



'SECONDS OUT'



LONDON EX-BOXERS ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2024 No. 612

Dear Members,

Hope you all had a good time over the festive season with your family and friends and are ready for whatever 2024 throws at us.

What a great Christmas Party we had, so many of our Champions, Members, some with their families all in attendance, made it a special day. Jimmy Batten provided the entertainment and got us in the party mood, several members went on the stage to give us a song or two including our own Michael Watson.

A special thanks to our Vice President John Conteh who must have spoken to nearly most of our members throughout the day and was still chatting away at 5 o'clock when I told him it was time to go !!! – thanks John.

Many thanks also to the staff of the Sports Bar and Grill for all the food and serving us with drinks – they really worked hard, especially Kaley.

LEBA Award Luncheon is on 18th February and tickets will be available at the January meeting and ticket sales have reached 200 -“£40 for members (subsidised) and £80 for guests and we will be limited to 300 so make sure you confirm your tickets at todays meeting if you intend coming – which for sure will be a great day.

As always at our January meeting your annual subscriptions need to be renewed and your Membership Secretary Kirsty will be in her usual position at the back of the hall to issue you with new membership cards.

Look forward to having a “Wee Dram” with you at our meeting to toast in the New Year where it is always “Nice to Belong”

Take Care and God Bless

Ray

LEBA Secretary/Treasurer

The LONDON EX-BOXERS ASSOCIATION AIMS and OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To have a Meeting Place for Ex-Boxers and LEBA Members to meet monthly in London
- ◆ To Help London Ex-Boxers and LEBA Members in need and with their well being
- ◆ To raise funds to finance the Association and help our Members

to Apply for Membership contact our Membership Secretary
Kirsty Nisbet Tel 07415 882 592 E-Mail - knisbet@londonexboxers.org.uk

Why not come along to one of our Sunday Meetings held on the first Sunday of every month 11.00 - 12.00 Official Meeting (12 - 2.00 Social Meeting) at

Sports and Grill Bar

174-180 Old Street LONDON EC1V 9RQ

Nearest Tube Station - Old Street- a 5 minute walk

All Ex-Boxers (Pro or Amateur) and Boxing Fans - Will be made Welcome Where
"It's Nice To Belong"

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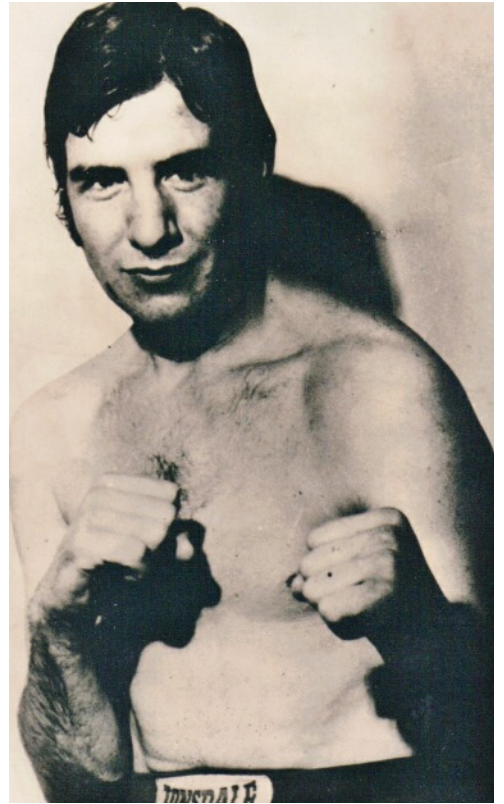
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PAT THOMPSON

(by Melanie Lloyd)

(Originally published in November 2015)

His friends call him *Killer*, but one would be hard pushed to encounter a more amicable assassin than Pat Thompson. When he speaks about what boxing has meant to him throughout his life, his face lights up with boyish enthusiasm. Indeed, Pat is without question one of the lads and, at the same time, he is the ultimate family man. He was born in Merseyside and his formative years were shaped by the fact that Liverpool was still recovering from the aftereffects of the Blitz, not that the lingering war damage prevented Pat and his chums from having fun. “In the street where I lived, some of the houses were bombed, but they just hadn’t had time to knock them down and rebuild them. We used to play in them. We used to go and collect pigeons, and all that, and it used to be great. There was one particular street called Reading Street and there were all different landings and, at the back of them, people used to play dice and crap games, and everything was good.”



“I didn’t come from a traditional boxing family. There was my mam and dad, and my three brothers and three sisters. One of my brothers boxed, but that was about it. They did an interview with me years ago, I’ve still got the tape somewhere, and they introduced my mother and they asked her ‘What do you think when your son is boxing and he’s getting hurt and getting battered?’ My mam turned round and said ‘He’s big enough to batter them back!’”

“In the neighbourhood, all the kids were boxing. I used to read about these fellas being good boxers, and the first club I ever joined was the Maple Leaf, but I wasn’t there for very long. Then I joined the Liverpool Transport Club. But, with me being a big lad, I was always a bit big to fight the other kids, so I only had a few amateur fights, about 15 or 20. Having said that, I boxed for England and I won a silver medal in a Multi Nations tournament in Denmark, because I was good, see. I got to the final and I got beat by a guy, and I can’t think of his name now, but he came in with a big Viking hat on him. He was a giant, and I suppose I was maybe a bit scared of him, instead of not worrying about him. I went the three rounds with him, but I was grabbing and holding because he was a lot bigger and heavier than me. But I won the silver medal anyway.”

“I joined the Merchant Navy when I was 15. I went into the sea school and they used to have boxing matches every month, and I used to win all the time. Then, after about three months, I went back to Liverpool to get on a ship, and I was on all sorts of ships, cargo boats, iron ore boats, passenger ships and tankers, and I was in the Merchant Navy for seven years. I’ll always remember my first trip. I was only 15, turning 16, and we went to Montreal. It took us about a week to get there, and I remember coming off the ship and thinking ‘Blimey, they’ve got pigeons here!’ I was only 15 and I didn’t realise that pigeons were all over the world.”

“I was always training on the ships. When I was on the deck on lookout, when I was supposed to be looking for ships, I’d be shadowboxing all the time to pass the time away. One of the last ships I was on was the Empress of Canada, which used to cruise all around the Caribbean. All the American tourists would be on the ship and we’d put boxing shows on for them, and then we’d go round with the bucket and collect all the dollars. We’d have a share out and we’d all get drunk, and then we used to get fined a day’s pay because we all had hangovers. But it was great. I loved it! It was just wonderful with all your mates, and we’d box one another, we’d kill one another, but then we’d be the best of mates after the fight, so it was lovely.”

“I came down to London with Pat Dwyer. I was going to go back to sea, but Pat Dwyer said ‘Come down to London and see how you get on down here.’ When I first came to London, we were living in a little hotel in Finsbury Park and then, when Pat Dwyer went home, I was on my own. So sometimes, you’d come back to the hotel, and there’d be three beds in the room and the landlord used to rent out one of the beds without telling you. So you’d come home and you didn’t know who was there. But, you know, we got by.”

“Then I met my wife. A boxer I knew called ‘Pommy’ Bob Murphy used to say to me ‘Pat, why don’t you come out with me tonight? My wife works with this girl and she’s a lovely girl.’ So I’d say ‘Yeah, okay’ but I never used to turn up. Then I did turn up one day, and that was the end of it! 40 years later, we’re still together. My wife’s name is Christine and our children are Gary, Kellie and Joanne. Joanne is a really great singer, Kellie can sing and tell jokes and she could be a stand-up comedian, and Gary likes to dance and he’s really good at it. So anyway, all the kids are cockneys.”

Boxing out of Islington, Pat amassed a record of 72 fights, with 38 wins, 29 losses and five draws. Throughout his career, he fluctuated between light-heavy and heavyweight, and it was all the same to him. “When I turned professional, Ernie Fossey was my manager and, in those days, if Ernie said to me ‘You’re fighting King Kong tomorrow’ I’d have boxed him, because I knew Ernie wouldn’t have me hurt. He was really a good manager. He was a lovely fella. We had such a great time in the gym, we boxed all over the country and we never stopped laughing.”

Although he is the brightest of sparks on a social level, Pat’s modesty about his boxing achievements is rather disarming. “I was an average fighter, an ordinary guy, an eight round fighter, but I was always happy. I’d fight anybody. I was always in the gym. I lost my first professional fight on points over six rounds in Manchester. That was against a guy called Terry Armstrong, and I’ll always remember that fight, your first fight with no vest on, and it’s funny the things that go through your head. Then, a few weeks later, I boxed Billy Brooks in London and I stopped him in one round. Throughout my career, I won quite a few and then I lost quite a few, but I never really got hurt by anybody.”

Pat actually boxed Terry Armstrong six times in total, the final of which provided the setting for the jewel in his career crown, the Central Area Light-Heavyweight Title. He took the vacant belt from the Mancunian fighter on 1st April 1976. The contest happened at the Adelphi Hotel in Merseyside, and Pat made sure that he was no April Fool that night. “I was like king of the country, wasn’t I? I loved it, coming home with me belt, showing me mam and me dad, and I was made up. I thought I was going to be world champion. I *felt* like a world champion, but you’ve just got to keep trying. You never know, do you?”

“That was my second attempt at winning that title. The first one was against a guy called Phil Martin. He came from Moss Side and he boxed as Phil Adelman as an amateur and then, when he turned pro, he was Phil Martin. I boxed him four times altogether, but Phil was one of these fellas, if I boxed him ten times, I could never just get that little bit extra to beat him. He beat me all the time. So I challenged him for the title at the Willows Rugby Ground in Salford and I got beat on points.”

“When I defended my Central Area Title, I boxed a fella called Alex Penarski at the Liverpool Stadium and everyone thought I’d won the fight, but I never. They gave the decision to him. John Conteh was fighting Len Hutchins the same night and Jerry Quarry came over to Liverpool to commentate, and the show was on the telly in America. A lot of my family lived in America, so they saw me box, and I’ll always remember what Jerry Quarry said about me. He said ‘This kid’s got the greatest smile I’ve ever seen.’”

Throughout the five and a half year timespan of Pat’s career, he boxed an average of once a month, often getting the call at short notice. “I’ll always remember one time, we used to go to the Noble Art Gym in Haverstock Hill on a Sunday morning and train. So we come out of there and I had nothing on, and I went and had a pint with the fellas next door. Then, when I got back to my house, Ernie Fossey called and said ‘Pat, you’re boxing tonight’. I said ‘But I’ve had a pint!’ and, to be honest with you, I boxed that night and I think I stopped the kid. I don’t know how I done it, but I did. But, even though I was a sort of ‘have gloves, will travel’ boxer, I could sell as many tickets as any of the Londoners, because I had a good name and I was with the right people, like Ernie Fossey.”

“Me and Billy Aird used to spar with each other all the time. We did used to get up to a bit of mischief. I’ll tell you a little story about big Bill. We were in the Isle of Wight. We used to have a free holiday out of it, because we’d go out and spar with the kids out there. Billy had a title fight coming up, and I said ‘Listen, Bill, don’t spar with them little kids, because they don’t know what they’re doing. They’ll come and smack you, because they’re only young kids.’ Bill said ‘No, I’ll be all right’ and this little kid went BOSH and cut his eye, and Billy had to cancel his fight. I couldn’t stop laughing! But me and Billy, we always had great times. We were laughing all the time.”

“All through my boxing career, I laughed. Sometimes, you have hard fights, but it was always good company really. I loved the camaraderie with the boxers, the banter. I never got into much trouble, because boxing helps you, doesn’t it? It gave me discipline. Every single fella I boxed, I’d have boxed every one of them again. They were all good fellas.”

“I had some great fights with Johnny Wall from Shoreditch. I boxed him three times. I won one, lost one and we had a draw, but I thought I got the three of them. Another guy I boxed was Billy Knight. He stopped me in five with a cut eye at the Albert Hall. When he hit me, he hit me so hard I didn’t know if I was in New York or New Brighton. I was still up for it, but I was glad I got stopped with a cut, because he probably would have killed me otherwise!”

Pat’s last ring appearance was a points victory over eight rounds against Theo Josephs at the Norfolk Gardens Hotel in Bradford. “I didn’t know that it was going to be my last one at the time, but I’d had 72 and that’s a lot of fights, isn’t it? Also, I was getting married, so Ernie said ‘You’ll have to retire now.’ To be honest, the signs start showing when you start slowing up a little bit. You know it’s time to step down and leave it to the young kids coming up. I loved being a boxer

and I really missed it, but what it is, when you get older, your timing is just that fraction out. You can see the shot coming, but you just can't get out of the way. Your reflexes start to go. All of a sudden, your opponent is going to throw a left hand at you, you can see it coming, but, before you can get out of the way, it's got you."

"Throughout my career, I always worked on the building sites. Sometimes I'd go to work the day after a fight looking a bit bashed up, and they'd say 'Hey, good looking!' Then, when I finished boxing, I became a publican. So I had 72 professional fights, and then I made it 100 by going in the pub! But I loved being a publican. You're like the Lord Mayor. Everyone knows you, don't they? I had different pubs in the East End, and I did that for 20 years. Then, when the all-day opening came out, the pub game was finished then. After that, I went into the catering game and I've been doing that ever since. It's similar to the pub game. You're mixing with people all the time, and I love mixing with people."



"I'd have to say my favourite boxer of all time was Muhammad Ali. I actually met Ali and Joe Frazier, and I got a book signed by George Foreman. I met George in the Hilton Hotel, and I met Joe when he came over here to box Joe Bugner. I was boxing at the same time as them fellas, and I met them all. Muhammad Ali was a lovely guy, great! I met Joe Louis as well when he came over to see John Conteh, and I was going mad because I never got my photograph taken with him. All boxers are great people. Even if you get beat, you still like one another. You stand together."

"I don't get to Liverpool that much. I go to the Grand National every year, and now and then I go to the Liverpool Ex Boxers Association. It's always nice to go back and see your old mates. It's lovely, but London is my home. I've been a member of LEBA since 1972, just after it started, when it was in Charlie Webster's place in Finsbury Park. On the morning of a LEBA meeting, I'm up early, I'm ironing my shirt, polishing my shoes and putting on a nice tie. I always like to look smart for our meetings. It's like an old soldier, isn't it? You've got to look smart. My mam used to say to me 'Always look smart, son. No one knows what you've got in your pocket!' I love LEBA. Everyone's lovely. From the contenders to the champions, everyone's the same."

"Believe it or not, I've never actually stopped training. These days, I'm down the gym about three times a week. I was in the gym training on Wednesday, and this kid came up to me and I didn't know who he was, I'd never met him before, but he come up to me and he said 'I've got admiration for you. It's inspirational to see you, the way you train' and I told him I've been doing it for 50 years and he couldn't believe it. Obviously, I don't do sparring, but, apart from that, I do the lot. I do about 12 rounds, shadowboxing, skipping, speedball, and I love it. It's great to still be around the boxing game after all these years, and it makes me feel young." It's nice to belong x

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & DONATIONS

RAFFLE DONATIONS

Pat Gavin, Danny Williams, Barbara O'Sullivan, Tommy Burling
LEBA, Michael Lordan, Sports Bar & Grill, George Masters
Kirsty Nisbet & Ray Caulfield

DONATIONS

Patsy Barrett, Tom Barrett, Dominic Shepherd & Peter Hewitt

CONTRIBUTIONS TO DECEMBER SECONDS OUT

Mike Taub, Michael Lordan, Kirsty Nisbet & Bob Cheeseman



Date of Next Meeting

4th February 2024

LEBA Award Luncheon

Connaught Rooms – 18th February 2024

January Birthdays

1st ADRIAN ZIMMERMAN, 2nd DAVID PYBUS, TONY THAKE 3rd KEN SELLEK
5th ROCKY KELLY, SAM REESON 7th MATT PALMER
11th CHARLIE WAKEFIELD 14th BERNARD KHAN,
PETER HAYMER (SNR) 15th TOMMY MELLIS 17th ROY HILTON
18th JAMES SMITH 20th PETER McCANN 22nd R HUMM
24th JULIE MELLON 26th BARRY SANDFORD 28th KENNY PALMER,
ANDREW CAULFIELD 29th EDDIE RICHARDSON 31st STEVE PALMER,
LENNIE WILSON, CHARLIE WYNN, DEAN FARDELL JOHN WALDRON,
STEVE WILLIAMS, ANDY TILL

LEBA Members enjoying



A table full of Smiling Faces



“Everyone having a good Laugh”

the Christmas Party



LEBA Committee Members with the Champions



Members enjoying each other's company

LEBA Members enjoying



Dave Hull, Haroun, Michael Watson and Bob Cheeseman getting into the festive spirit



John Conteh with Dave Hull, Martin Powers and Gary Corcoran

the Christmas Party



Three Champions having a singalong



Members Steve Palmer and “Uncle” Ken Palmer with John Conteh

Family day at LEBA



Two Lovely ladies Diane Williams and Carmen Cook enjoying the day with husbands Derek and James



Brothers Stephen, Desmond and John Powell with three generations- of family

Christmas Party



Billy Schwer (Senior) with his family – three Generations



Peter Haymer (Senior) and Junior with again three generations of family

Round and About, December 2023

By Bob Cheeseman

Well what a great Christmas gathering we had, a total of 154 members and guests and it was buzzing, I could see you all from the stage and you all looked like you were really enjoying the day.

24 Champions were with us, World and Area's, including Vice Presidents John Conteh and Maurice Hope both of whom really did their bit by going around tables and having a chat with most of you as did the committee.

You all made the day successful and enjoyable everyone had the Christmas spirit.



Bill and Wendy Schwer and family



Martin Power, Wayne Alexander, John Conteh & Gary Corcoran

I didn't expect so many members and supporters to turn up owing to other gatherings and the travel services on the day, was I so wrong. People started filing in late... more like 10.50 for the 11 o'clock meeting and I was alight to see so many entering, the Scwhers came from the Midlands, Micky Crawford came up from Worthing, the attendance was unbelievable.



The food did last and it was good, enough for everybody till the end I am pleased to say, I didn't stop eating when I had the chance that is, I was so excited to see so many people.



Pictures from our party

We were pleased to hear that our fellow EBA's also had a good day, Brighton and the Home Counties well done and we wish you and all your members best for the New Year.

On Sunday 17th December myself and Lynda went to the Essex Ex Boxers to celebrate with them at their Christmas Party, and another brilliant day again with great company and great food.

Three replica Area belts were presented on this day and I was given the honour of presenting my great pal Tony Hudson with his, thank you EEBA.



Terry Marsh



Tony Hudson



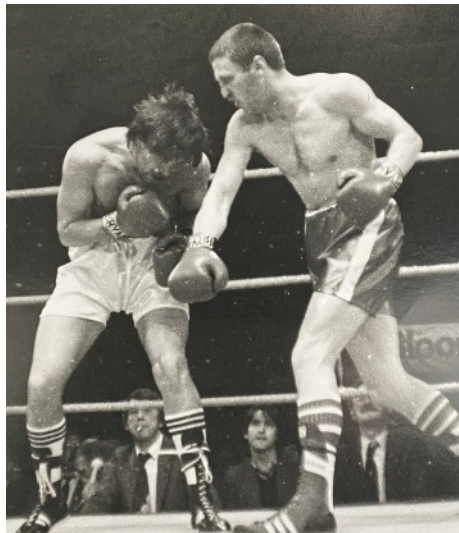
John Claydon

A great day Essex Well done,

Looking forward to our New year meeting, January 7th.

Happy New Year from us all

GARY HOBBS



Gary started boxing when he was 11 years old for the Southall boxing Club and was trained throughout his amateur career by Colin Cracknell and Harry Holland.

As an amateur in the juniors Gary got to the semi-finals of the schoolboy championships and the semi-finals of the junior ABA's.

As a senior in the ABA's Gary won the Southwest Divs Title – fighting twice in the same night. He represented London ABA against the Met Police and the Army winning both contests.

Injuries forced Gary to have a 4 year lay off from the sport and when he returned, he won 7 fights on the trot then in his 8th contest he lost a split decision Jim Jenkins who was rated number 4 in the UK and Gary was immediately ranked at number 5 in the UK and his last amateur contest he fought two-time ABA and Commonwealth Champion Jimmy Price.

Total Amateur Contests	Wins	Losses
85	68	17

Gary turned professional at 24 and was managed and trained by Harry Holland and in his 9th fight he stopped tough Dave Armstrong to win the Southern Area Title at Middleweight and his future looked very exciting with ambition to win the British Title but unfortunately a work-related injury resulted in the loss of sight in his right eye forcing him into retirement from boxing.

Total Pro Fights	Wins	Losses
10	9 (5 KO's)	1

Gary fought some good fighters as an amateur some of whom went on to win ABA and Commonwealth Titles, and as a professional some become British and European Champions. Had Gary's career not been cut short by his injuries who knows what heights he would have achieved but for sure he would have been a Champion.

Gary says "That overall, he had a great boxing career, and met some amazing people. He keeps in touch with a lot of his former opponents some of whom he meets up with every month at the London Ex-Boxers meetings where we do lots of work helping ex-boxers in need and the banter and camaraderie at meetings is something special between all the members"