

BAWB 4-51

THE HISTORY OF THE "IRON GAME"

END OF PART I

IN RETROSPECT

By W. J. LOWRY

Famous Weightlifting Historian

MY first instalment in this History of the Iron Game dealt with the feats of strength alleged to the credit of Atlas, who supported the world on his shoulders; to Hercules whose exploits are recalled, whereas those of the former are overlooked; and I concluded with the story of Samson who carried off the Gates of Gaza and who subsequently lost his strength through misguided devotion to Delilah.

Early Lesson in Amateurism

A very early lesson is obvious from the fact that Emperor Theodosius considered the Olympic Games had become unworthy to continue through the growth of professionalism, and by a proclamation prohibited any further celebrations. Thus the Games passed out of existence and were not revived until 1896—after a lapse of 1500 years.

Following, I dealt with the exploits of Caius Maximus, Roman Emperor; Salvius of Rome (reputed able to walk up a ladder with 200 lbs. in his hands and 200 lbs. tied to his feet); Scanderburg, King of Albania, fifteenth century; Richard Joy, of Kent, able to break with bare hands a rope with a 35 cwt. breaking strain.

Then the feats of Thomas Topham, a Londoner, born in 1710, bears the better marks of authenticity than many earlier recorded feats. The story of his carrying off a night watchman, asleep in his box, betrays a sense of the ludicrous, whilst his harness lift with three hogshead of beer was the forerunner of similar strongmen, Carl Abs, noted German, and the later music hall Sampsons—of whom we have had many claiming that name for stage purposes.

Sandow—Pioneer of Strength

"Sandow, of all strong men, invested strength with a glamour which, possibly, was mainly instrumental in keeping weightlifting alive."

Editor's Note.—In the past fifty issues of this magazine Mr. W. J. Lowry, the famous historian, has traced the development of the Iron Game from its earliest beginnings until the time of the First World War.

It is now decided to bring this history to a temporary halt.

The closing instalment here gives a brief summary of the chapters which have made this particular feature the most authoritative and interesting history of the Iron Game ever written.

Sandow, of imperishable memory, whilst receiving credit for popularizing weightlifting, nevertheless did more to popularize physique contests and actual bodybuilding. Yet he seems to be remembered more for his music hall feats and for his contests against Cyclops (Franz Bienkowski) and Sampson in 1910. The fact that a verdict was given against him in his contest against Hercules McCann, one of two English strong men brothers, is apt to be overlooked. This memorable contest took place on Wed., Dec. 10, 1910, at The Royal Music Hall, Holborn, London, W.C.1.

First World's Weightlifting

Championships

The first of the series of World's Amateur Championships took place on Sat., March 28, 1891, at Cafe Monico, Piccadilly, London, W.1. Lifters from Italy, Germany, Belgium, Hungary and England competed, and the Englishman, Lawrence Levy, a noted Birmingham gymnast, won decisively, although far from the heaviest man. Eight feats were laid down for competition and staminal power was as important as muscular in those times.

Second World Championship—Olympic Games, 1896

Launceston Elliott's exploits at the Olympic Games, Athens, Greece, in 1896, have been recorded and made known to posterity. I acquainted readers with all the

details (with actual poundages lifted, not previously known accurately) and gave, in addition, many details concerning his earlier and subsequent career, also not previously disclosed to the present generation.

The "Third" of the "First World's Amateur Championships"

So far as the continentals are concerned, the meeting at Vienna in 1898, was the "First" of the "World's Amateur Championships". This meeting was more justifiably named than the previous two in view of the calibre of the competitors. This championship was won by Wilhelm Turk, Vienna, whose best feat was 320½ lbs. Cont. Jerk with two bells. Hackenschmidt, later to become famous as the Russian Lion, then

aged 20, came third against men superior in experience, age and bodyweight. Hack's best effort was a Right Hand Bent Press—229½ lbs., at that time a World's Heavy-weight Amateur Record.

World's Early Strongest Men

Exploits by Louis Cyr, French-Canadian, whose bodyweight was 365 lbs. Back lift of 3,536 lbs. R.H. Bent Press 265 lbs. Cont. Jerk 347 lbs. on 31/3/1896. Hans Beck, of Munich, European Champion 1896, Rotterdam, Holland, granted recognition for Heavyweight World's Amateur Record for 347 lbs. Cont. Jerk with Barbell. Feats by Rondi, Dusseldorf, Schneidereit, Cologne, together with Steinbach's astounding feat of 336 lbs. T.H. Cont. Jerk with 2 bells (which remains unexceeded) were quoted.

World's Greatest Jerker

Karl Swoboda, Vienna, still holds the record for the greatest weight ever jerked from the shoulders. This was 440½ lbs. (200 kilos) lifted in 1912 but two men assisted him in getting the weight to the shoulders—thence to be jerked with superb ease.

The Most Stupendous One Handed Lift in History

Arthur Saxon's unbeaten feats included the most astounding one of 370 lbs. Right Hand Bent Press lifted officially. Unofficially this poundage was exceeded with 386 lbs. but witnessed by men of repute and integrity. His other lifts include 448 lbs. T.H. Anyhow with Barbell and Ringweight, which also remains unbeaten.

1893 Championship in Which "Champ" Was Sole Survivor

This was an interesting and, in addition, an amusing recount of the championship in which only Wm. France, the winner, was the survivor.

This meeting took place at The Royal Agricultural Hall, Islington, London, N.1, on Wed., Nov. 2, 1893, and was decided on thirteen feats—an unlucky number for all his rivals. In those days championships were decided more on points than on actual aggregate poundages. Thus each successful effort counted as a point, and Wm. France, the winner, was the only one successful on them all.

Tom Pevier—the Greatest of the Old Time Amateurs

The story of Tom Pevier, the greatest of the old time amateurs, was recounted at some length. His rise to fame and the eclipse by him of Launceston Elliott, the hero of 1896, proved, I suggest, an interesting story—particularly as many of the facts were disclosed for the first time in any coherent and sequential story.



Launceston Elliott, who lifted in the Olympic Games of 1896. The records are not very clear as to whether this Englishman was the first Olympic champion or not.

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HISTORY OF THE IRON GAME....

Pevier, still alive (75 in August, 1951), will long be remembered for his undying and, apparently, still unbeatable record of 225 lbs. Right Hand Clean & Bent Press. This record was accomplished by him immediately following his victory as Heavyweight Amateur Champion in 1904, at Birmingham, on Sat., Jan. 23.

Foreigners Who Won British Championships

There have been three cases of foreigners winning British Amateur titles at weightlifting. In 1902, Sat., April 26, Maspoli, French Heavyweight Amateur Champion, won the Heavyweight British Amateur Championship, and in 1904, Leon See, of Lyons, France, won the 12st. British Amateur Title. These two events, however, were staged under the auspices of an outlaw Association then the enemy of the controlling body—The Amateur Gymnastic Association. This outlaw body was directed and encouraged by Professor Szalay, a Hungarian hairdresser, who earned the title subsequently of "Father of British Weightlifting", and was honoured as such by professionals and amateurs alike.

The third and similar win was by A. Werkman, German, who was permitted to compete in the 7th British Championship at the BAWLA Championships in 1913. The regrettable result of this permitted entry was the withdrawal of the reigning champion, A. Bradburn, of Manchester, and one other. Never since has there been a British championship at that class weight.

The story of these days includes the names of then famous lifters such as Caswell, House, C. V. Lom, Butler, Russell, Slade-Jones, Spencer, Gruhn, Townshend (Coldstream Guards), Sgt. Hawthorn, whose exploits were too numerous to include in a summary.

The Professional Era in Great Britain

The what I term "professional" era in Great Britain was a great one. Weightlifting undoubtedly became more popular with the activities of professionals like Thomas Inch, Aston, Monte Saldo, Harwood, Schofield, Croft, Carquest, and many others too numerous to quote.

Inch won the Middleweight Championship (Professional) of the world in his contest against W. P. Caswell in an historic contest at the display staged by *H & S* on Sat., April 20, 1907, when Inch, on the terms agreed upon, won handsomely and decisively.

During that year Causer and Carquest met for the 8th Championship of England title—won by the former who later was to acquire fame for his unique bent pressing—his epic in this style was 222 lbs. at 9thst.

1909 was the year of conflicts between Edward Aston and Max Sick, the Bavarian,

in fights for the World's Professional Middleweight title. Aston's victories over the marvellous Bavarian have been told in detail and these instalments are worthy of re-reading.

First Official "Britain's Strongest Man Championship"

Health & Strength was instrumental in staging the first of the "Britain's Strongest Man" Championships at The German Club, Pancras Road, London, N.1, on Sat., June 11, 1900. This was won by Thomas Inch with a total of 826 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. compared with the runner-up's total of 780 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

Aston Defeated Inch for Title "Strongest Man"

Whit. Sat., June 3, 1911, at International Athletic Club, Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1, saw Aston deprive Inch of the proud title in a fiercely fought contest. Aston created new record with 178 lb. 3 oz. R.H. Snatch; 233 lbs. 10 oz. R.H.C.; 238 lbs. 6 oz. L.H. Anyhow; 271 lbs. 6 oz. T.H. Clean & Jerk; 293 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. T.H. Cont. Jerk w. B.

Inch v. Aston Rivalry of 1912/14—Aston "Lifted" £40 in Historic Wager

This wager has been detailed by me at some length, and the result indicated in the March, 1950 issue. These two great lifters continued their activities during and following the First War and, indeed, each is still alive and quite active even today. Their exploits between the two wars is history yet to be told and the account would provide much of interest that could be used profitably.

The BAWLA Was Born in 1910

The events leading to the birth which culminated in the meeting held under the auspices of *Health & Strength* on Tuesday, Oct. 25, 1910, at the Holborn Restaurant, Holborn, W.C.1, have also been detailed. At this meeting a joint body (amateur and professional) was formed but the two sections separated on Jan. 17, 1911, when the two Associations—"British Weightlifters' Association" and "British Amateur Weightlifters' Association" were formed. The second named body has continued to function under that name; whilst, regrettably in my opinion, the professional body became defunct although a temporary revival took place in 1923 when Geo. Calder became its organising secretary. By 1926, however, following the precedent accepted by Inch, the professionals became content to accept the adjudication by the amateur association as more likely to command respect and subsequent acceptance of records.

Early Successes of the BAWLA

The amateur association met with a good

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Calling All Bodybuilders

OFFICIAL NABBA NOTES

By Secretary KEN WEBSTER
NABBA, 24 STORE ST., LONDON, W.C.1



NABBA'S GREAT PROGRAMME FOR 1951

WELL, fellows, it looks as though 1951 will see your Association really going places. After approval by a full NABBA committee, consisting of the Executive and area representatives, Emyln Jenkins (Wales), Tom Frankland (Yorks.), Pete Seldon (Middlesex), John McRobbie (Scotland), and Percy Ratcliffe (Herts.), plans are now going ahead to get three new competitions into operation.

The "90 day Self-Improvement" and "Bodybuilder of the Month" competitions are continuing, but the County contests are not. In their place we plan to stage Divisional contests, of which there will be thirteen. To set the ball rolling, Tom Frankland will organise the first of these contests in Yorkshire on April 28. (This show takes the place of the Mr. Yorkshire Contest, originally scheduled for this date.)

The other twelve areas will be, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Northern Counties, Yorkshire, Lancashire & Cheshire, West Midlands, East Midlands, South Midlands, Eastern Counties, S.E. Counties and West Counties. The divisions are detailed on page 32.

The winners of these contests will automatically go forward into the "Bodybuilder of the Year" contest, which will be staged towards the end of the year. In this way, lads, you'll all get a chance to enter. The winner will be known as the NABBA Physique Champion of his division.

Proficiency awards are the other plans we have in mind. One of the main reasons we are conducting this scheme is to give bodybuilders a chance to win an award for ability at other sports, and also to encourage those who do not at present indulge in any other sport to have a crack at winning an award on the following activities.

Archery, Athletics, Boxing, Diving, Gymnastics, Hand-balancing, Swimming, Weightlifting, Wrestling and Judo.

From the Associations governing these sports, we will get what they consider to be

good standards for the awarding of Primary, Intermediate and Advanced Diplomas. More about this later.

Girl of the Month

And now, great news for the women members of the Association. Although your number is still very small, we have decided that we cannot keep you waiting any longer for a competition. So, with the fifty odd lasses at present with us, we are going to start a monthly photographic competition. All you have to do is to submit a clear, bright, black and white print in a front or side pose



BODYBUILDER OF THE MONTH
Albert Karklins, of Northfleet, Kent, wins this month's silver medal. Albert has a good physique and can use it. His best Olympic total is well in excess of 700-lb. Vince photo.

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The story of the BAWLA and its climb from comparative obscurity in 1921 (when I became secretary for the first time) to 1937 (when I relinquished the position and became its Technical Adviser) would have proved history of the most illuminating kind. I would have continued from that point to the present time and have traced the causes of the modern trend from competitive lifting to physique contests and, in conclusion, I may have given my views to bring about a resurgence of weightlifting on a scale never previously contemplated but which I am still firmly convinced is POSSIBLE GIVEN THE WILL, THE DESIRE AND THE DIRECTION.

One final word: History proves that it is impossible for weightlifting to die. It may suffer temporary set-backs (as, indeed, has been its recurrent fate) but will always rise again with its Phoenix quality of rising from the ashes of its own ruins—to flourish again and again.

HISTORY OF IRON GAME

from page 30

measure of success right from the commencement in 1911. Annual championships were held under conditions and with rules that have continued to influence the course of championships ever since.

The successes of the Camberwell WL Club, which became known as "The National Sporting Club of the Weightlifting World", met with acclamation in many quarters and opposition from others. Pullum, a man who cured himself of tuberculosis, earned the title of "Wizard of the World of Weights" by reason of his multiple wins in championships and his hundreds of British and World's records.

Pullum's career as an athlete, but certainly not as a coach and unexcelled trainer of strong men, culminated on May 24, 1915, when he received a Diamond Medal for his extraordinary feats in breaking over 77 British records following the commencement of the first world war. Pullum left a list of records, many of which have not yet been equalled—either at his weight or in classes much higher, and no other has equalled his feats in all round lifting.

In the story of amateur days, names of lifters whose records made history include: Neale, Rabenau, Appleton, Bradburn, Flint, Davis, Devis, Dungey, Arden, Werkman, Hayes, Clarke, Aldred, Weston, Rees, Jackson, P. Wood, Harold Wood, etc., etc.

This summary of the first part of "The History of the Iron Game" is necessarily very sketchy, and much has been omitted. Included were accounts of ALL the World's and European Amateur Championships from 1891 to 1914; of all the Olympic Games in which weightlifting figured from 1896 to 1904 (weightlifting was not included in 1912 but returned with a vengeance in 1920); and details were quoted of hundreds of epoch making world's and other records established by foreigners as well as Britishers. One of these, however, I consider ought to be included in the summary, viz.: Vasseur's (of France) unequalled Right Hand Snatch of 100 kilos (220½ lbs.) in 1912 with one of the old type shot-loading bells—a feat which, to my mind, still stands "Par excellence" in the annals of weightlifting.

The second part of the history would have related to Olympic lifting from 1920 (Antwerp); to 1924 (Paris); 1928 (Amsterdam); 1932 (Los Angeles); 1936 (Berlin) and 1948 (London). The advent of countries additional to the usual German, French, Swiss, Italian combine would have been detailed. The records of Wheeler, Hayes, Attenborough, Jowett, Cadine, Ripoulet, Hostin, Ismayr, Manger, Touni, and hundreds of others would have had references—some passing; some detailed.

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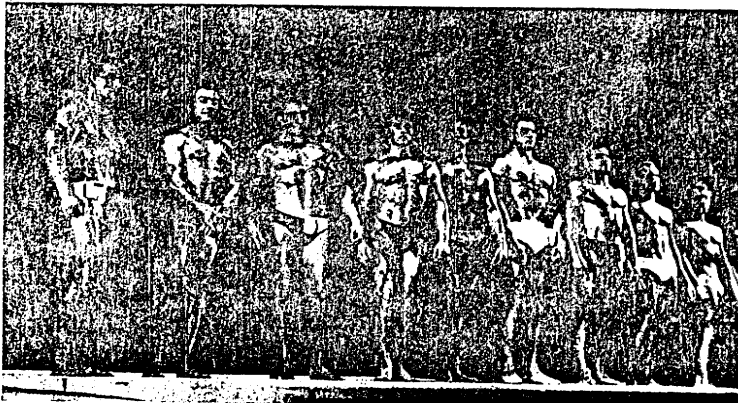
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Plus Bel Athlete du Monde
Line up of some of the competitors at this Paris contest, held in conjunction with the 1930 world's championships. Winner John Farbotnik of America is on the extreme left. Photo by Arax.

MUSCLE CONTROL from page 21

There are many other controls of this muscle group. Some for remedial and corrective purposes and others for exhibition muscle control, but the four controls already given and the one that follows will make a valuable addition to the muscle control repertoire of any reader.

Exercise 13

This is a "control proving feat" rather than an exercise pure and simple, being a static contraction of the "Pecs" when the shoulders are held in the most unfavourable position for "Pec" control. The chest should be expanded and the shoulders carried well back, and then without any alteration in the position of the shoulders or any inward pressure of the hands the "Pecs" should be fully hardened.

The ability to contract the "Pecs" and spread the "Lats" (see January article) while maintaining the chest in the fully expanded position is the reason that so many big chest measurements are now recorded. Maxaldist Bhandarkar of Bombay who posed for Exercise 13 was a weight trainer who had reached a "sticking point". Muscle control enabled him to get past that point, to add a lot of healthy muscular tissue and eventually to record the biggest chest measurement known on a man of his small-boned physique type.

All roads lead to Rome, and all good training systems must lead to increased development and strength, and it should be the aim of all those who genuinely have the interests of weightlifters and bodybuilders at heart to be reasonable when making statements concerning their choice.

OLYMPICS ANALYSED from page 23

your feet leave the floor in the split, the laws of mechanics which govern the path of a projectile will ensure that your centre of gravity will continue in the desired forward direction so that eventually your hips will finish in the desired position, i.e., vertically below the bar which, during most of the Snatch, travels in front of the hips.

Not a straight line

Mention of the bar's movement brings to mind the path that it follows from the floor to the top of the Snatch. For the sake of scientific accuracy we should reveal that this path is not a perfectly straight line. We have plotted the path of the bar from the previously mentioned slow-motion film, but you will be able, with a little practice, to follow the path of a bar actually during a Snatch. Stand at the side and focus your attention on the very end of the bar nearest to you. Ignore everything else. You will see that the bar starts travelling vertically, moves obliquely upward for a short distance and then continues in a vertical direction. The oblique movement coincides with the raising of the heels and the shifting forward of the centre of gravity over the toes. However, during most of the lift the bar does virtually move in a vertical line, and you must think only of pulling in a straight line. Carry in your mind a picture of the bar travelling upwards in a straight line and your hips arching forward into this line just below the bar and practise, practise all the time to get that all-important hip thrust.