

BARBELL CROSS-OVER STARS

By Dresdin Archibald

In the early days of weightlifting's development the boundary lines between weightlifting, bodybuilding, pure strength lifting, wrestling and weight throwing were much less defined than they are now. Athletes would try many different aspects of heavy athletics and in the process would come to rub shoulders with those from the other disciplines. In this day of extreme specialization we often know little of the athletes or the sport culture of those allied sports. It is entirely possible that one can spend an entire career and never meet anyone from another discipline.

In my own province back in the late 1950s and all of the 1960s there was still a great deal of crossing over. Every year there would be at least one power (or "odd-lift") meet organized under the auspices of the AAU. Most of the athletes would be primarily Olympic lifters who wanted a temporary change of pace. Lifters like **Bob Devolin, Bill Moe, Bert Mozley, Lorne Hansen, Joe Stockinger, Sam Kitagawa** and myself would make this annual transition. There were also a few power specialists such as the late **Gordon Kay** and **Reg Pfaff**. The conventional wisdom then was that a yearly spell of power training was good for an Olympic lifter. It added strength and relieved the boredom by adding new exercises. In Alberta, except for one notable example, we had little interest in bodybuilding.

But in other locales this was not the case. In those places the weight game was similar to the automotive game. In those early days the hot-rodders all wanted to build a hotter car that was also better looking than the stock items available. You would soup up a flathead Ford V8 and then drop it in a chopped and channelled Merc, all painted a wild candy apple red. Similarly, those of a different iron working persuasion wanted souped up muscles on a slimmed down frame covered with their own new custom body work.

But as time went on specialization was inevitable. The various car boys would go down their own roads while the weight world also saw more specialization as more athletes took up the sport and competition increased. Parallel political developments in the sport ensured that future ruling councils would be separate from one another. It was becoming apparent that in order to succeed in the future one would have to begin specializing as soon as one entered the game. By 1971 or so the bodybuilders and weightlifters were divorced and their bastard sons the powerlifters (meant in the best way) had finally grown up and left home.

However, not all weight people did so. The attractions of the various branches of weight training are still attractive enough that many athletes would continue to spend time in more than one of them, requiring transitions from one to another. Such transition required the learning of new techniques to old exercises, completely new exercises, new set and rep structures and even different body morphology.

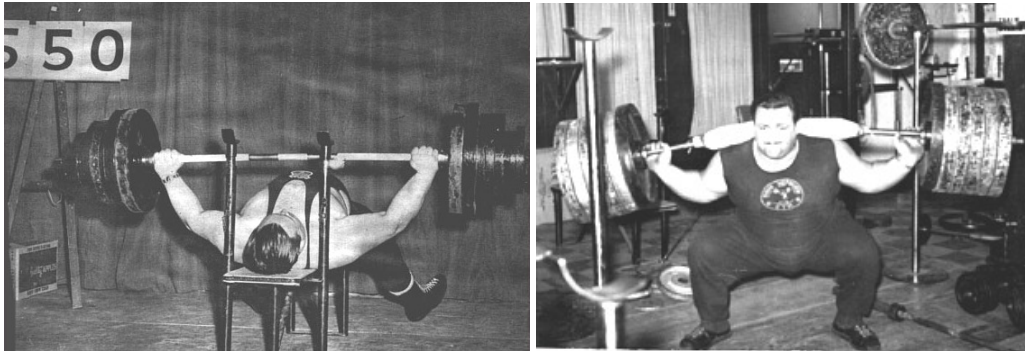
Most transitions occur early in an athlete's weight career. This is usually a result of a young person's trying several different sports at the same time and then finally specializing on the one that appeals the most. Often however, such choices are made due more to situational socialization factors than any rational choice on the part of those concerned. The athlete finds a mentor who specializes in one sport or the other who then influences his charge to take up the same sport. If a different mentor was available, personal choices and ultimate histories might have played out differently.

Late transitions can occur but are less likely. They can occur when an injury forces a change. Bodybuilding has gained more than a few such converts when a lifter is told he should not do any more heavy lifting. Since our athlete cannot give up the iron completely he becomes a reluctant pec blaster. Others have changed over when persuaded that their chances of success would be better in a different sport. An elite athlete whose time is valuable may make a rational decision to change. Examples include **Shane Hammon** and **Bruce Wilhelm**. They could see that their way to the gold medals was blocked in one sport so chose another allied one where their chances were better.

Some athletes never do make a permanent transition but constantly switch back and forth because they enjoy both too much to abandon either. While this is not recommended if one has elite aspirations it is useful to the journeyman who will develop a lot of all-round ability and a great trophy collection. Superheavy **Mark Henry** (USA) medalled in the Junior Worlds and deadlifted over 900 lb for a WR in one of the now innumerable powerlifting

federations. Unfortunately his pro wrestling career was one of the most embarrassing ever in an activity that now places few limits on tastelessness.

In the early days of weightlifting's rise in popularity athletes experimented with power lifts in the hopes of bringing Olympic strength to a new level. I have already written about the careers of **Doug Hepburn**, **Paul Anderson**, and **Dave Ashman** who did just this. They were all-round strong men who are now just as revered in power circles as they are in Olympic ones, if not more so. They came along when all of the weight world was developing at a rapid rate. These men were pioneers who used their own bodies as guinea pigs in the search for more strength. They were unusually successful as their well known histories can attest.



Doug Hepburn – Bench Pioneer and Early Heavy Squatter

We will now have a look at those that have made their mark in more than one branch of heavy athletics, comparing the exploits of those in the various types of transitions.

Bodybuilding to Weightlifting

Many lifters started out doing bodybuilding exercises and later started to specialize in Olympic lifting. Such transitions are not so much crossovers as they are a clarification of goals. Some though have gotten to a fairly high level before re-directing their training routines. **Louis Martin** would come close to matching Kono on the posing platform. He started as a bodybuilder, being billed as one of the “West Indies Trio”. In the late 1960s **Dr. John Gourgott** (USA) took second places in both the US Seniors and the Mr. America.

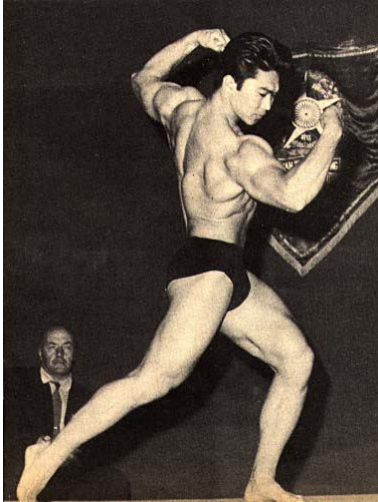
Some who are primarily bodybuilders have supplemented their trophy cases and training effects with some Olympic lifting. Many do some powerlifting but fewer do Olympic lifting. This situation mainly existed in the US in the days when all entrants in the “Mr.” contests had to justify their bodybuilding with some proven athletic ability. (This rule had “Bob Hoffman” written all over it). In those cases it was usually sufficient to total triple bodyweight to get the full five athletic points. This was not too onerous for higher level bodybuilders but some did fail (mostly Weider men if one believes Uncle Bob). This was an easy way to get their athletic points without having to learn and spend valuable training time at another sport. Former Canadian resident and Mr. America **Roy Hilligen** was mainly a bodybuilder who probably lifted just to get his points. He certainly got them as he also placed high in the Seniors the year he won the Mr. America. When in Canada he did not OL since that was all there was.

Weightlifting to Bodybuilding

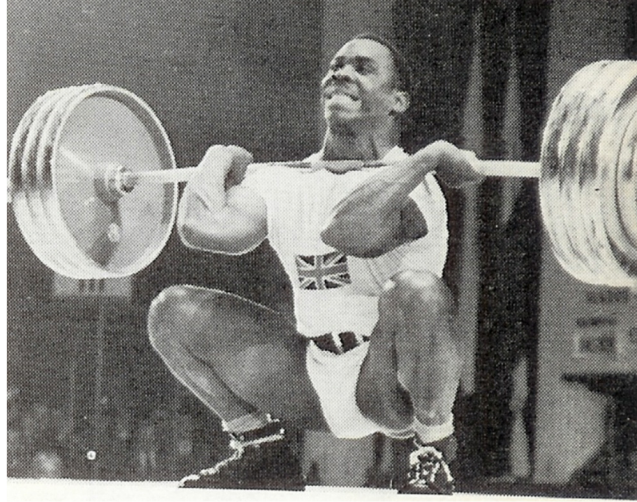
The weightlifting to bodybuilding transition is also common. **Arnold Schwarzenegger** had a brief Olympic career as a teenager. **Sergio Oliva** was a more accomplished 90 kg lifter (approx. 440 kg total) for Cuba at the Central American Games. He claimed that he only took up OL to get a shot at international travel, which would then enable him to make good his defection to the USA. At about the same time the York people were encouraging bodybuilders to spend some time on the three lifts in order to get “that finished look”. Most suspected that this was just another of Uncle Bob's recruiting and Weider-baiting efforts. Nevertheless Mr. Americas **Bob Gajda** and **Dennis Tinerino** (970 lb total) both seemed to have done exactly that at the time of their wins. It was Gajda who was responsible for the powerful Duncan Y team in the late 1960s.

Tommy Kono is the all-time best example of the complete cross-over star. His eight world and Olympic golds are well known to all. But they are matched by his four Mr. Universe wins at the physique contests which were held in conjunction with the Worlds back in the 50s and 60s. It was true that the calibre of this Mr. U was not that of NABBA's in England, or even of the Weider or AAU ones but Kono's wins needed no asterisk. The photos below show that he could have held his own in any top level meet in his era.

Some lifters became bodybuilders for brief periods. When the US team conducted their tour of the Middle East and Asia in 1955 they not only lifted, they did some posing. Kono was the headliner of course but **Isaac Berger** and **Chuck Vinci** also gladly did some flexing. **Clyde Emrich** hated bodybuilding but did finally give in and pose. Ten years later **Bill March** also won the 1965 IWF Mr. Universe. None were what might even be called part time bodybuilders.



Tommy Kono



Louis Martin

Powerlifting to Weightlifting

Powerlifting to weightlifting transitions are difficult after the lifter has reached elite level after a number of years training at power tempos. In addition, the powerlifting muscles can interfere with Olympic technique if they are relied on too much. Flexibility can also be a big hurdle. The transition period can also be dangerous when already super strong powerlifters try to advance in their new sport too quickly. Unlike beginners or lesser lifters they are strong enough to do some damage to themselves when things go wrong.

Shane Hammon is the probably most successful powerlifting to Olympic convert ever. Being only 5'7" and 160 kg or so he would have seemed an unlikely candidate for such a feat. But as a powerlifter he was famous for his super fast 1000 lb squats. His quickness reminded many of Paul Anderson, who always astounded sports writers who expected to see a slow moving (and probably dim-witted) dinosaur.

Weightlifting to Powerlifting

Weightlifting to powerlifting transitions are a lot easier to make since it is easier to slow down, tighten up and gain weight than do their opposites. Former World, Bulgarian, and Canadian champion **Antonio Krastev** was probably the most successful cross-over weight man in history. He earned this when he added his IPF World powerlifting silver in the 1980s.

Going back a few years **John Terry** (USA) was an international level 60er in the late 1930s. During that time he also deadlifted an astounding 622 lb which 70 years later still stands as one of the best ever performances. In describing it *Powerlifting USA* had to remind its readers that it was not a typo.

Bill Starr (USA) entered power meets to get to know that sport better when he was on the AAU Executive. He was fairly successful but he soon grew disenchanted with the uncouth culture then (as now?) permeating the sport. Unfortunately for him, Olympic lifting also soon grew disenchanted with Starr.

In Canada we had our 90 kg champion **Cosford White** who could squat close to the then record 600 pound squat. He threatened to beat Harry Love's (USA) record but never attempted this. More recently our 1984 67.5 kg **Claude Dallaire** (QC) has made a complete switch to powerlifting where he is a record holder and champion. **Randi Singh** (MB, AB) as also a powerlifting refugee.

Triple threats that have succeeded at elite levels in all three are, as one might expect, very rare. One that comes to mind is **Precious MacKenzie** (NZL). He won the Commonwealth Games a record four times and was also world champion at powerlifting, while in his 40s. He also entered physique meets, more so in his younger days.

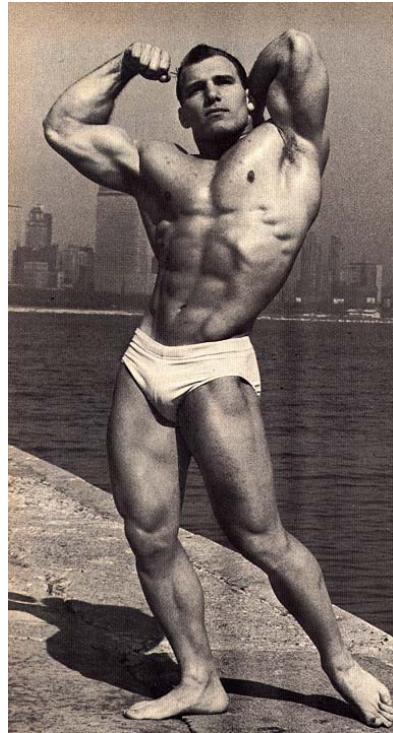
Marvin Eder of New York City (left) was another high level triple threat in the early 1950s. Weighing 90 kg he was at the top of the 90s and like



Hepburn also a pioneer in popularizing the bench press. He won many odd-lift meets and was also used by Weider in his ads for bodybuilders. This would cost him his amateur status. Later another 90 kg Arizonan **John Kantor** tried to take his place. Kantor held American power records but also totalled close to

450 kg on the Olympic Three and gave good accounts of himself in physique contests. His neighbour **Jon Cole** was the best American powerlifting super in the early 1970s. Few remember that the well built Cole was also close to the top in OL (1200 lb total) as well as a national calibre discus thrower.

Bill Seno of Chicago (right) also scored high in whatever kind of meet he entered in the late 1960s. fellow Americans **Dave Moyer**, **Enrique Hernandez**, **Larry Mintz**, and **Homer Brannum** were mainly Olympic lifters who nonetheless won their Senior Nationals in both disciplines.



Throwing to Weightlifting

Unlike some of the other weight athletes, those who have starred in the throwing events in athletics are by necessity limited to the top one or two weight categories. Throwing puts a premium on height so short men need not apply. Most of our cross-over stars have been shot-putters. The discus, hammer and javelin do not require so much muscle so their elite practitioners may not match that level as lifters. They might as high school-ers but not at higher levels. The track people have toyed with the idea of weight or height categories but so far it has come to nothing.

Training for the throwing events is similar to that in our sport. They do lots of cleans, snatches, squats and presses. Many would enter WL meets in the off season as a way to keep them motivated until spring. They also were a route to more medals, especially if the local weightlifting competition was not that stiff. Some did so well that they would continue all year, having to balance their schedules. When the press was dropped the number of thrower cross-overs dropped as well since the power lifts were thought to be best for throwers. But with the recent discovery of the Olympic lifts as training lifts for throwers this trend may again reverse itself.

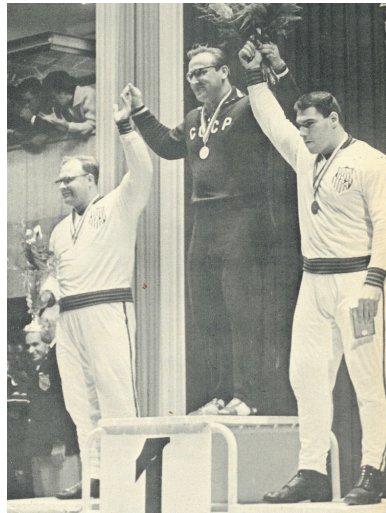
Norb Schemansky (USA) had been a shot-putter in high school. I doubt that this was his specialty, even then. I would bet that his reputation for strength brought an invitation or demand that he try out for track. Since there was no weightlifting in the Detroit schools then (or now, for that matter) he probably complied as a way to win something.

Ken Patera (USA) was a star in many sports. He was a shot-putter in Brigham Young University (a hardship post for him, I'm sure) and also dabbled in wrestling (amateur and later

pro), football (brother Jack was coach of the Seattle Seahawks). He tried one power meet and made the US top 10 list with a low bench.

Bruce Wilhelm and **Sam Walker** were both shot-putters who failed to make the 1976 US Olympic track team so went as lifters instead. Wilhelm's two victories in the "World's Strongest Man" contest in the late 70s attested to his all-round strength.

Gary Gubner (USA) in the 1960s seemed to his fellow Jews to be the second coming of Samson. His performances certainly seemed to back this up. He went to the 1961 Maccabean Games and won weightlifting, shot-putting and the discus. His technique was almost completely absent but he was probably stronger than even Vlasov. He set junior and senior world records in the press and for a while seemed like the man who would one day hand Zhabo a defeat. But then came Bednarski.....



Ski, Vlasov, Gubner, 1962 SWCs



Gubner at New York U.

Al Fuerbach (USA) was a shot-putter who was unusual in that he was only a 110er. But he was able to hand the come-backing Bednarski a defeat. Al remained at the top of both sports for a while in the early 70s.

George Frenn was a 56 lb. weight thrower who was also the top 110 powerlifter in the late 60s. He also tried Olympic lifting where he was quite competent.

Manitoba seems to have made a cottage industry out of converting champion female throwers into champion female lifters. The first was **Teresa Brick**, (right) Canadian champion in the women's hammer. She is equally celebrated in both sports. In her early years she would always qualify in both sports before a Games but then would have to make an agonizing decision since you could usually only enter one. Such situations unfortunately can create some ill-will with the other sports. Whichever was the loser would harbour resentment against the other. In previous years Russ Prior also found this out as he poached his colleague **Bruce Pirney's** (former Olympic thrower) track team at their Winnipeg high school. Brick was soon followed by **Bryce Singbeil**, **Suzanne Dandenault**, **Noreena Bodaglo**, **Josée Morneau**, and **Charlotte MacEachern**. Even their coach **Denis Van Leaken** is an accomplished canoer besides being a national level lifter himself.



Due to the newness of women in strength sports it might still be possible to see a lot of cross-over stars among the distaff side. Australian **Bev Francis** started as a thrower, then became the world's top female powerlifter in the 1980s before conquering bodybuilding as well. It is a pity she could not have tried OL as well. Few doubted that she would have been

successful. The aptly named **Anne Turbine** (USA) was also a thrower while also topping national powerlifting lists in the late 1970s.

Another canoer was the late **Claude Hardy** (QC). He was a champion 90er who took time out to wield an oar for Quebec in the Centennial Canoe Pageant in 1967. This was a re-creation of the old fur traders' cross-country route. **Pierre St. Jean** also tied serious canoeing, I believe, but never made the teams he aspired to.

By contrast, few lifters seem to become throwers. This may be because there is still marginally better funding opportunities in throwing, so the larger athletes will try that first. Only after they have peaked out there do they seem to be willing to try full time lifting. Nevertheless, some have moved in the opposite direction. The late **Ray Rigby** (AUS) was a promising lifter who dropped out early for some reason and switched to the shot. I accidentally encountered him one day at the Toronto YMCA where he was getting in a workout during the 1973 Pan-Pacific Games. **Brad Jones** (AB) has switched between the shot and WL both in his regular and Masters careers, as did **Bill Samborsky** (QC). Former Canadian champ **Chris Dariotis** (USA) also competed in the shot in the 2005 World Masters Games.

Weightlifting Wrestlers

Any transitions between these sports are done early in the career since the strength disciplines needed are not too compatible. Wrestlers must indeed be strong, but it is mostly upper body endurance-strength that is needed, not lower body speed-strength as with lifters. Most double threats that have appeared did so at lower levels. **Darryl Schultz** (AB) was one example. One exception was two time Olympic winner **Wilfried Dietrich** (GER). He was also a good part-time heavyweight lifter who totalled in the mid 400s. This was good enough to defeat fellow Olympian **Dennis Hillman** (GBR, CAN) in a local meet when Dennis was stationed in Germany.

When we look at the pro ranks of wrestling we see a different picture emerge. Since this activity is theatrical and not real sport impressive looking muscles are more important than properly trained ones. This has allowed many starving weight men to cash in. A hundred years ago wrestling and weightlifting intermingled often, with many of the music hall and vaudeville strongmen also wrestling. Professionals like **George Hackenschmidt**, **Ivan Pudukny**, **Milo Steinborn**, **Stan Zbyszko** and **Primo Carnera** were all first lifters who then switched to the mat when that was a better paying proposition when vaudeville died. This phenomenon has continued since there is still no money in lifting. **Bert Assirati**, Doug Hepburn, Paul Anderson, Mark Henry, **Harold Sakata**, and Ken Patera are more recent examples from Olympic lifting. Power and bodybuilding have added many more.

I will now finish this with a tribute to one of Canadian Weightlifting's greatest cross-over stars. This is the man who started me in the sport and who is also still going strong more than five decades under iron.

BERT MOZLEY

All weightlifters have someone who, without their influence, they might never have entered the sport. My mentor in the sport was a neighbour who lived up the street from us in the Calgary of 1955 who had recently immigrated to Canada from Derbyshire, England. His name was Bert Mozley. This name was somewhat notorious due to its similarity to one Sir Oswald Mosley, leader of Britain's fascists in WWII. Despite that it was, and continues to be, revered back in Derby Country where he was, and still is, the Rams' all time greatest centre halfback in soccer's First (now called "Premier") Division. His main sport was soccer, for which he had trained since pre-school days. But he was also an iron aficionado. He had developed a set of pecs and arms that were quite out of place on the soccer pitches of the somber post war England of Clement Attlee. He got involved in the weights because, according to him, his twin sister was getting stronger than him. That would have been hard to take even if your sister was several years older. It was intolerable if the sister was born a few minutes after you! Like most trainees then he operated out of a home gym. To there I would occasionally accompany my father when they would work out together. And as eight year old might, I would test myself with the odd dumbbell. When I came of age I was introduced to real weight training. In the meantime he would "translate" the English jokes while we watched

various Britcoms. I suspect that he missed his calling as a comedian. He would have been a great addition to the Carry-On gang.

He was capped four times (played in international matches), often alongside the immortal Sir Stanley Matthews. He decided to leave England for a job as a hotel manager in Canada. When in Calgary he soon joined the local soccer team and just as quickly dominated play there, terrorizing teams such as Calgary Croatia and Calgary Juventus. As a result in later years when he went into the furniture business Yugoslavs or Italians would boycott him. He also got involved in the Cow-town weight scene, mainly with Bob Devolin. He also became the best 90 kg weightlifter and “odd-lifter” as powerlifting was called then. If that was not enough he usually won the “Mr. Calgary” title with a body that was inspired by Phil Grippaldi (arms) and George Eiferman (pecs).

His years managing the Royal and Wales hotels brought him in contact with Stu Hart and the local wrestling scene. He would later act as a referee keeping order with the likes of the Dr. Jerry Graham and Chief Big Heart.

On another occasion Bert paid a visit to the Calgary Stampeder training field. There he showed an astonished QB Eagle Day how a 42 year old soccer kicker could kick even an odd shaped ball equally far with both feet.

In 1973 the Mozleys pulled up stakes again, moving to Galiano Island just off the east coast of Vancouver Island. There he coached the Royal Roads Military College soccer team and opened his own gym. He continued to enter bodybuilding meets, winning Mr. Senior BC several times and still later guest posing, all with a comic turn.

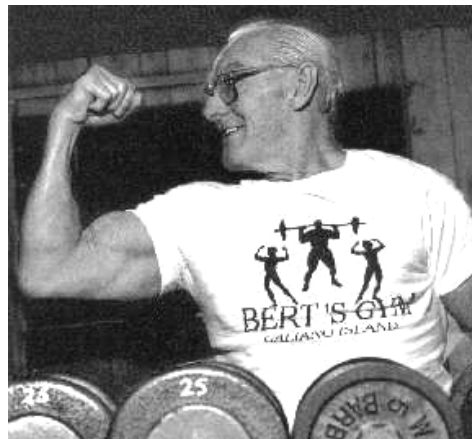
As his long suffering wife Jean will tell you, Bert is lifelong practical joker. Even in a lifting meet he would try something to get a laugh out of the audience. He would walk up to the platform in serious psyche-up mode, then trip over the edge of the platform, complete with grimaces. Then he would make his lift, get the down signal and then shout out “thank you” as if he were fighting an immanent heart seizure. It never failed to get the crowd (such as it was) going. His Midlands accent, which seems to have gotten more pronounced with each year of British exile, would make any joke even funnier. All attempts at curing him have failed, usually because the doctors couldn’t stop laughing. Since he left Alberta weightlifting has been the poorer. But he is still coaching on the Island.

When I started lifting Bert got me a copy of George Kirkley’s book on training. He was editor of Britain’s Health & Strength magazine and also a top weightlifting photographer, as the shot of Martin above attests. I finally was able to meet Kirkley when I was at the Junior Worlds in Edinburgh in 1985. I told him of the time I was given his book by Bert Mozley. Kirkley immediately replied “Mozley?...Darby Country, right?”. He was more interested in what I could tell him about Mozley than vice-versa. It had been thirty years since Mozley had last played in England.

I still get e-mail jokes on an almost daily basis. He seems to have passed on his humour to his daughters while even his wife now seems infected. If he had moved a block further away I might never have met him. Who knows what I might have turned to?



Bicep-less Ram in his 20s



Still 18" in his 70s