



The Association of Oldtime Barbell and Strongmen is scheduled to hold its 1993 meeting and reunion on the 23rd of October, at the Downtown Athletic Club in New York City. Honored by the association this year will be Dave Webster, strength historian and Scottish Highland Games promoter; Terry Robinson, famous Hollywood trainer of the stars; and Chuck Vinci, Olympic gold medalist in 1956 and 1960. For tickets and other information, contact Vic Boff at 4959 Vii St., Cape Coral, Florida, 33904. Phone: 813-549-8407.



A British friend, fellow history buff, David Gentle, recently sent us a magazine article about another old-timers gathering, this one held in England. Inspired by the lead of the Association of Oldtime Barbell and Strongmen, Reg Park, Dave Webster, Tom Templeton, and Dianne Bennett joined together to host a reunion and to present the first "Pioneers of Physical Culture" award for the United Kingdom. The 1992 award went to octogenarian Bob Woolger, for his lifetime of dedication to the Iron Game. Dianne Bennett organized the dinner/celebration. Arnold Schwarzenegger was among those who attended.



Library News: We are grateful beyond words to Mabel Rader for her recent donation of the *Iron Man* magazine archives to our collection. Through the more than fifty years that Mabel and Peary ran *Iron Man*, they carefully saved the items that made up each issue of *IM*. The manuscripts, photographs, correspondence, and other related items filled eighty book cartons and are now in the process of being sorted catalogued and preserved for future generations of iron game historians. We'd also like to thank Alton Eliason for donating his extensive collection of magazines and correspondence. Once a successful gym-owner and promoter of physical culture shows, Alton is now a national authority on organic gardening, though as his letter on the next page attests, he still loves the Iron Game.



Dear *IGH*:

Remembering a letter sent to you by Curd Edmunds which you published in Vol. 2, No. 3, of *Iron Game History*, I thought he (and you) would be interested in this newspaper cutting [*Daily Telegraph*, April 1993]. It involves a man, George Ives, who died recently aged 111 years. Ives could chin up to a parallel bar by the arms until he was well past one hundred. He remained critical of his children's generation, complaining that youngsters in their eighties and nineties were apt to let themselves go.

After serving as a soldier in the Boer War, joining in 1899, he became a farmer in British Columbia, Canada. He proved to be a hard-working and methodical farmer. In 1919 he moved to White

Rock, British Columbia, where he took a dairy farm. I thought Curd would be interested as he, too, is a farmer. I recalled Curd writing, "I feel so good, maybe God will let me read *IGH* two more years," then wondered whether he had read Genesis, Chapter 6:3—"And God said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." As a point of interest, I notice that from the ages of sixty to seventy-five, Ives worked in a shipyard, and I imagine he still did work that involved keeping his muscular system in good tone—not office work.

Please do not think that I am suggesting that Curd should aim to live to be 120 years. Just as Alan Calvert wrote in *Super Strength*—page 141—"It would be the height of folly to exercise just for the sake of getting big muscles on the outside of the body," so it would in my opinion be the height of folly to aim to grow old just for the sake of being old.

Re: Alan Calvert: In the same issue of *IGH* which contained Curd's letter was another from Roger Manna suggesting a feature article about Alan Calvert. I, too, was mystified many years ago about his complete "volte face," (about face). How could he write in his *Super-Strength* (1924, page 169): "I can state positively that the easiest and quickest way to get a magnificent build and the super-strength that goes with it is to practice a progressive schedule of developing exercises with an adjustable barbell." And, write in the same book, on page 134, "The greatest value of barbell exercise is its undoubted effect in promoting the vigor of your digestive and assimilative processes." On page 143, Calvert wrote: "In conclusion, I wish to state emphatically that in order to be super-strong a man has to be super healthy. If you train so as to increase the vigor of your internal organs at the same time as you are increasing the exterior development, you will get the kind of muscle that will stay with you for the rest of your life, and you can create an upright, shapely figure that will not become bowed and enfeebled until extreme old age." Then, in the following year—1925—he published the pamphlet *Natural Strength Versus Made Strength—an Explanation of Why I Abandoned the Field of Heavy Exercise*. It was a 2500 word booklet and it ran into several editions.

In the late 1930s I bought a second hand book in a market for six pence (a few cents). It was *Exercise Without Exercise*, by S. Arthur Devan, a "disciple" of Alan Calvert in which his teachings are described in detail. It was published in Great Britain in 1935—no mention of an American edition—but I noticed in Vol. 2, No. 4 of *IGH*, there is a letter from Raymond Rogers who, writing about Alan Calvert, mentions Arthur Devan's name along with Harry Paschall, Sieg Klein, and Ray Van Cleef. I was surprised at this because I have never seen his name mentioned in an American magazine. I think he was probably English as he starts Chapter Two by writing: "An American friend of mine, Mr. Alan Calvert. . ."—in the same chapter he writes, "Some years ago he came to the conclusion that the whole business of training for strength through the use of apparatus and special exercises was all wrong." Although I have read this many times through the years and it contains some good sense, there are also several nonsensical statements concerning men with muscles sticking out all over them dropping off suddenly into the Great Beyond through heart failure and other things. When I was younger it was quite common for a person to say, "It is

well known that strong men die young." I would reply, "Tell me one who died young and I will tell you of twenty who lived to be old." After all, when Sandow died at age fifty-seven, he was still several years older than the average man in England at that time.

Joe Assirati
London, England

Ed Note: If we had to pick one man as a relatively unsung hero in the field of physical culture, Joe Assirati, whom we featured in Vol. 2, No. 5 of *IGH* would be a good choice. Now eighty-eight years old, Joe still works out regularly, and it is an absolute delight to us when we receive a letter from him. As for the mystery of Alan Calvert's spurning of weightlifting, it appears to have been partly a matter of economics. In a letter to Ottley Coulter dated 31 January 1919, Calvert wrote: "All the offers I made to you will have to be considered as 'off' as I recently sold out to a couple of young men who intend to revive the business and operate under the old title of The Milo Barbell Company. I have agreed never to re-enter the Bar Bell business, so all my connection with the P.C. game is at an end." However, as many of our readers know, Calvert's association with physical culture was not at an end. In *Natural Strength Versus Made Strength*, Calvert explains that he has purchased turn-of-the-century health reformer Edwin Checkley's copyrights and will henceforth promoting the Checkley system. Watch future issues of *IGH* for the full story of Calvert's fascinating career.



Dear *IGH*,

I wanted to tell you of one of the most enjoyable visits Marge and I have ever had in our long life. We had the pleasure of meeting John and Lucille Gorton, a two hour visit that proved much too short. We went to interview John about his phenomenal powerlifting at age eighty-five. Lucille, age eighty-one is a wonderful, loquacious conversationalist with a delightful sense of humor that made the visit most enjoyable and memorable. You may remember my telling you of Ed Jubinville describing this eight-five year old powerlifter he saw compete in a meet at Stamford, Connecticut last year. John Gorton is the man. The few figures I will present will convince you of the strength of this quiet, unassuming, but legitimate strongman.

Born in England, 6 August 1907, he came to St. Johnsbury, Nova Scotia, Canada at age five. He moved to the United States in 1926 and survived the depression working as a migrant seaman and finally in New York as the manager of, to use one of his own words, a third-rate off Broadway hotel, from 1937 until he entered the service. Returning there after the War, he trained at Adolph Rhein's Gym—later to be John Terlazzo's—Sieg Klein's Gym and others. In 1955 at 190 pounds, he deadlifted 558 pounds. Later, at a bodyweight of 165 pounds, he deadlifted 514 and squatted with 412. At 146 pounds, he bent-pressed 166 pounds with his right arm and 156 with his left. At age eighty-five, in a recent meet in Stamford, where they live, he deadlifted 360 pounds, squatted with 250 and bench pressed 125. (Since I failed to write these last two figures down there may be a slight discrepancy in them.)

Obviously, his forte is the deadlift, which resulted from his severely injuring his seventh and eight dorsal vertebrae in the

service. Cautioned by the doctors that he would never exercise again, he took matters into his own hands and did just that. Noting that he suffered a severe curvature of the spine, he resorted to deadlifting with straight back while standing on a box, eventually reaching 300 pounds, lifting the bar from his toes. Having corrected his curvature, he then practiced the usual deadlift.

Alton Eliason
Northford, Connecticut



Dear *IGH*,

I recently came across the May 1993 *Iron Game History* and want to tell you how much I enjoyed the issue. Having been a voracious reader of *Strength & Health* magazine and having trained in Sieg Klein's Gym in New York City, your magazine's articles struck many delightfully responsive chords.

The articles were all well-written and extremely informative. Especially noteworthy was the excellent word-picture description of the second Oscar Heidenstam Memorial Trust dinner reunion that occurred in England on March 20, 1993. The writer of the description, Dr. Rosa, did a magnificent job of presenting both the substance and flavor of the event. His account was extremely delightful and gripping to read. Actually, it gave me the sense of being at the reunion, such was his superb account of what transpired. It is obvious that Dr. Rosa is a very talented writer. I hope he will contribute additional articles to *Iron Game History*.

There is a weight training/bodybuilding club at the University; I will have the president of the club order one or more subscriptions to your fine publication. Your publication is especially important for contemporary bodybuilders to read because it will clearly show them that great strength and magnificent bodies may be developed *without* the use of steroids.

Michael Klausner, University of Pittsburgh
Bradford, Pennsylvania



Dear *IGH*,

I just got off the phone with you. I really enjoyed talking to you. I've enclosed some pictures of Richard Sorin, the guy with the super-strong hands I was talking about. I've got a bunch more photos of this guy if you are interested. I've also got a hand-gripper, made by Warren Tetting, and there are only four of these grippers in existence. They are of .300 of an inch diameter spring size. I have seen no man close them with both hands. Richard Sorin has closed it shut with one hand. This guy is worth looking into, he is for real.

Joe Musselwhite
Mabank, Texas

Ed Note: We know he's for real, Joe, because just as we were going to press with this issue, Richard Sorin visited us at the Library. As always, it was a pleasure to show the Library to someone so keenly interested in the old days.