gym at Currock House, Carlisle. Kendal Academy meets in the Westmorland Hall, Kendal Leisure Centre each Friday 7.30-9.30pm. January 9 has Junior Ages Competitions Milnthorpe Academy meets in the Dallam Sports Pavilion each Thursday night, beginning at 6.45pm Waberthwaite Academy meets each Wednesday at Waberthwaite Village Hall.

16th January 2004

RUGBY LEAGUE CLUBS CAN LEARN FROM THE STYLE OF OUR COUNTY CHAMPIONS

RUGBY AND wrestling are complementary sports. When Jonny Wilkinson grabbed an opposing player, lifted him up and clashed him down on his back he would not have been out of place in the Grasmere ring. The late Eddie Wareing, in his commentary on Rugby League, used to mention the Cumberland Hipe when the attacker was brought to a halt in a standing position before being lifted and dumped.

Each sport features strong bodily contact where each player tries to master the other with strength and skill, so it should be no surprise that Barrow Rugby League Club should make enquiries about wrestling training for their players. They hope to have an initial session to see if there are specific benefits to be gained, and then decide whether to develop it further. Apparently, wrestling training is used by other League clubs. Perhaps it is no accident that Wigan with its famous Rugby club is also the main area for Olympic Freestyle Wrestling in Britain. Obviously, the more technical chips like the hank and outside-stroke would be out of place on the rugby pitch, but the hipes, twists and half-buttocks would serve well to bring an opponent to ground with that bit of intimidation which is part of Rugby.

The greatest amalgamation of rugby and wrestling success was West Cumbrian Douglas Clark in the twenties and thirties when he played professional Rugby for Huddersfield and Great Britain, and was three times World Heavyweight wrestling champion, C & W Style.

Currently, several champion wrestlers are also successful rugby players: Lee Wall on the wing for Carlisle RUFC until a recent injury is the holder of two championships and a Grasmere title. Kendal forward Richard Harryman was Under 18 Champion in the nineties; ex-heavyweight champion Duncan Hutton plays for Morpeth and Northumberland, and Russell Housby of Silloth who has held boy championships over several years, plays for Cumbria Colts and has been in the Aspatria first team, playing out of position because he is too young to play in the front row.

I received a post-card last week from Ollolai in Sardinia, where the European Championships were held last year. The Sardinians won the team championship and the town has been allocated a special frank for their outgoing mail which has a picture of two wrestlers in the centre and Campionato Europeo Lotta (wrestling) Tradizionale in the surrounding circle. Carlisle Wrestlers will now be training on Wednesdays each week at 7.45 in Currock House Gym, instead of Fridays. Wrestlers at the Academies at Kendal and Milnthorpe were in competitive action last week. Milnthorpe ranks were boosted by the arrival of four youngsters from the same family and by an extra coach in the form of Ian Parsons who travelled from the Appleby area to help the young wrestlers.

A big Scottish wrestling event, The East Kilbride Opens, already postponed from December until February, has been further postponed in the expectation of some generous sponsorship later in the Spring.

RESULTS

Kendal Academy Age Competitions

Under 10 Years 1 B. Brocklebank 2 J. Hodgson 3 C. Hodgson

Under 12 Years 1 A. Thompson 2 J. Hodgson 3 C. Hodgson

Under 14 Years 1 G. Brocklebank 2 N. Bentham 3 T. Hodgson

Under 16 Years 1 N. Bentham 2 T. Hodgson 3 D. Parsons

Under 18 Years 1 G. Brocklebank 2 N. Bentham 3 T. Hodgson

Milnthorpe Academy

Under 12 Years 1 D. Parsons 2 S. Mason

Under 14 Years 1 A. Parsons 2 J. Burrow 3 S. Mason

30th January 2004

NOT THE WORST WEATHER FOR WRESTLING

FIVE minutes before writing this I was making my way through a blizzard, with my eyes full of snow. Not the best weather for wrestling you might think, and rightly, but there are records of wrestling on ice and in snow over two hundred years ago.

In 1785 on Windermere Lake froze solid and "a vast concourse from all parts of the surrounding country" gathered at Rawlinson's Nab for roast ox, "lots of beer", music from a Kendal band, and wrestling. *"The wrestling was in clogs such as country people at the time generally wore. These primitive coverings of the feet, though well adapted for sliding on the ice, were clumsy to wrestle in; nevertheless, the falls were eagerly contested, and delighted the throng of spectators. The final victor received a belt."*

A special occasion such as that may be understandable, but the annual wrestling at Langwathby, which was held each New Year's Day, seems like long-term masochism.

Langwathby Rounds ended in 1870: "having sunk in social status, these Rounds were finally given up, lest some riot or other unpleasant circumstance might crop up, as did at Armathwaite, between the English and Irish navvies employed in cutting the extension of the Midland Line of railway from Settle to Carlisle". Records of the Rounds go back to the 1780s, and they may have been much more ancient, as some elements such as a "stanging" or Mummers tour round the village households have the flavour of the old pagan/Christian midwinter ceremonies. In addition, *"A dance on the village green among the village girls of four or five years old, formed a pretty rural sight, even when witnessed amid the cheerless snow"*. Nor was the wrestling exempt from snow. *"About 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 all 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 arm were found to be too short and refused to meet. Continuing therefore to 'doff' what was the 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!"*

Nevertheless, Mason's tactics must have worked for he is recorded as the winner.

Because of treacherous roads, Carlisle Wrestling Club, now meeting on Wednesday's, postponed its Points Night for both men and boys until next week (February 4)

Kendal Academy's Points Competitions continued with wins for the usual suspects.

RESULTS

Kendal Academy Age Groups - Under 10 Years: 1 B. Brocklebank 2 B. Thompson 3 H. Hodgson. Under 12 Years: 1 A. Thompson 2 J. Hodgson 3 D. Bland. Under 14 Years: 1 G. Brocklebank 2 N. Bentham 3 T. Hodgson. Under 16 Years: 1 D. Parsons 2 N. Bentham 3 T. Hodgson. Under 18 Years: 1 D. Parsons 2 C. Proctor 3 T. Hodgson

20th February 2004

WE'RE ON COURSE TO TURN OUT SOME REAL COACHES

I DID not need my physics teacher to tell me that if you stand with two feet in a bucket, you cannot lift yourself off the ground by the handle. Yet this is the trick that the Wrestling Association is trying to do when it develops its coaching qualifications for Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling from scratch. Without any qualified coaches in the sport, who will act as assessors for the first people to qualify? Of course, there is no shortage of wrestling expertise, so the obvious answer is to tap the experience in the governing board to provide the "grandfathers' rights" to start the ball rolling.

The first course of all for the CWWA Basic Coaching Certificate takes place at Currock House on Sunday, March 14, and in the afternoon course-members will have to demonstrate that they can instruct others in the basic elements of wrestling. That involves Taking hold and the basic rules of winning and losing, back-heel, inside-click, outside-stroke, inside hipe, outside hipe, cross-buttock and full buttock. The course is deliberately being kept at a basic level.

The sophistication of combinations of chips and counters will be part of the higher level courses which are yet to be developed. *"Give me a fulcrum on which to rest and I will move the earth"* said Archimedes, so the Wrestling Association has hired a fulcrum for the morning session. This consists of a sports coach UK workshop, good practice and child protection, provided by Sport Cumbria. Participation leads to a nationally recognised attendance certificate recognised by the NSPCC. The combination of imported expertise and home-grown knowledge should form a solid foundation for this ground-breaking step for the Wrestling Association. Yet, the most important part of the day may well be the final, plenary session, when participants will be able to have their say about what is needed in the next stages. Anyone wishing for more information should contact me on 016974 73559

27th February 2004

A SAD LOSS TO WRESTLING; BOB CLARK, ITS GREATEST SUPPORTER, DIES

THE greatest wrestling supporter of all has died.

Bob Clark of Grayrigg was a promising wrestler until the age of twenty when he had a serious accident which damaged his arm and ended his wrestling career. For the remaining seventy-two years of his life he has been a ceaseless advocate for wrestling. At first he and his wife Dorothy "used to go of to the wrestling, and take father". Inevitably they were roped in to help organise events, until Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling became the focus of their lives. Each year for decades they travelled an average of eight thousand miles to help the sport. They transported wrestlers all round the North of England. Dorothy would run the table with notorious efficiency, while Bob would judge or commentate. After the wrestling was over, their car boot turned into a mobile buffet.

For twenty-five years Bob was President of the Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association. When he stood down in 1999 Jim Bland asked, *"How long has it been, Bob?"* *"Oh, endless,"* said Bob This ready humour was always to the fore when he had a microphone in his hand and a crowd round a ring. I must have heard his mushroom joke a thousand times, but I still laughed every time. As wrestlers compose themselves between bouts, they often wander about looking at the ground in front of them.

"It's nee good looking for mushrooms theer lad...a's already checked."

One hefty wrestler lay prone after a fall: *"My, he's as tall lying down as he is stannin up."* The further he was from Grayrigg the stronger his accent seemed to get, but wherever he was he held a crowd in his hand.

His humour was always affectionate, and through all his commentaries shone his love for the sport. I first remember Bob Clark in 1961 when I travelled from Northumberland to compete at his local event, Grayrigg Show. Everything was done to make me feel welcome in a strange country.

My last meeting with Bob was at the Academy Shield competition at Kendal Rugby Club in December when he ignored bad health to be there. Everything Bob did was full of zest and skill: farming, stick-dressing, bowling...but chiefly he will be remembered for a life dedicated to Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling

12th March 2004

MODERN DAY CHAMPIONS COULD HOLD THEIR OWN AGAINST PAST CHAMPIONS

FOR centuries the basic core of Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling has remained unchanged. A modern champion such as Andrew Carlile or Joseph Robson could fly back in time and compete on equal terms with the likes of Tom Nicholson for the five guinea prize at Carlisle Races in 1809, for the rules are virtually the same, as is the terminology.

But wrestling has also to fit into the contemporary athletic scene, too, and in the next week two events will take place which could only have happened in the last few years. On Sunday, March 14 wrestlers and supporters will meet at Currock House, Carlisle to qualify for the first ever coaching qualification in the sport: the CWWA Basic Coaching Certificate. The course will bring together participants from Northumberland, Lancashire, Kendal, West Cumbria, and even from East of Appleby which has been a blank spot for wrestling in recent years. As well as being widely spread geographically, the participants also have a wide age range: from early twenties to Senior Citizens. The morning session deals with general principles of coaching and child protection. In the afternoon everyone must show that they can teach the basic throws of C&W Wrestling. There has been a good response to the course, but there may still be some spare places. If interested, phone me on 016974 73559.

The other event which could only have happened in recent years is the selection night for the European Espoirs Championships in Austria. In the old days an international event meant wrestling at Jedburgh Games. Now wrestlers can compete in ten European countries.

On Wednesday, 17 March any young wrestler aged 16 to 20 years, who would like to be considered for the team should come to Currock House, Carlisle at 8.30pm. We need wrestlers at seven weights from 57kg upwards.

Carlisle Wrestling Club's last Points Night of the Winter Season was a lively affair, with twenty five wrestlers participating. Callum Lowry of Wreay was awarded the trophy for the best wrestler in the Junior events, though there were many contenders for the battered old cup. Lowry won his own weight, the 8 stones, with classy hipes and swings, but he also went on to wrestle against lads bigger than him with passion, determination and a lot of noise. A big contingent of young wrestlers came from the Haltwhistle area. All of them wrestled with enthusiasm, but the pick of them was Craig Ridley who has learnt a lot in a short time. He won the Under 12 Years and wrestled up to Callum Lowry in the 8 stones. Michael Harrington did well to stem the Northumbrian when he inside-clicked his way to win the 7 stones. Jonjo Pattinson was a popular winner of the Men's lightweights. He followed the ring last season but is always at a weight disadvantage whenever he wrestles. In the 11 stones section he did some smart twisting to go through unbeaten. Alan Walton did well to wriggle and squirm his way into a winning position after David Atkinson seemed to have him at his mercy. Russell Housby continued his policy of never being felled, when he won the All Weights. Meanwhile Russell's young cousin Helen Housby has to be applauded. She wrestles away manfully, the only girl amongst a score of lads.

Results:

6st: 1, W Storey; 2, James Harrington; 3, C Raine; 4, H Housby; 7st: 1, M Harrington; 2, P Pearson; 3, A Ridley; 4, D Ewart.; 8st 1, C Lowry; 2, C Ridley; 3, W Storey; 4, P Pearson; 10st: 1, R Dixon; 2, J Ewart; 3, P Housby; 4, A Ridley; Under 12 Years: 1, C Ridley; 2, C Raine; 3, D Ewart; 4, W Storey; Under 15 Years: 1, C Lowry; 2, P Housby; 3, A Ridley; 4, C Raine; Under 18 Years: 1, D Barnes; 2, R Fox; 3, R Dixon; 4, Joe Harrington.

Points Trophy Winners 2003/4:

6st: Willam Storey; 7st: Adam Ridley ; 8st: Callum Lowry ;10st: Callum Lowry; Under 12 Years: Daniel Ewart; Under 15 Years: Joe Harrington; Under 18 Years: John Harrington.

26th March 2004

SEEDS SOWN 30 YEARS AGO WILL BE HARVESTED IN SALZBOURG, AUSTRIA,

FIVE Cumbrian lads will travel to Austria next month to represent the C&W Wrestling Association at the European Championships Espoirs Championships of the Federation de Luttes Celtiques.

The competitors are all aged between 16 and 21 years, and will take on wrestlers from Brittany, Austria, Scotland, Sardinia and Holland in two traditional styles of wrestling: the Breton jacket style called Gouren in their own language, and our own back-hold style. Richard Dixon, John Harrington and Paul Barnes will be competing in the lighter weights between 57 and 74kgs, whilst David Barnes will be wrestling at 90kg, and Russell Housby is clearly in the super-heavyweight class over 90kgs. Their coach, Andrew Carlile, thinks that this will be one of the strongest teams ever from this region to contest the Espoirs Championships. All of the young wrestlers have held a youth championships and are skilled and experienced exponents of Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling. The problem, as always, lies in the Gouren which is much more technical and specialised than their normal style. But both of their coaches, David Atkinson and Andrew Carlile, are experienced exponents of the Breton style, and a new piece of equipment has arrived at the Currock House Gym where the weekly training sessions are held: a crash mat, which allows wrestlers to practice some of the more spectacular throws in safety.

The inclusion of the Barnes brothers from Dearham is especially satisfying to me personally, for it shows how efforts put in years ago can unexpectedly bear fruit. From 1970 to 1972 I taught at Trinity School, Carlisle, and ran a lunchtime wrestling session for pupils in the now defunct Strand Road Sports Centre. One of the best prospects at the time was Michael Barnes who made his mark in boys wrestling but then disappeared from the sport. Any sports coach has to accept that only a tiny proportion of those that he coaches will make the grade, and even fewer will sustain their interest over a long period. Michael Barnes re-appeared years later, not as a wrestler, but as the father of wrestlers, encouraging his sons and willing to transport them round the shows and sports meetings.

Seeds sown 30 years ago will be harvested in Salzburg, Austria, in three weeks time.

2nd April 2004

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE NEW POST

THE Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association has a new President after last week's AGM, and I hope he is up to the job.... because it's me.

I am well steeped in the traditions of the sport as I won my first event over 50 years ago and my direct ancestors wrestled in the 19th Century, but my focus now has to be the 21st Century, and that was the main thrust of a constructive General Meeting. The present sporting climate demands measures which would have been unthinkable twenty years ago, and the meeting heard about "Child Protection", "Health and Safety checks", Criminal Records Bureau", "Limited Company status" and "the CWWA Development Plan".

The meeting also had a long and thoughtful debate on whether the traditional wrestling strip was an asset or a liability to the development of the sport. The consistency, or lack of it, in referees was considered. And new Governing Board Members, David Parsons of Milnthorpe Academy and Eddie Younger of Northumberland were elected to join those who had their mandate renewed.

The CWWA has always run as a low cost operation, but the increased costs of insurance, trophies, and administration have force the Association to double its fees or face financial meltdown in two years. The

Academy was formed in the fifties when it was one of the last to be founded in the post-War boom for wrestling, but it is the only academy not to close in all that time.

The youngsters' names - Brocklebank, Bland, Hodgson, Hayhurst, Wilkinson and Parsons - read like an academy register of the past 50 years, for C&W Wrestling tends to run in families. This season has seen a shortage of senior wrestlers in training, but the enthusiasm of the juniors bodes well for the future.

Kendal Wrestling Academy Award Winners 2003/4

Under 10 Years: 1 Ben Brocklebank 2 William Hayhurst

Under 12s: 1 Jake Hodgson 2 B. Brocklebank U14: 1 Graham Brocklebank 2 Neil Bentham U16: 1 G. Brocklebank 2 David Parsons U18: 1 D. Parsons 2 N. Bentham

Weights - 6st: 1 B. Brocklebank 2 Daniel Bland 8st: 1 Sam Wilkinson 2 Alistair Thompson 10st: 1 D. Parsons 2 N. Bentham 12st: 1 D. Parsons 2 G. Brocklebank 14st: 1 Joseph Robson 2 N. Bentham

All Weights: 1 J. Robson 2 Trevor Hodgson

The wrestler with the most points over the winter season: Ben Brocklebank

9th April 2004

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16th April 2004

HOUSBY STARS

A BATTERED and bruised team of five young men returned from the European Espoirs Wrestling Championships in Bruck, Austria earlier this week.

Heavyweight Russell Housby of Aspatria had been the star wrestler, coming second in the Gouren style and winning the backhold section. In a thrilling final he took on an Austrian even bigger than himself. The Austrian's buttocking brought early success, but Housby fought back to level terms at two falls each by rushing his man forward as he came to buttock. In the decider he was even more decisive, for he lifted his nineteen stone opponent high and twisted back for a famous victory. His success was an example of mind over matter, for he was wrestling with a badly sprained ankle that needed plaster and wheelchair treatment to get him home.

The Barnes brothers from Dearham were also suffering from injuries. Paul did well to compete at all for he travelled with a hand injury. Gouren, with the need to grip a canvas jacket was impossible, but he competed well in the backhold, to be beaten in the final by his team-mate John Harrington. David Barnes only had two wrestles, for he dislocated his little finger and was unable to carry on. Richard Dixon of Lessonhall, Wigton, was the youngest competitor, and found the opposition strong. In a Gouren bout he did well to gain a Kostin which is a high quality throw. He came home unscathed and enthused by the whole international experience.

John Harrington on his first trip abroad did well to win his group. Against older, strong wrestlers he withstood their buttocking and hanking, to win with back-heels and hipes.

Andrew Carlile has to be applauded for the way he prepared the young wrestlers and wore so many hats in Austria as coach, judge, delegate, and medical attendant

30th April 2004

SPRING HERALDS OUR WRESTLING FAMILY'S RETURN

ITS April, and the Ospreys have returned to Bassenthwaite Lake... and the tourists will also return in their thousands to watch them from Dodd Wood or the Whinlatter Centre, bringing with them the odd million or two of spending money.

In August, Breton wrestlers will migrate to the paddock next to my house and put their tents up, just as they have for the last 20 years... and thousands of visitors to the likes of Grasmere Sports or Keswick Show will applaud them for their skill and the distance travelled.

The region can function perfectly well without Ospreys and Breton wrestlers, but they add different threads to the rich tapestry that is Cumbria. Of course, wrestling tourism is not a one way street and our wrestlers compete on the Highland Games circuit and on the piled sawdust of Breton wrestling rings, as well as in the formal international championships which take place each year. Over the years firm friendships have developed between wrestlers of different countries because of these sporting links. In the post-War era we were all introspective and a trip over the Cumberland/Northumberland Border counted as an exotic adventure to places where they spoke funny. Ted Dunglinson, the great Heavyweight Champion, changed all that, for he was more outward looking, seeking new wrestling challenges away from his home patch. He regularly and secretly competed under the name of McBride in the Highland Games and in 1970 persuaded some Cumbrian wrestlers to compete in the Cornish wrestling at St Austell. In 1985 he was part of the original initiative to establish the International Federation of Celtic Wrestling which has so widened the horizons of our wrestlers.

Since then our lads have followed wrestling to Iceland, Holland, Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, Spain, The Canary Islands, Austria and Sardinia. Trips abroad are fine, but they serve to remind us how precious our own wrestling heritage is. Holiday times can be tricky when you have to veto your wifes plans for a trip to the Costa Lotta because it clashes with the Cumberland Show.

Local fare is on offer tonight at Dallam Football Pavilion when Milnthorpe Academy will host a Finals Night and Open Competitions at 7.30pm. Open competitions include Under 12, 16 and 18 Years and Seniors at 13st and All Weights

14th May 2004

IS THE CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND WRESTLING STRIP OUT-DATED ?

IS the Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling strip out-dated, and a source of mockery which turns young people away from the sport; OR is it neat and effective for the needs of the sport, and a distinctive part of our local culture? The answer, of course, is yes to both questions, and that creates a problem.

A source of mockery?... When a journalist on a local paper refers to the velvet centre-piece as knickers and a local television presenter ends a serious piece of film on wrestling with Mmm, seem like nice boys!. Then it is little surprise that comments at the ring-side and in the school corridors can be daunting to youngsters who are taking their first steps in the sport. Long-johns have associations with grandads and Carry On films. If you call them tights they have links with women and ballet-dancers. And the embroidery on the vests and centre-pieces seem at odds with a tough sport. Even the word costume has a less than macho feel to it. And then there is superman. So, yes, we have an image problem.

Neat and effective?...The result of a backhold wrestling fall can depend on an inch of difference as the two wrestlers hit the ground. Wrestling judges need short-cropped grass and tight-fitting clothes to be sure of the result of some falls. The traditional strip is perfect for this. It is also light in weight, easily washed (my wife tells me!), and cheap.

Distinctive?...When I flew to South Africa, the in-flight magazine had picture of Tom Harrington and Gavin Fox at Grasmere. Tourist literature constantly uses images of wrestlers to help define the special nature of the culture of the area. One of Tom's strips was an exhibit in the Tate Gallery recently. The strip could scarcely be more distinctive - an instantly recognised symbol of our sport.

Local culture?...The strip has been part of the sport since the 1850s when it was the fashionable athletic strip of the time before shorts appeared. Before that wrestlers stripped down to shirts, knee breeches and stockings.

21st May 2004

CALLING ALL WRESTLING EXPERTS!

There may sometimes be a shortage of them competing but there always seem to be plenty round the ring.

For the active wrestlers, the grass season is poised to start tomorrow, with Sedbergh Gala and the North Cumbria YFC Field Day at Cockermouth. In the next five weeks, there will be no fewer than nine wrestling events, including the All Weights Championship at Killington on June 3, and a busy weekend ten days later when the 15st Championship is at the Roman Wall Show on Saturday June 12 and the 10.5st Championship at Morpeth on Sunday June 12 .For the armchair wrestlers - the past champions - there is a rare chance to demonstrate their expertise as the Wrestling Association is seeking their help to produce a coaching handbook.

The main book in loose-leaf form will be the work of a select few, with each section covering a basic chip before branching out into combinations and counters. But those behind the project also want to involve as many old and contemporary wrestlers in the development of the handbook as possible. So, what pattern of footwork did you use when you came in to hipe? How did you throw out the hank? What was your answer to a back-heel? The CWWA development committee will be pro-active in circulating past and present wrestlers for a response but a comprehensive list is not available, so unsolicited expertise is needed.

If you want to help, contact me, Roger Robson (tel:016974 73559)

Dates:

Saturday May 22: Sedbergh Gala (1.55pm) U15/U18/12.5AW.

Saturday May 22: North Cumbria YFC Field Day at Cockermouth.

Monday, May 31, Northumberland Show, Corbridge (1.30pm)

U14/U18/111/2/13/AW (300)

Thursday June 3 Killington Sports including AW World Championship

4th June 2004

NORTHUMBRIAN WRESTLERS TRY TO KEEP THE CUMBRIANS AT BAY.

THE Northumberland County Show was swamped with sunshine and people, so it was no surprise that a big crowd gathered to watch the Northumbrian wrestlers try to keep the Cumbrians at bay.

Andrew Carlile, of Carlisle, dominated the lightweights. He bossed it, said Alf Harrington. Those bossed included Jonjo Pattinson in the final and John Harrington who was easily felled in the semi-final. Wrestling never lets you rest on your laurels, though, and John Harrington turned the tables in the next weight when he attacked Carlile from the onset. The Northumbrians dominated the heavyweights with Robert Leiper of Ponteland showing great form against Jason Davidson in the final. For the first fall he swung Davidson and nudged him with an outside stroke when he landed on one leg. For the second fall he did not need the follow-up chip for his swinging inside-hipe finished the job decisively. Alan Jones of Hallbankgate started his second year of not retiring from wrestling with a straightforward win in the 13 stones. He played less of the waiting game than usual when he felled Alan Walton in the semi-final, and wrenched and twisted John Harrington in the final.

In the boys wrestling, local novice lads had it all their own way in the Under 12 Years. Chris Walton of Haltwhistle had to be on his toes against active opposition in the Under 14s, but won easily in the end.

Most interesting was the under 18's when some of the favourites had wake-up calls in early rounds. Chris Walton took the first fall off Richard Dixon in the first round, and Dixon in turn gave John Harrington, the eventual winner, a shock in their first fall. Later, Dixon hurt his shoulder in what seemed an innocuous fall and has a chipped collar-bone which will keep him out of action for six weeks.

Wrestlers were shocked to hear of the death of Bill Threlfall, who for so long was the major driving force behind wrestling in North Lancashire. He had been ill for some time but seemed in good form recently. In March, at the age of 66, he was by far the oldest person to gain the CWWA Basic Coaching Certificate. He wrestled occasionally when a young man, but he took the sport up seriously in 1967 at the age of thirty. With his strength and wrestling knowledge, he was always a formidable opponent, but his lack of early training meant that he never quite fulfilled his potential. He was placed at Grasmere twice, and over a period of twelve years he met Big Wilf Brocklebank in about eighty finals in Lancashire and South Cumbria. His proudest record was that against the great Ted Dunglinson. His score of three for and 12 against was better than most wrestlers managed. He was the foremost organiser of wrestling in Lancashire for decades. In the Summer he was responsible for many events; in the Winter he ran the Wrestling Academy at St Michael's-on-Wyre which produced so many good wrestlers and champions. Amongst these was his son, Joe, who won several championships at 14 stones and All Weights, and he paid tribute to his father's role as coach and wrestling strategist. He had wide interests and excelled in all that he did. As a dairy herdsman he ran one of the highest achieving herds in Lancashire. As a snooker player he won the individual championship in both the Preston and Longridge leagues. At the age of thirteen he was the best draughts player in Lancashire, and for many years played for the county.

He leaves a wife, four children and ten grandchildren. He was pleased last year when he watched one of those grandchildren, Joshua, compete for the first time in the sport which was for Bill Threlfall an obsession and a delight. His funeral service will take place at 11am on Monday 7th June at St Stephen's, Inskip.

RESULTS

Northumberland County Show

Under 12 Years: 1, J Charlton; 2, T Parkin; 3, M Lines.

Under 14 Years 1, C Walton; 2, R Scott; 3, W Noimai.

Under 18 Years 1, John Harrington; 2, R Pattinson; 3, R Dixon.

11st 1, A Carlile; 2, J Pattinson; 3, John Harrington.

13st 1, A Jones; 2, John Harrington; 3, A Walton.

All Weights 1, R Leiper 2, J Davidson 3, A Murray.

DATES

Saturday, 6th June 1pm Carlisle Vintage Society, Cargo, Nr Carlisle U12/U15/U18/12/AW

Saturday, 12th June 2pm Roman Wall Show U15/U18/11/13/15st World Championship (500 for Championship)

Sunday 13th June Morpeth Boys/10st World Championship/13/15/AW

Saturday 19th June 2pm Kirkheaton U12/U15/U18/12/15/AW

11th June 2004

A COLOSSUS STANDS ASTRIDE CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND WRESTLING,

Robert McNamara, who weighs in at more than 23 stones, has been the CWWA Heavyweight World Champion since 1997.

At Killington Sports, Big Mac, of East Kilbride, put his name on the old trophy for the eighth time and is now easily within reach of Ted Dungleinson's record of nine wins. Quick on his feet despite his size, McNamara waded easily through the opposition. He allowed any attacks to bounce off him and then picked his man up like a bairn, gave a quick sideways flick off the chest, and dumped him flat on the grass. Kendal Academy's Joseph Robson made the best shot at unsettling the Big Yin by moving him around the ring, but my laconic notes on the outcome of the two falls simply say "chest" and "buried". David Atkinson wrestled well for the privilege of contesting the final, but McNamara was more than twice his weight, with thighs as large as the Cumbrian's torso, so he, too, was unceremoniously "buried".

David Atkinson, though, had a good week of wrestling as he appeared in both men's finals at Killington, and then won both senior categories at the Carlisle Vintage Rally. In the 12½ stones, he felled Alan Walton, of Haltwhistle, and in the All Weights beat his training partner Andrew Carlisle.

A refreshing aspect of the wrestling this week is the return to the ring of some good wrestlers, such as David Barnes, David Jamieson, Martin McLoughlin and Andrew Bentham, who lack match fitness, but who always give a good account of themselves.

Finally, a wrestler was born a fortnight ago. How do I know already that he is a wrestler when his centrepiece is a disposable nappy? Well, he is the son of Trevor Hodgson, of Dent, whose other children all wrestle, and how could he be anything but a wrestling star with the name they've given him?.....Ted!

RESULTS

Killington Sports

Under 12 Years 1, B Brocklebank; 2, A Thompson; 3, S Mason.

Under 15 Years 1, G Brocklebank; 2 S Mason; 3, N Bentham.

Girls Under 15 Years 1 T Hodgson; 2, H Hodgson; 3, C Musgrave.

13st 1, A Walton; 2, D Atkinson; 3, Joe Harrington.

All Weights World Championship 1, R McNamara; 2, D Atkinson; 3, J Robson.

Carlisle Vintage Rally

Under 15 Years 1, C Lowry; 2, W Naimai; 3, M Harrington.

Under 18 Years 1, D Barnes; 2, John Harrington; 3, C Lowry.

12st 1, D Atkinson; 2, A Walton; 3, A Carlile.

All Weights 1, D Atkinson; 2, A Carlile; 3, D Barnes.

Dates:

Saturday, June 12 2pm Roman Wall Show U15/U18/11/13/15st World Championship (500 for Championship)

Sunday June 13 Morpeth 10st World Championship U12/U15/U18.

Saturday June 19 2pm Kirkheaton U12/U15/U18/12/15/AW

Sunday June 27 2pm Patterdale U12/U15/U18/11/13/AW

18th June 2004

WORLD CHAMPIONS CROWNED

TWO new champions have silverware to polish after last week's wrestling: Jason Davidson of Rothbury became 15st World Champion at the Roman Wall Show, and John Harrington of Bewaldeth gained his first senior title, the 10 World Championship at Morpeth Fair.

The Roman Wall Show, perched on a ridge by the Wall beside crags and loughs, had a vintage year with big crowds ringing the sheep show, the terriers and the wrestling. The standard for the wrestling was set in the first boys event when Callum Lowry, growled and struggled to fell Richard Armstrong in the final of the Under 15 Years. Despite all Lowry's efforts Armstrong seemed to have it won until a wayward knee twice touched down for a dog fall and then a loss. The clinching fall, though, was entirely Lowry's own work when he connected with a timely inside-click. The warm-up for the championship continued with Richard Younger twisting strongly to fell Richard Fox. Andrew Carlile gave a hiping demonstration in the final of the 11 stones, but David Atkinson then gave a master-class on the subject in the 131/2 stones.

The championship brought together some substantial wrestlers from Kendal, Carlisle and Northumberland, and the eventual winner, Jason Davidson, sampled all of these. In the first round he won by countering the attacks of Carlisle's David Jamieson with neat twists. In the semi-final Kendal's Joseph Robson, the 14st champion, was twice rushed forward off the buttock. The final with Robert Leiper of Stamfordham, Northumberland, continued the theme of reactive wrestling when Davidson back-heeled Leiper when he stepped in to hipe. The fall which clinched the title was as complicated as it gets. Davidson made his first mistake of the competition when he stepped right across the front of Leiper into a suicide position. In the resulting flurry of action Leiper twisted the wrong way and then it was twist on spinning twist until Davidson reached for miles with a cross-buttock that brought Leiper cleanly over.

The judges awarded the salver for the best performance of the afternoon, too. Then the next day at Morpeth Fair, Davidson continued his purple patch by winning both the 15 stones and the All Weights. The main drama at Morpeth Fair took place before the actual wrestling when John Harrington was madly running round the park dressed like a latter day punk in a black bin-bag, trying to make the weight for the 10 Championship. When he lost the first fall against the holder, Andrew Carlile, all that effort seemed futile, but he struck back with an extraordinary fall: a leg-up buttock from a long way off which caught Carlile's shin rather than splitting the legs. In theory it should not be possible, but his father did the same to me in a Grasmere final in 1980, so it must be. In the final, against Jonjo Pattinson of Bardon Mill, Harrington had full control. He hiped and back-heeled for the first fall and then twisted back for the winner when Pattinson stepped across to buttock.

Results

Roman Wall Show

Under 15 Years 1, C Lowry; 2, R Armstrong; 3, C Ridley.

Under 18 Years 1, R Younger; 2, R Fox; 3, R Armstrong.

11st 1, A Carlile; 2, J Pattinson; 3, C Lowry.

13 1, D Atkinson; 2, A Carlile; 3, A Walton.

15st World Championship 1, J Davidson 2, R Leiper; 3, J Robson

Morpeth Fair

Under 12 Years 1, S Turner; 2, M Robinson.

Under 15 Years 1, R Armstrong; 2, M Harrington; 3, S Geagan.

Under 18 Years 1, R Younger 2, R Armstrong; 3, John Harrington.

10st World Championship 1, John Harrington; 2, J Pattinson; 3, A Carlile.

13st 1, A Jones; 2, John Harrington; 3, A Carlile.

15st 1, J Davidson; 2, R Leiper; 3, A Jones.

All Weights 1, J Davidson; 2, D Whitfield; 3, R Younger.

Dates

Saturday, June 19, 2pm Kirkheaton U12/U15/U18/12/15/AW

Sunday, June 27 2pm Patterdale U12/U15/U18/11/13/AW

25th June 2004

CHRIS LEADS THE WAY WITH CHAMPIONSHIP WIN

BETTER and better as it went on, that was Alf Harrington's verdict on the wrestling at Kirkheaton Show.

The first boys event, the under 12 years, was an entertainment in itself when a wide range of youngsters from six years upwards keenly contested the prize-money. In the next three sections, the winners were fairly obvious before a bout was wrestled. Chris Walton, the under 15/8st champion had too much skill and experience to fail in the under 15 years. Richard Younger from nearby Ponteland is the under 18 champion and is already built to lift girders. And Alan Walton had little trouble coping with younger opposition. After that the going got harder for Northumberland has some substantial wrestlers who are on good form at present. 15st champion Jason Davidson had been on a winning streak recently but that came to a halt at Kirkheaton when he was felled in the 15st final by Robert Leiper and in the all weights final by Darren

Whitfield. Although he lost the middle fall when he slipped in the rain slicked grass, Leiper was wrestling at full power and crushed Davidson into bad positions before lifting and twisting over the knee.

Darren Whitfield was revitalised in the All Weights after a lack-lustre and tired display at Morpeth Fair, the previous week. At Kirkheaton he got his right shoulder in to all his opponents and "bossed the whole thing". He went straight over the top of Richard Younger in double-quick time in the semi final, and in the final he gave a text book illustration of the outside-hipe on the weighty and long-legged Jason Davidson.

Wrestling moves into central Lakeland for the next two weeks with events at Patterdale at the head of Ullswater and in the Great Langdale Valley.

Results

Kirkheaton Show

Under 12: 1, Nick O'Neil; 2, Lewis Browell; 3, Callum McLacklenced. Under 15: 1, Chris Walton; 2, Michael Harrington; 3, Robby Scott. Under 18: 1, Richard Younger; 2, Joe Harrington; 3, John Bertram. 12st 1, Alan Walton; 2, John Bertram; 3, J Pattison. 15st: 1, Robert Leiper; 2, Jason Davidson; 3, Alan Walton. All Weights: 1, Darren Whitfield; 2, Jason Davidson; 3, Richard Younger.

Dates

June 27 (Sun): 2pm Patterdale U12/U15/U18/11/13/AW

July 4 (Sun): 2pm Langdale Gala U12/U15/U18/11/2/13/AW.

July 10 (Sat): Longridge; 11 (Sun) 2pm Haltwhistle Carnival U15/U18/Novices/11/2/13/2/AW

2nd July 2004

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED WAS THE THEME AT PATERDALE.

The boys wrestling gave off an air of normality, with a mix of wrestlers from the academies at Milnthorpe and Carlisle, spiced up by some Sunderland lads who competed at several events last year where foxhounds and wrestling co-incided. The winners were not unexpected with Stuart Mason, a farmer's son from Milnthorpe, felling Daniel Ewart in the Under 12s final. Then Daniel was felled by big brother, Jack, in the Under 15 Years final. One of the Sunderland lads, Glen Foot, showed power and the basics of wrestling to reach the final of the Under 18 Years, but, not unexpectedly the taller, heavier, well-practiced David Barnes snuffed out any spark of opposition with an inside-hipe.

At that point normality disappeared, and if I had been gambling, I would have lost a lot of money. Bouts between Andrew Carlile and John Harrington have been one of the highlights of this season so far. In the 11st semi-final Harrington drew first blood with a last gasp twist, but Carlile steadied to take the next two finishing by rushing Harrington off the leg-up buttock. That left him facing Paul Barnes of Dearham in the final. Barnes has held a junior championship and has been well schooled in the past at Carlisle Wrestling Club, but the 11st champion, Carlile, with his high levels of fitness and experience, was the favourite to win. He did win the first fall, but only by a short head as the two wrestlers landed on the tops of their heads with feet to the sky. But then Barnes took over, cutting through Carlile's long legs with an inside-click for his first win of the season. Andrew Carlile had to regroup and reassert himself to win the 13 stones in a three fall final with John Harrington. As the All Weights progressed normality seemed to reassert itself as Joe Threlfall felled the strapping David Barnes to reach the final with John Harrington who had reached there by the easier half of the draw.

The crowd was further lulled as Threlfall, a former Heavyweight Champion, twisted the new 10st Champion over his knee for the first fall. Then the impossible happened, twice. First an inside-click from Harrington cut through Threlfall's intentions and sat him down. Then a quicksilver twist had Threlfall heading for the turf. He came with a desperate late twist, which just failed, leaving John Harrington the winner.

Results

Patterdale Country Fair

Under 12 years: 1, S Mason; 2, D Ewart; 3, J Fothergill.

Under 15 Years: 1, J Ewart; 2, D Ewart; 3, W Naioma.

Under 18 Years: 1, D Barnes; 2, G Foot; 3, K Bebb.

11st: 1, P Barnes; 2, A Carlile; 3, John Harrington.

13st: 1, A Carlile; 2, John Harrington; 3, P Barnes.

All Weights: 1, John Harrington; 2, Joe Threlfall; 3, P Barnes.

Dates:

4th (Sun) 2pm Langdale Gala U12/U15/U18/11/13/AW

10th (Sat) 3.30pm Longridge, Near Preston U13/U16/11/14/AW.

11th (Sun) 2pm Haltwhistle Carnival U15/U18/Novices/11/13/AW.

17th (Sat) Cumberland Show (U18yrs Championship)

18th (Sun) Great Ecclestone

9th July 2004

THE BARNES BROTHERS

THERES nothing like this for the kids down at Oldham, said John Brown's parents as they watched their lad take second place in the Under 15 Years wrestling at Great Langdale. The boys' entries had wrestlers from the academies at Milnthorpe and Carlisle, as well as local lads and visitors from the likes of Oldham. The final of the youngest age group - the -under-12 Years - saw Milnthorpe in the shape of Jack Lashley fell Carlisle's Daniel Ewart with strong crosses.

The final of the Under-15 Years saw local lad, Graham Benson, of Skelwith, beat the Oldham visitor, John Brown, with powerful back-heels.

After that it was the Barnes brothers who had all the success. They now live at Dearham after training at Carlisle over several years. Little brother David is smaller in years and much bigger in physique than big brother Paul (if you know what I mean?) so he easily won the Under-18 Years and the Senior All Weights with hipes and rushes.

Paul Barnes continued the good form he displayed at Patterdale last week with wins at both 11st and 13st. He is a quick -moving, skilful wrestler and he cut through the opposition with ease until he met little/big brother David in the All Weights final when weight proved more effective than seniority.

The number of wrestling events in Lancashire had been halved by the demise of the Lancaster Show, leaving only Great Ecclestone to carry the wrestling flag, but tomorrow sees the revival of wrestling at the Longridge Show, near Preston.

RESULTS

Great Langdale

U-12: 1 J Lashley; 2 D Ewart; 3 S Lashley.

U-15: 1 G Benson; 2 J Brown; 3 A Parsons.

U-18: 1 D Barnes; 2 Joe Harrington; 3 J Wright.

11st: 1 P Barnes; 2 G Benson.

13st 1: P Barnes; 2 Joe Harrington; 3 J Wright.

All Weights: 1D Barnes; 2 P Barnes;3 Joe Harrington.

Dates

Tomorrow 3.30pm: Longridge, Near Preston U13/U16/11/14/AW.

Sunday 2pm: Haltwhistle Carnival U15/U18/Novices/11/13/AW

Saturday July 17: Cumberland Show (U18yrs Championship)

Sunday July 18: Great Ecclestone Show

16th July 2004

CHAMPION CONTENDERS LIMBER UP FOR THE UNDER 18'S CHAMPIONSHIP

TWO of the main contenders for tomorrow's Under-18 Years Championship limbered up in style last week. Both Richard Younger, the present champion, and David Barnes won at senior level and showed lots of skill and power in doing so.

David Barnes made the long trip from West Cumbria to the Longridge Show, near Preston, to compete and he was amply rewarded by a win in the 14 stones. He also produced a good performance in the All Weights when he finished third behind two big Lancastrians, Joe Threlfall and Pat Molloy. Joe Threlfall had persuaded several of his doormen friends to take part in the renewal of the sport at Longridge, so there was a hefty contingent of wrestlers in the All Weights. Barnes also competed well at Haltwhistle Carnival, sitting the mighty Richard Younger onto his backside with an inside-click when they met in the final of the Under-18 Years. This had the unfortunate effect, for Barnes, of waking Younger up and he hoisted 14 stones of Barnes high in the air before twisting him off his chest. The two met again in the final of the All Weights and once more the lighter man proved to be a problem for Younger, taking the middle fall with a sneaky cross-click.

Andrew Carlile had lightweight wins at both Longridge and Haltwhistle, and Alan Jones, of Hallbankgate, continued his good run of form by winning a highly competitive 13-and-a-half stone competition, felling Andrew Carlile, David Atkinson and Haltwhistles Alan Walton. One of the cleanest falls of the day put Peter Hunter flat on his back, a rare occurrence, especially as the winner was a straw bale, and Peter was a judge moving back from the wrestlers!

Serious damage was done to my hearing last week when I staged wrestling at St Aidans County High School as part of their Year 7 Medieval Day. With a big crowd of youngsters, the atmosphere was electric and very loud.

A special Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling training session for women and girls only will be held at 7.45pm on Wednesday in the gym at Currock House. All-comers welcome

Longridge Show

Under-13 Years: 1, B Brocklebank; 2, S Mason; 3, L Spenser; Under-16 Years: 1, G Brocklebank; 2, D Parsons; 3, B Brocklebank; 11st: 1, A Carlile; 2, D Parsons; 3, G Brocklebank; 14st:1, D Barnes; 2, A Carlile; 3, V Shawtech; All Weights 1, Joe Threlfall; 2, P Molloy; 3, D Barnes.

Haltwhistle Carnival

Under-15 Years: 1, C Walton; 2, W Naioma; 3, M Harrington; Under-18 Years: 1, R Younger; 2, D Barnes; 3, R Walton; Novices: 1, R Pattinson; 2, Joe Harrington; 3, J Pattinson. 11st: 1, A Carlile; 2, R Walton; 3, J Pattinson; 13st 1, A Jones; 2 A Walton; 3, D Atkinson; All Weights 1, R Younger; 2, D Barnes; 3, A Jones.

Dates

Tomorrow 4.30pm: Cumberland Show U-12/U-15/U-18 Championship/12/14/AW (390)

Sunday 2pm: Great Ecclestone U12/U15/U18/13/15/AW (Round-robin competitions, 350)

Sat July 24 1pm: Penrith U12/U15/U18yrs/10st Championship/111/2/13/AW

Sun July 24 12noon: Flookburgh U12/U5/U18/111/2/13/AW

Sun July 24 3pm: Coniston Country Fair U12/U15/U18/111/2/13/AW

Thu July 29 1pm: Ambleside Sports U15/U18/111/2/121/2/14/AW

Fri July 30: Langholm Common Riding

6th August 2004

BATTLE OF WOUNDED KNEES

NUMBER games and statistics do not always make good reading in the world of Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling, where entries can be in short supply. But last week there were some happy numbers.

How about the fact that there were no fewer than 18 wrestlers who had wins last week at four different venues: Ambleside Sports, Langholm Common Riding, Cockermouth Show and Beetham Sports? Or how about the 25 entries in the under-12 years at Beetham or 17 in the under-18s at Ambleside? Of course, numbers are only a rough guide to anything, for it is quality that really counts to the ringside crowd. And that was there in abundance, too.

David Atkinson was in sublime form at Ambleside, where he won two weights with an astonishing range of throws. He is sometimes seen as a one-chip wrestler, with his trademark right-leg inside-hipe, but that myth was exploded when he won spectacular falls with a leg-up buttock, left-leg hipe and a combination of inside-hipe leading to a back-over twist to finish with an outside hipe. The Guinness Trophy for the best performance can rarely have been easier to allocate, even though Andrew Carlile, Richard Fox and Graham Brocklebank all impressed.

Russell Housby, too, was on great form when the all weights became The Battle of Wounded Knee.

First Jason Davidson in the semi-final and Joe Threlfall in the final succumbed to knee injury after the first fall. Housby was in a strong position with Davidson but looked like slipping out of the ring for a restart. Instead he hoisted his man up and carried him several paces up the hill before thumping him down with a twist off the chest. Even though injured, Davidson did pull one back when he gained a good hold and rushed Housby forward, but he collapsed under pressure from Housby in the decider. In the final Housby stepped over Joe Threlfall's favourite twist over the knee and twisted to win the first fall. The second fall ended oddly when Threlfall was exactly where he wanted to be with a powerful grip, but had to stop wrestling because of doubts about his knee. Housby also won the heavyweights at Cockermouth where the last bout of the day, his final with Carl Clark, was also one of the closest and best.

John Harrington missed Ambleside because of a family wedding, but he made up ground with a win against Andrew Carlile at Langholm when he was able to escape and counter Carlile's best efforts.

At his local event, Cockermouth Show, he was bested by David Barnes in the final of the under-18 years, but then went on to win both the lightweights and the middleweights.

At Beetham, Sam Brocklebank, son of the George Brocklebank who won the heavyweights at Grasmere at the age of 14, won the under-18 years. "Is he built like his father and grandfather? said I. "Well, he's shepped like a brick," said Peter Hayhust

13th August 2004

HOUSBY ON FORM IN THE ALL WEIGHTS

THE two related families the Hodgsons and the Brocklebanks have enough wrestlers both male and female, young and old (sorry, Trevor) to have their own Academy. At Ings and Kirkby Lonsdale they took the lion's share of the prizemoney, except that John Harrington at Ings and his cousin Joe at Kirkby Lonsdale both won junior and senior classes. And Russell Housby, another from Carlisle Wrestling Club, took the heavyweights at Ings.

Housby, fully recovered from an ankle injury which kept him away from the ring at the start of the season, is coming into his own in the All Weight classes. At Powburn, his final with Richard Younger of Ponteland was a grand finale to some excellent wrestling. Younger took the first fall with a slight lift and a twist off the chest like a junior McNamara. Housby steadied the ship, gained a good hold and took Younger forward off the right side, twice.

The 14st final at Powburn was also a peach. David Atkinson found that he could not hipe Andrew Carlile going forward, so he converted to a lock hipe to win. In the second bout he again tried twice to dispatch Carlile with his favourite right side hipe, but Carlile rode all that he could throw at him and countered with his own swinging hipe. Third time lucky? Atkinson loaded Carlile onto his hip and hiped him at last.

Young wrestlers ruled the roost at Gilsland. Richard Walton won the Under 17 Years and then back-heeled his father Alan Walton in the first round of the All Weights. Dad recovered to take the next two. When John Harrington and Richard Fox are in the same draw you can expect some top class sport. But there was also an extra ingredient at Gilsland when Kevin Fox proved unbeatable in the All Weights.

RESULTS

Ings:

Under 12 Years 1, B Brocklebank; 2, J Batts; 3, D Leacock. Under 15 Years 1, G Brocklebank; 2, B Brocklebank; 3, J Cumbie.

Under 18 Years 1, John Harrington; 2, G Brocklebank; 3, J Cumbie.

12st 1, John Harrington; 2, I Honeyman; 3, Joe Harrington.

All Weights 1, R Housby; 2, John Harrington 3, M Cumbie.

Powburn:

Under 10 Years 1, R Cuthbert; 2, T Pennie; 3, W Biggs.

Under 13 Years 1, R Cuthbert; 2, T Pennie 3, L Sutherland.

Under 16 Years 1, Joe Harrington; 2, C Lowry; 3, R Stevenson.

11st 1, A Carlile; 2, John Harrington 3, C Lowry. 14st 1, D Atkinson; 2, A Carlile; 3, R Cockburn.

All Weights 1, R Housby; 2, R Younger; 3, D Atkinson.

Gilsland:

Under 13 Years 1, K McGrath; 2, R Coates; 3, M Palmer.

Under 17 Years 1, R Walton; 2, Joe Harrington; 3, R Palmer.

11st 1, John Harrington; 2, J Pattinson; 3, R Walton.

All Weights 1, K Fox; 2, John Harrington; 3, R Fox.

Forestburngate:

Under 13 Years 1, M Goldsworthy; 2, D Crane; 3, M Crane.

Under 15 Years 1, M Goldsworthy; 2, W Noimai; 3, D Crane.

Under 18 Years 1, R Younger; 2, A Poole 3, John Harrington.

12st 1, John Harrington; 2, Joe Harrington 3, J Pattinson.

14st 1, R Leiper; 2, R Alston; 3, John Harrington.

All Weights 1, R Younger; 2, W Davy; 3, R Leiper.

Kirkby Lonsdale:

Under 12 Years 1, S Brocklebank; 2, W Hayhurst; 3, J Hodgson.

Under 15 Years 1, G Brocklebank; 2, S Wilkinson; 3, W Noimai.

Under 18 Years 1, Joe Harrington; 2, D Parsons; 3, S Wilkinson.

13st 1, Joe Harrington; 2, G Brocklebank; 3, S Wilkinson.

All Weights 1, Trevor Hodgson; 2, Joe Harrington; 3, T Brocklebank.

Ladies 1, M Brocklebank; 2, H Hodgson; 3, Tracey Hodgson

DATES:

Tomorrow: 12 noon Dalston, U12/U15/U18/11/13st Championship/AW

Sunday: 2.30pm Lakeland Country Fair, Torver U12/U15/U18/11/13/AW

August 21st: Allendale 4pm Skelton U13/U16/U18/11/13/AW

August 22nd: 11am Grasmere Boys U12/U15/U18 Girls U15/U18 Men 11/12/13/14/AW Women 10/AW (£2,033 prize money)

August 25th: Ennerdale

20th August 2004

THE DAVID ATKINSON MASTER CLASS AT DALSTON

DAVID Atkinson put on a master class of wrestling to win the 13st World Championship at Dalston Show, once he got going.

His first bouts did not augur well for him as Alan Walton put him on his back with a back-heel just as he went to hipe. A cagey, dour second hold had to be stopped and restarted after the wrestlers paid a visit to the crowd. Then he woke up. He hiped Walton twice even though Walton knew what to expect and strove hard to keep ahead of the attack. His next opponent was the highly rated Scot, John Taylor of Yoker who won the 13 stones at Grasmere last year. Caution is not a concept known to the young Scot, so the action was instant, violent and skilful with Atkinson surviving attacks and countering decisively. For the first fall he threw Taylor forward off the hank. The second fall was as good as anything you are likely to see in a wrestling ring. Taylor catapulted Atkinson high into the air on a left leg inside hipe but failed to turn him. Instead, Atkinson dropped to his feet and went for the full buttock. He was perilously near to overloading himself with Taylor up near his neck rather than over his lower back, but the old rule of wrestling came into play that if you pull a man's head into the right position the rest of him is likely to follow. Taylor's feet disappeared briefly in some low cloud before completing a wide arc onto the long grass of the showfield. That fall took Atkinson to the final where he had to contend with a completely different style of wrestling.

Alan Jones was intent on denying Atkinson any hold to work from and this resulted in two untidy bouts with each wrestler having a minimum of hold somewhere around the ears and the result was more like Judo than backhold wrestling. Atkinson, however, found the mental and physical toughness and the speed of thought to win the day felling Jones twice with the buttock. David Atkinson has already held the 11st and 15st titles and is proving to be an excellent coach, too. In the Autumn he goes to university in Newcastle,

and already there is talk of training sessions in the North East this winter. John Harrington has one of the coolest wrestling heads around, but even he can be riled sometimes.

At Dalston he thought that he had won the Under 18 Years final against David Barnes with a leg-up buttock, but it was adjudged a dog-fall. He puts everything into his wrestling anyway, but the next fall had some extra zip and adrenalin as he took all the hold and lifted an opponent three stones heavier than him high in the air before twisting down.

At the Lakeland Country Fair at Torver the following day the adrenalin must still have been working for he won no fewer than four wrestling categories. Oh, and he won the costume prize as well.

Results

Dalston Show

Under 12 Years: 1, D Ewart; 2, L Ross; 3, R Harrison;

Under 15 Years 1, C Lowry; 2, A Quinn; 3, W Noimai;

Under 18 Years 1, John Harrington; 2, D Barnes; 3, R Fox;

11st 1, A Carlile; 2, John Harrington; 3, R Fox.

13st World Championship 1, D Atkinson; 2, A Jones; 3, John Harrington;

All Weights 1, R Housby; 2, S Robson; 3, John Harrington

Torver

Under 12 Years: 1, D Ewart; 2 J Aikrigg; 3, J Harris;

Under 15 Years: 1, G Brocklebank; 2, E Fox; 3, M Harrington;

Under 18 Years: 1, John Harrington; 2, Joe Harrington; 3, E Fox;

11st 1, John Harrington; 2, J Park; 3, G Brocklebank.

13st: 1, John Harrington; 2, J Park; 3, Joe Harrington;

All Weights 1, John Harrington; 2, T Brocklebank; 3, W Fleming

Dates

21st August (Sat) 1pm Allendale U14, U16, 11, 13, AW also 4pm Skelton U13, U16, U18, 11, 13, AW

Sunday 22nd, Grasmere Boys U12, U15, U18. Girls U15, U18. Men 11, 12, 13, 14, AW. Women: 10, AW (£2033 prizemoney including £530 for female wrestling and £113 costume prizes)

Wednesday 25th, 2pm, Ennerdale U12, U15, U18, 12, AW

Saturday 28th, Newcastleton

3.30pm Bellingham U12, U16, Nov, 12, 14, AW (335) and Millom & Broughton

Monday 30th, Silloth (U15yrs Champ), Keswick (11st Champ) also Muncaster

Thursday September 2nd, Grayrigg

3rd September 2004

TEENAGER Chris Waltons joy quickly turned to agony as he was taken to hospital having suffered a serious injury just a few minutes after being crowned world champion.

Chris, from Haltwhistle, was still in hospital yesterday awaiting a scan on a suspected ruptured kidney. The youngster, whose father Alan is a former senior champion, had just won the Boys Under 15 Years World Championship at Silloth last weekend when he was injured in the subsequent Under 18 Years competition. The fall seemed ordinary enough but Chris was obviously in severe pain and shock. He had been involved in the star bouts at Silloth with Graham Brocklebank in the semi-final of the Boys Under 15 Years World Championship. Against a stronger, heavier and skilful opponent, Chris managed to weather the storm and bring Graham down with chips which used Grahams power against himself. The final against Callum Lowry was more controlled and Chris won in straight falls. Sadly, Chris was injured shortly afterwards. Everyone wishes him a speedy and complete recovery.

In all, there were seven events in a week which tested the capacity of Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling to put enough competitors in the various rings but all except Millom achieved enough local support to give plenty of good sport for the crowds. Amongst all the hundreds of bouts which took place, those in the championship events - the Under 15 Years at Silloth and the 11 stones at Keswick - stand out for their intensity and skill.

At Keswick, Cyril Bragg, the judge for the Guinness Trophy for the best performance, had the easiest job ever. John Harrington warmed up by winning the Under 18 Years. He then had to find his best form to wrest the 11st title and the massive silver trophy from Andrew Carlile. In the semi-final, Paul Barnes took the first fall with a back-heel but Harrington fought back with a leg-up and inside-hipe. Two ultra close bouts left the two wrestlers level. Then in the third, Harrington unleashed an inside-click from a long way back which caught Carlile as he went to twist and put him on his back.

Wrestling Round-up:

At Ennerdale, the young locals made the day and John Harrington felled Grasmere champion Rab Clark. Richard Fox took home the trophy for the best performance at the Holm Show, which his brother Andrew, now in Torquay, won last year.

Bellingham Show sent a cap round the ring and raised 40 prize-money for women's wrestling. The Breton, Albane Salaun, felled Tanya Rogers for the head prize. At Bellingham too, Alan Walton did the double, felling heavyweight Darren Whitfield en route.

Millom and Broughton Show had poor entries and the Brocklebank brothers Graham and Thomas won virtually everything.

On the Bank Holiday Monday, entries were marginally better at Muncaster where the Pendleton and Crowther brothers did well until Stephen Garnett made his first appearance this year and did the double.

John Harrington, David Atkinson and Russell Housby all won their weights at both Silloth and Keswick.

RESULTS

Ennerdale Show

Under 12: 1 N Richardson; 2 P Murray; 3 M Smith.

Under 15: 1 H Chapman; 2 W Noimai; 3 J Graves.

Under 18: 1 John Harrington; 2 Joe Harrington; 3 W Noimai.

12½ st: 1 John Harrington; 2 R Clark; 3 M le Marre. All Weights: 1 R Housby; 2 C Clark; 3 R Clark.

Holm Show, Newcastleton

Under 13: 1 A Brough; 2 F Robb; 3 D Mallinson.

Under 15: 1 A Howieson; 2 J Beattie; 3 A Hepburn.

Under 18: 1, John Harrington; 2 S Brough; 3 Joe Harrington.

12½ st: 1 R Fox; 2 D Courteaux; 3 John Harrington.

All Weights: 1 D Whitfield; 2 R Housby; 3 John Harrington.

Bellingham Show

Women's Challenge: 1 A Salaun; 2, T Rogers.

Under 12: 1 S Grant; 2, G Robson; 3, R Morland.

Under 16: 1 Joe Harrington; 2 C Walton; 3 C Bird.

Novices 1: R Armstrong; 2, C Walton; 3, M Dixon.

12st: 1 John Harrington; 2 J Pattinson; 3 M Dixon.

14st: 1 A Walton; 2 John Harrington; 3 A Rutherford.

All Weights: 1 A Walton; 2 John Harrington; 3 D Whitfield.

Millom & Broughton Show

Under 12: 1 J Porter; 2 W Hayhust; 3 J Hayhust.

Under 15: 1 G Brocklebank; 2 S Wilkinson; 3 A Mason.

Under 16: 1 G Brocklebank; 2 A Mason; 3 S Wilkinson.

Under 18: 1 S Fell; 2 G Brocklebank; 3 A Mason.

12st: 1 G Brocklebank; 2 S Wilkinson.

All Weights: 1 T Brocklebank; 2 J Lowery; 3 M Stephenson.

Silloth Carnival

Under 12: 1 A Hird; 2 S Graham; 3 R Williamson.

Under 15 Championship: 1 C Walton; 2 C Lowry; 3 G Brocklebank.

Under 18: 1 John Harrington; 2 G Brocklebank; 3 R Walton.

11st: 1 John Harrington; 2 J Pattinson; 3 R Walton.

13st: 1 D Atkinson; 2 M Messer; 3 A Walton.

All Weights: 1 R Housby; 2 T Brocklebank; 3 D Atkinson.

Keswick Show

Under 12: 1 A Hird; 2, J Beresford; 3, C Ridley.

Under 15: 1 G Brocklebank; 2 G Farrell; 3 J Clark.

Girls Under 15: 1 E Doolan; 2 A Scott; 3 L Rice.

Under 18: 1 John Harrington; 2 Joe Harrington; 3 C Lowry.

Women's Open: 1 J Charters; 2 M Brocklebank; 3 L Shepherd.

11st Championship: 1 John Harrington; 2 A Carlile; 3 P Barnes.

13st: 1 D Atkinson; 2 Joe Harrington; 3 John Harrington.

All Weights: 1 R Housby; 2 John Harrington; 3 T Brocklebank. Guinness Trophy: John Harrington

Muncaster

Under 12: 1 J Porter; 2 M Dickinson; 3 A Chapman.

Under 15: 1 P Pendleton; 2 H Chapman; 3 M Longworth.

Under 18: 1 J Pendleton; 2 T Crowther; 3 S Pritt.

10½ st: 1 T Crowther; 2 P Pendleton; 3 J Pendleton.

12½ st: 1 S Garnett; 2 R Benn; 3 S Crowther.

All Weights: 1 S Garnett; 2 R Lowery; 3 T Crowther

DATES

September 4th (Sat) 3.15pm Heskett Newmarket U12/U15yrs/8st Ch'ship/U18/121/2

2.30pm Harbottle Boys/Novices/12/AW

3pm Lowick U15/U18/121/2/AW

September 5th (Sun) 1.45pm Wolsingham U15/U18/11/12st Ch'ship/14/AW

September 9th (Thu) 3.30pm Westmorland Show U15/U18/11/12/13/14/AW

September 12th (Sun) Stanhope

(Sun) Whitfield

September 16th (Thu) Loweswater

10th September 2004

CALLUM IS A VETERAN CHAMPION AT 14

LONG wrestling apprenticeships paid championship dividends last week when Callum Lowry won the Under 15 Years/8st title at Heskett Newmarket and David Atkinson won the 12st Championship at the Wolsingham Show.

Lowry, the son of former 14st champion Mark Lowry, is only 14 but he already has 11 years of wrestling experience under his belt. He had to battle every inch of the way in the championship against wrestlers from academies at Kendal, Milnthorpe and Glasgow. He inside-clicked Kendal's Sam Wilkinson in the semi-final and hipped Thomas Mason, of Milnthorpe Academy, in the final. David Atkinson has been wrestling for a similar length of time and was on the form of his life at Grayrigg Show and Wolsingham. He goes off to read law at Newcastle University next week and seemed intent on paying off his student loans before he even gets there with double wins at both events. The core of his wrestling is still that devastating inside-hipe, (see photo) the threat of which distorts the way his opponents wrestle. But now he has a battery of chips to take advantage of his opponents' exaggerated reaction to that threat. In the Championship final with his friend and training partner Andrew Carlile he loaded him up nicely on the hipe for the first fall. But the second came from an outside-hipe and twist as Carlile strove to avoid the expected danger.

Earlier in the season, that old warrior Alan Jones found a way of felling Atkinson by denying him any hold to work from and he commented that by rights, these young lads should be felling him now. At Wolsingham in the 14st final, Atkinson gave him his answer by standing up straight when Jones slipped out of holds and then buttocking him by the ears twice. Spare a thought for Andrew Carlile, who has featured in two championship finals in a week and gone down in both. However, he can take pride in the way that he felled

the precocious talent of John Harrington in the 12st Championship semi-final. In their previous encounters, it looked as though Carlile had lost confidence with the younger wrestler, who seemed able to put the hank in and eventually win the bout. At a stroke, Carlile put the doubts back in Harrington's mind when he swept him over backwards with a salto, a throw from the freestyle wrestling repertoire. Harrington was suddenly less keen to play the hank and after much manoeuvring, Carlisle felled him with an outside-stroke like a cobra strike.

John Harrington and David Atkinson between them had enlivened the wrestling at Grayrigg Show, where they both won twice. The Kendal area's strength lies in the heavier weights and it was an all-Kendal academy final in the 15 stones when John Wilson returned to the ring to show what buttocking is all about against Grasmere Heavyweight Champion Trevor Hodgson. Then in the All Weights the two lighter Carlisle wrestlers re-asserted themselves when Harrington took the first fall with an outside hipe but Atkinson hit back with a variety of hipes to win the competition.

RESULTS

Grayrigg Show

Girls 1, T Hodgson; 2, H Hodgson; 3, C Hodgson.

Under 12 Years 1, A Thompson; 2, J Hodgson; 3, B Dixon.

Under 15 Years 1, G Brocklebank; 2, A Thompson; 3, C Proctor.

Under 18 Years 1, John Harrington; 2, G Brocklebank; 3, A Thompson.

11 st 1, John Harrington; 2, S Dixon; 3, W Hayhurst.

13st 1, D Atkinson; 2, John Harrington; 3, S Dixon.

15st 1, J Wilson; 2, T Hodgson; 3, D Atkinson.

All weights 1, D Atkinson; 2, John Harrington; 3, T Hodgson.

Hesket Newmarket

Under 12 Years 1, A Hird; 2, S Mason; 3, S Graham.

Under 15 Years/8st Championship 1, C Lowry; 2, T Mason; 3, S Wilkinson.

Under 18 Years 1, I Steel; 2, S Foster; 3, Joe Harrington.

12 st 1, D Miller; 2, S Coburn; 3, Joe Harrington.

Lowick Show

Under 12 Years 1, B Brocklebank; 2, P Maher; 3, W Hayhurst.

Under 15 Years 1, G Brocklebank; 2, J Gill; 3, W Hayhurst.

Under 18 Years 1, Brocklebank; 2, W Hayhurst; 3, J Gill.

12 st 1, P Barnes; 2, G Brocklebank; 3, W Hayhurst.

All Weights 1, T Brocklebank; 2, R Lowery; 3, P Barnes.

Wolsingham Show

Under 15 Years 1, R Johnston; 2, W Noimai; 3, B Blackett.

Under 18 Years 1, R Fox; 2, John Harrington; 3, R Walton.

11st 1, John Harrington; 2, J Pattinson; 3, R Walton.

12st Championship 1, D Atkinson; 2, A Carlile; 3, John Harrington.

14st 1, D Atkinson 2, A Jones; 3, A Walton.

All Weights 1, R Leiper; 2, D Atkinson; 3, John Harrington.

DATES

Sept 12 (Sun) 12 noon Stanhope U12,U15,U18,11 ,13,AW;

3pm Whitfield U12,U15,U18,12,AW

Sept 16 (Thu) 3pm Loweswater U12,U15,U18,12 ,AW

Sept 18 (Sat) 2pm Egremont Crab Fair U12,U15,U18,11,13,AW

Sept 19 (Sun) 2pm Borrowdale U12,U15,U18,11,13,AW

17th September 2004

JOSEPH ROBSON MEETS THE ROCKING HORSE MAN

DONT tell Joseph Robson's mum that he was wrestling, and winning, at the Westmorland Show.

Six weeks ago he injured his ribs at Ambleside Sports and looked like being out for the season, or at least until he defended his 14st Championship at Alwinton Show in October, but he sneaked his wrestling strip out of the house to compete in the 14 stones wrestling. His final opponent, Jesse Bradbury, was the proverbial "man from the crowd", an unknown, but it had quickly become apparent that this was no novice wrestler. He made some errors, but he also showed good wrestling technique and seemed to be learning fast, so that he also reached the Heavyweight final. "Where did you learn to do that?" said I, as he came past after buttocking an opponent. "Freestyle," was the laconic answer.

After all the wrestling was over, he explained that he had come up from Warrington with a trade stand to sell hand-carved rocking horses, and had decided to have a go at the wrestling. He also revealed that he had been National Junior Champion in Olympic Freestyle Wrestling no fewer than eight times, and National Senior Champion twice at 74kg. Very quickly wrestling officials were trying to persuade him that there was a hunger for rocking horses at various Agricultural Shows where there just happened to be wrestling competitions too.

Dieting for Robert Leiper is like chiselling rock off a crag: there's not a lot of fat there. He is obviously aiming for the 14 stones Championship at Alwinton, and has been weighed out of several 14st events in the past month. At last he managed to weigh in at the Westmorland Show.....and was promptly felled. His long journey from the North East looked a wasted effort, but he wrestled with renewed power (or was it desperation?) to win the All Weights. At the opposite end of the wrestling Ben Brocklebank, one of the smallest wrestlers in the lists, won the award for the best performance of the boys wrestling even though he only came third in the Under 15 Years. Big brother Graham Brocklebank won the competition, but Ben did all the giant-killing. David Atkinson received the men's award, partly because he won the 12 stones, but mainly for a series of spectacular falls, displaying Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling at its best.

Alan Jones had a good week, winning at both the Westmorland and Stanhope Shows. The 13st final at Kendal was a vintage display against the talented David Atkinson. Jones struck first when he managed to ride Atkinson's hype, dropped to the ground and twisted to win. Atkinson then answered with a hype that even Jones was unable to escape. Usually Jones plays a waiting game when he wrestles Atkinson, but in the deciding fall he came with a big twist and a swing, which caught Atkinson cold. Alan Walton could be doubly pleased with his wrestling performance at Stanhope Show and with the news that his son Chris, who had been in hospital with a ruptured kidney after winning the Under 15 Years Championship at Silloth, is now well enough to attend school.

After Russell Housby's successful trip to Brittany in February when he was overall winner of the Brittany Backhold Championships, more wrestlers have expressed an interest in taking part in the event next year. The Bretons have sent us an invitation for March 20, 2005 in the town of Carhaix.

RESULTS

Westmorland Show

Under 15 Years 1, G Brocklebank; 2, S Mason; 3, B Brocklebank.

Under 18 Years 1, John Harrington; 2, S Fell; 3, G Brocklebank.

11st 1, John Harrington; 2, G Brocklebank; 3, D Parsons.

12st 1, D Atkinson; 2, D Miller; 3, John Harrington.

13st 1, A Jones; 2, D Atkinson; 3, John Harrington.

14st 1, J Robson; 2, J Bradbury; 3, D Atkinson.

All Weights 1, R Leiper; 2, J Bradbury; 3, R Housby.

Stanhope Show

Under 15 Years 1, R McCriery; 2, E Nicholson; 3, J Ewart.

Under 18 Years 1, John Harrington; 2, Joe Harrington; 3, J Ewart.

11½ st 1, John Harrington; 2, R McCriery; 3, E Nicholson.

13st 1, A Jones; 2, A Walton; 3, John Harrington.

All Weights 1, A Walton; 2, John Harrington; 3, R Leiper

Whitfield

Under 12 Years 1, D Ewart; 2, C Humphrey; 3, J Brown.

Under 15 Years 1, J Ewart; 2, M Eames; 3, D Ewart.

Under 18 Years 1, John Harrington; 2, Joe Harrington; 3, J Ewart.

12½ st 1, A Carlile; 2, A Walton; 3, John Harrington.

All Weights 1, R Housby; 2, R Leiper; 3, A Jones.

DATES

Tonight 8pm: Carlisle Wrestling Club AGM at Currock House, Carlisle.

Sept 18 (Sat): 2pm Egremont Crab Fair U12/U15/U18/111/2/13/AW

Sept 19 (Sun): 2pm Borrowdale U12/U15/U18/111/2/13/AW

Sept 25 (Sat): Langholm Show, Eskdale

24th September 2004

'WRESTLING IN THE RAIN

HOW could wrestling compete with the real excitement of Loweswater Show - the collapse of the cattle tent in a blasting wind?

The rain did little to help, either, and the usual huge ringside crowd was all in cars heading home to warmth and safety before the wrestling even started. Luckily there were enough local young lads daft enough to wrestle in the rain and mud to sustain the boys' classes and the two top wrestlers, David Atkinson, of Carlisle, and John Harrington, of Bewaldeth, gave a touch of class in unpromising circumstances. The lighter man, John Harrington, seemed unstoppable when he won the Under 18 Years and then felled

Atkinson, the double middleweight champion, in the 121/2st final. Atkinson, however, reasserted himself in the All Weights final to register a last win before heading off to wrestle with torts and codicils at Newcastle University Law School.

Egremont Crab Fair had another excellent turn-out of local youths but it was the veteran multi champion Alan Jones who mastered the young pretenders and the conditions to add another two wins to the steadily accumulating list in his autumnal season.

Borrowdale Shepherds' Meet was a remarkable event for John Harrington, who won four different categories. He had to fight every inch of the way with the Grasmere 13st Champion, Richard Fox but always had the last touch.

A feature of this season has been the addition of girls wrestling whenever possible. At Borrowdale, the crowd was treated to a highly competitive event with Emily Doolan and Kerry McKay battling it out in the final.

Results

Loweswater Show

Under 12: 1, L Smith; 2, J Smith; 3, C Lowther.

U15: 1, A Hayton; 2, D Smith; 3, L Smith.

U18: 1, John Harrington; 2, M Hayton; 3, A Hayton.

12½ st: 1, John Harrington; 2, D Atkinson; 3, M Hayton.

All Weights: 1, D Atkinson; 2, John Harrington; 3, R Clark.

Egremont Crab Fair

U12: 1, R Pearson; 2, K McTaggart; 3, L Kendal.

U15: 1, G Postlethwaite; 2, D Short; 3, M Donaldson.

U18: 1, D Barnes; 2, J Hodgson; 3, R Pearson.

Girls 1, E Doolan; 2, K McKay; 3, J Murdoch.

11½ st: 1, John Harrington; 2, P Barnes; 3, J Hodgson.

13st: 1, A Jones; 2, P Barnes; 3, John Harrington.

All Weights: 1, A Jones; 2, John Harrington; 3, D Barnes.

Borrowdale Shepherds' Meet

U12: 1, D Ewart; 2, B Hooper; 3, S Graham.

U15: 1, T Strong; 2, J Scott; 3, D Ewart.

U18: 1, John Harrington;

11½ st: 1, John Harrington; 2, R Fox; 3, J Ewart.

13st: 1, John Harrington; 2, R Fox; 3, P Barnes.

All Weights: 1, John Harrington; 2, R Fox; 3, P Barnes.

Dates

Saturday Sept 25th -12 noon: Langholm Show U12/U15/U18/121/2/AW

Eskdale U15/U18/101/2/12/AW

Saturday, Oct 2nd: Yetholm Show.

22nd October 2004

BUTTERMERE SHOW

BE a bit rougher, dad," was the call from a young voice in the crowd at the Buttermere Show last weekend. But the cry came too late and dad - Mr Grove as the commentator called him - thumped into the ground in his pristine fawn trousers. Buttermere is essentially a sheep show and to add insult to injury, he landed in some of the evidence of that. Fortunately, he then shaped up well to win the third prize-money.

"That'll do for the cleaning bill," said Alf on the mike.

In the meantime, the final of the Locals event was what passes for an international match in those parts: Borrowdale versus Buttermere. The Borrowdale man was the compact and wiry Jonny Bland, just back from the fell race in which he came second. The local opposition, Andrew Nicholson, did not exactly have the physique to run up a mountain but he had won both the Herdwick and Swaledale Championships in the sheep show and had the forearms and shoulders you get from handling horned sheep every day. Nicholson won the day, with his extra weight and power, but Bland, a Borrowdale farmer, went on to wrestle up in the two open events, facing Andrew Carlile in the 12 stones and David Barnes, of Dearham, in the All Weights. Tom Harrington had no hesitation in awarding Bland his trophy for the best performance. The first prizes all went to trained wrestlers: Daniel and Jack Ewart, Andrew Carlile and David Barnes, who are regulars at Carlisle Wrestling Club in the winter months, but the main applause went deservedly to the local lads and men who did themselves credit.

Buttermere

Under-12 Years 1, D Ewart; 2, K Plaskett; 3, E Grove;

Under-15 Years 1, J Ewart; 2, T J Kearney; 3, S Kennedy;

Under-18 Years 1, D Barnes; 2, J Ewart; 3, C O'Fee;

Locals: 1, A Nicholson; 2, J Bland; 3, A Grove;

12½st 1, A Carlile; 2, J Bland; 3, N Hardisty;

All Weights 1, D Barnes; 2, J Bland; 3, A Carlile.

Dates

Wednesday October 27 at 7.45pm - Carlisle Wrestling Club at Currock House (tel 016974 73559 for details).

Friday October 29 - Wrestling Association presentation dinner. Tickets from board members.

5th November 2004

HARRINGTON'S FOUR TROPHIES

WRESTLERS and supporters from Lancashire, Cumbria and Northumberland gathered in Carlisle to honour the most successful wrestlers of the 2004 Grass Season.

Normally there would be six wrestlers receiving trophies at the CWWA Presentation Dinner, but this year there were only three, for the simple reason that John Harrington won four categories. At the age of seventeen he is a prodigious talent capable of felling anyone, but a main factor in this monopoly of trophies is his persistence and willingness to travel. At each level there were wrestlers who felled him more than he felled them. For example, in the 111/2st section Andrew Carlile felled him in many finals at the beginning

and end of the season. At 13 stones, David Atkinson ruled the roost. And in the All Weights there were at least three wrestlers, Russell Housby, David Atkinson and Robert Leiper, who had more wins than he did.

Wins in the All Weights section were especially dispersed this year, and Russell Housby was most prolific with ten first places. John Harrington did have spectacular moments, such as when he felled Joe Threlfall at Patterdale and took a fall from Rab McNamara at Alwinton, but his surprise win of the Points Trophy for the season came from a steady accumulation of second and third places.

The Wrestling Association trophies were originally introduced to reward wrestlers who performed consistently throughout the long haul of the Grass Season from May to late October and this is exactly what they did this year. Thirty years ago, when the CWWA trophies were first introduced, big Wilf Brocklebank was a winner. This year his grandson Graham Brocklebank was the clearest winner of all in the under 15 section. Graham, who trains at Kendal Academy, was virtually unstoppable in his age group. He is no giant, but has the strength and activity level to unsettle any opponent, and the range of chips and skills to make the most of any opportunity.

The biggest surprise at the actual Dinner was the winner of the Under 12 Years trophy. Until he heard his name called out Daniel Ewart from Westward had no idea that he was a winner. He should have known, though, for he had accumulated a steady flow of wins throughout the season as a reward for his years of training at Carlisle wrestling Club

19th November 2004

"COMMUNITY-BASED ACTIVITY IN THE UPLANDS"

LAST week I spent two days at a conference, and for much of the time wondered why I was there.

The "International Centre for the Uplands - Cumbria", was hosting its first conference since it was formed in April 2004 on the subject of "Community-based Activity in the Uplands" and I reckoned that Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling had to fit in there somewhere. There is no rule which says that our indigenous wrestling has to take place in the hills, but many of the events take place in remote communities in the Northern Uplands: Wasdale Head and Buttermere embedded in the Western Fells, Alwinton and Harbottle in the Cheviots, Bellingham high up the North Tyne valley, Stanhope in Weardale, and Killington lost in the by-ways of South Cumbria.

And Grasmere Sports, the Olympics of C & W Wrestling, is a central hub for the Lake District, encircled by mountains.

Similarly there is no rule which says that wrestlers have to be farmers, but many are. Carlisle Wrestling Club is city-based but is the meeting place for wrestlers from a wide rural swathe of North Cumbria, Northumberland and the Borders of Scotland. To the East Jonjo Pattinson farms high on the Roman Wall, thirty miles from Carlisle with his Blackface sheep and Galloway cows; nearly as far West is double champion John Harrington of Bewaldeth attending to the Swaledales on the family farm. There are city lads who wrestle, but the most wrestlers have a rural background. Kit Nicholson, Director of the Upland Centre, in an introduction to the conference, wrote that "Cumbria is the emblematic English upland county, with unique local experience.

We also have a thriving culture, grounded in our landscape and traditions" and that to me seemed to include our wrestling. A whole morning of bullet points and powerpoint presentations did nothing to help. I knew all the words but rarely understood the meaning. "Sustainable" was the commonest adjective, and that seemed to mean that any financial input into the region had to be economically viable in double-quick time.

Wrestling is never going to show a profit, so would never qualify for help. However, as speaker succeeded speaker, the idea that financial criteria were all important diminished as the issues of life-styles and cultural heritage in upland communities surfaced. Professor Peter Davis with his comments about "intangible heritage" and "local identity and sense of place" chimed with my thoughts, and made me realise that Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling is "a territory not necessarily defined by conventional boundaries".

Dates:

Saturday December 4, The Academy Shield Match and Open Classes for boys, at Bootle Station (Weigh-in at 7.30pm).

25th November 2004**FIRST POINTS NIGHT OF THE WINTER SEASON**

CARLISLE Wrestling Club had two hours of continuous wrestling on its first Points Night of the winter season.

For most of the time heavyweight Russell Housby sat smiling and chatting ringside. When he eventually stepped on the mats, he had four bouts of devastating simplicity when he splattered his opponents on the mat (without doing them any damage!) to gain maximum points. Of course, Housby did have some advantages. An extra four or five stones helps, and his opponents were already in various states of exhaustion after the lightweight and middleweight sections. Alan Walton won the 13 stones after some intense and prolonged wrestles when he just managed to keep the younger generation at bay in the round-robin system. He lost one fall to John Harringtons sharp back-heel, but Harrington, too, lost a fall to Andrew Carlile, so there had to be a sudden death wrestle-off to decide the winning points. Harrington put on the hank, from which he has various options, but Walton cut right through those by kicking the hank out and twisting to win. John Harrington did more wrestling and had more success than anyone else, for he is still only 17 and a lightweight, so he figured prominently in four sections, winning at Under 18 Years against Joe Harrington in the final, and then going unbeaten through the round-robin of the 11 stones. He also took second place in the two heavier sections. After Russell Housby had walked all over them in the All Weights, Alan Walton, Andrew Carlile and John Harrington were left to fight over the scraps with a three-way wrestle-off for the places. Harringtons right leg outside-hipe cleaned up Andrew Carlile.

In the boys classes, Callum Lowry showed skill and his usual determination, but it was newcomer Watchai Noimai who caught the judges eyes for he was awarded the trophy for the best performance in all the boys classes. A year ago he lived in a remote area of Thailand, before he came to live with his stepfather in Anthorn. His wrestling and his English have blossomed and with some training on the mats he is becoming more and more formidable.

The age of the digital camera has made the photography of wrestling so much easier and better. This pictorial essence of the Wrestling Season 2004 will be on display at a slide show organised by Carlisle Wrestling Club for CWWA funds at Currock House, Carlisle, at 7pm on Sunday, December 5.

Results:**Carlisle Wrestling Club:**

Under 12 Years: 1, C Ridley; 2, D Ewart; 3, P Murray; 4, H Housby.

Under 15 Years: 1, C Lowry; 2, W Noimai; 3, J Ewart; 4, A Ridley.

Under 18 Years: 1, John Harrington; 2, Joe Harrington; 3, R Dixon; 4, P Housby.

6st: 1, P Murray; 2, H Housby.

7st: 1, A Ridley; 2, C Ridley; 3, P Murray; 4, H Housby

8st: 1, W Noimai; 2, C Lowry; 3, A Ridley; 4, M Harrington.

10st: 1, R Dixon; 2, W Noimai; 3, C Lowry; 4, J Ewart.

11st: 1, John Harrington; 2, A Carlile; 3, R Dixon; 4, J Pattinson.

13st: 1, A Walton; 2, John Harrington; 3, A Carlile; 4, Joe Harrington.

All Weights: 1, R Housby; 2, John Harrington; 3, A Carlile; 4, A Walton.

Dates:

Saturday, December 4, The Academy Shield at Bootle Station (weigh-in at 7.30pm).

Sunday, December 5, A slide show of images from 25 wrestling events from 2004 at Currock House, Carlisle (7pm).

3rd December 2004**LAKELAND SPORTS PERSON TROPHY PRESENTATION FOR 2004**

THE Lakeland Sports Promoters Association presented the Lakeland Sports person Trophy for 2004 to David Atkinson of Carlisle at a luncheon at Heaves Hotel, Near Kendal.

Atkinson's name has thus been added to list of 40 or so names on the silver shields encircling the base, which reads as a Who's Who of the runners of track and fell, jumpers, and wrestlers who have dominated the traditional Lake District sports meetings since 1965. David Atkinson won because of his wrestling exploits at three of the biggest events on the calendar: Ambleside Sports, Grasmere Sports and the Westmorland Show. At Ambleside he had a double win at 12 stones and 14 stones. At Grasmere he was stunned to lose the final of the 13 stones to a young club-mate, Richard Fox, but harnessed that emotion to storm away with the 14 stones. At the Westmorland Show he won his own weight, the 12 stones, and then figured in the prizes for two heavier categories. The citation of his prowess dwelt also on the clean and spectacular style of his wrestling, his sportsmanship and the contribution he makes as a coach.

Graham Brocklebank, the winner of the Junior Sportsperson's Trophy, is keeping up a family tradition, for his grandfather, Wilf, won the senior trophy in 1972. He had eight first places in LSPA events in 2004. He was commended for his technical skill, his determined attitude. His cousin, Tracey Hodgson of Dent, is the first wrestler to win the Girl's section, simply because separate competitions for girls have only recently been added to the wrestling agenda. On the day that her father, Trevor won the Heavyweights at Grasmere, Tracey won at both Under 15 and at Under 18 Years.

No runners dominated their classes in the same way that the wrestlers did, but Tom Doyle won the U12 trophy, David Shepherd won the U18, with veteran Matt McMahon was runner-up to David Atkinson for the main trophy.

Two special events will bring Cumberland and Westmorland wrestlers together this week-end. Tomorrow night at Bootle Station, Waberthwaite Academy will defend the Academy Shield against teams from Kendal Carlisle and Minthorpe (weigh-in at 7.30pm). On Sunday night at Currock House, Carlisle, (starting 7pm), a slide show with images from 25 2004 wrestling events will be the main focus of a social evening which is open to all.

CDs, photographs, clothing and books will be on sale with profits going to the Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association

10th December 2004**CARLISLE REGAIN THE ACADEMY SHIELD**

CARLISLE Wrestling Club deservedly won back the Academy Shield from Waberthwaite Academy at Bootle Station last week.

The Carlisle team did not dominate the match, but they had a full team which was competitive at every weight. Waberthwaite had the best of starts through midge-weight Andrew Woodend in the 6 Stones. He won all his bouts and so impressed the judge, Stan Roberts, that he was awarded the trophy for the best performance in all the categories. In the 7st, 8st and 9st sections, only Douglas Parsons of Milnthorpe was unbeaten. The spoils were well spread out among the other wrestlers, with Craig Ridley of the Carlisle second team doing as well as anyone when he lost only one fall in the 7 Stones. After four sections Carlisle had just edged ahead by two points, but in the next three sections their wrestlers Richard Dixon, Andrew

Carlisle and John Harrington built a virtually unassailable lead, which is just as well for the other academies fought back with some excellent bouts. Unbeaten were Waberthwaite's Stephen Garnett (13st), Kendals Joseph Robson and John Wilson (14 and 15st), and John Threlfall, guesting for Milnthorpe in the All Weights. But Carlisle wrestlers eventually won by six points.

Any wrestler who wishes to qualify for the CWWA Basic Coaching Certificate, has a chance next Wednesday, December 15, to be assessed for the practical element at Carlisle Wrestling Club, The Gym, Currock House.

The Child Protection element will be held on Monday, February 7 at St Aidan's School, Carlisle (6.30pm).

A slide show of photographs from Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling events of 2004 drew wrestling supporters to Carlisle from far afield. The event launched the sale of a CD which is an archive for wrestling in 2004.

It includes all my wrestling articles.

The CD is available from me, call 016974 73559, at a cost of 6.50 plus postage. Profits go to the Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association

17th December 2004

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE BRETON BACKHOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS.

CUMBERLAND and Westmorland Wrestling may be an ancient and traditional sport in this area, but that does not mean that it has not moved into the 21st Century. The actual bouts, the throws and techniques, remain unchanged, but the frame work and ambience of the sport is in tune with modern sporting needs.

A glance at the winter programme for wrestlers illustrates the strides that wrestling has made in the last twenty years. As ever, the basis of the sport in winter is coaching the next generation on the mats, but there are extras that would have been unimaginable to previous generations. For example, the nearest that my father's generation got to international competition was to wrestle at Jedburgh Games. For the wrestlers now there are two international events to look forward to in the first months of 2005: the Breton Backhold Championships and the European Championships of the Federation des Luttes Celtiques. Last year only one of our wrestlers travelled to Carhaix for the Breton Backhold Championships.

Even with numbers diminished by a spectacular snowfall, there were still over 100 wrestlers taking part and Russell Housby came top of the pile by winning the Open Senior competition. More wrestlers have expressed interest in participating in 2005 in an event which has sections for all ages and weights, and both sexes.

The event takes place at Carhaix again on March 20, 2005. The Carhaix event is for individuals and involves only our style of wrestling. The European Championships is a more serious event with a representative team going from this area to battle against teams from Austria, Sardinia, Spain, Brittany, Scotland, and Holland