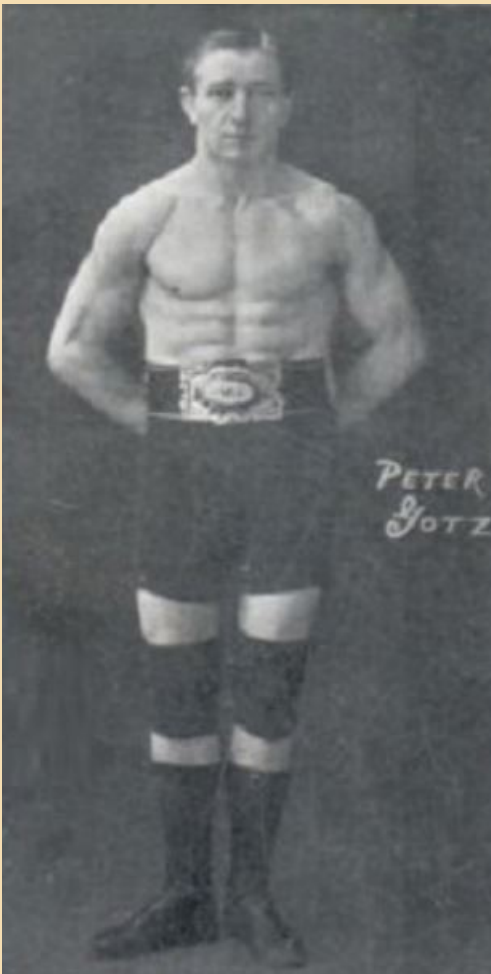


Ron Historyo's
Time Travel
to the

Wrestlers of the
Golden Age

Peter Gotz



Many of the early 1900's wrestlers have had bio's done and it is perhaps not the place for Heritage to rehash the same information. A few of these people went into the new age of wrestling to contribute in one way or another, maybe as a promoter or even to wrestle as veterans. In choosing Peter Gotz I believe, at the time of writing, that maybe I have stumbled upon at least some basic information that has not been previously known. To make some headway on this and place Peter Gotz in Heritage's Pioneer section I believe is a good achievement for this site.

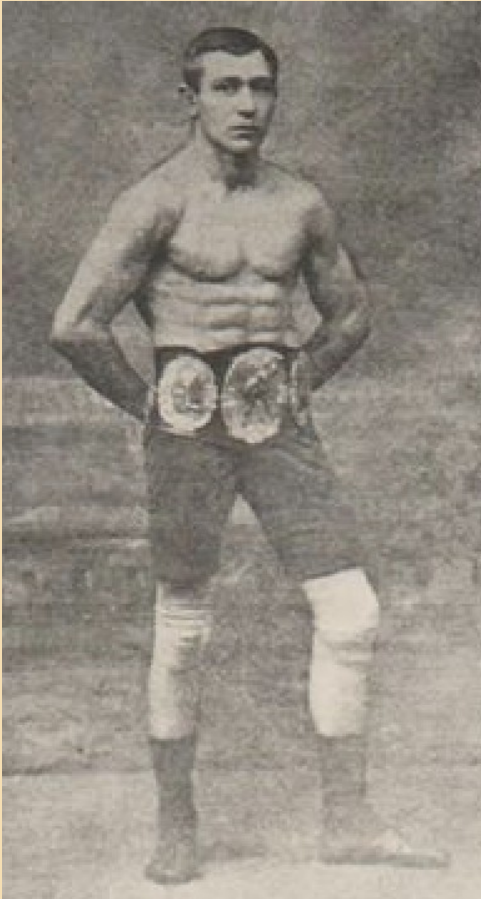
I wonder if I have a scoop if I reveal that Peter Gotz was born on 4th May 1877 and his town of birth was Bockenau in Rhineland Germany. Father Peter Gotz and mother Maria Bauer. He was the eldest son amongst at least six children.

His town of birth was nowhere near any of the major cities and this beautiful town was way above sea level and sometimes described as Little Switzerland.

Peter Gotz did it all , he did the Music Halls, came north and did open air wrestling in Wigan, did Fairgrounds, and did the Rings of new age wrestling when he was as old as 57. He had a Lady Troupe of

Wrestlers and he took Assirati and Reginski round the Music Halls schooling them in wrestling. He was also a great champion, initially at Lightweight.

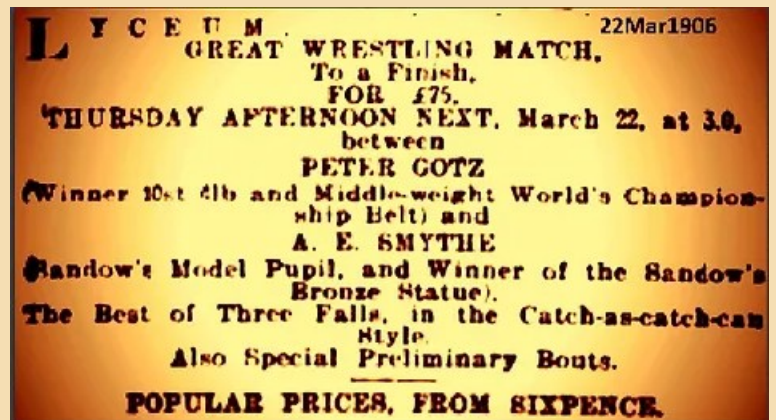
I found an interview where Gotz claimed to have come to England as a boy. I must admit that I can find no trace of him with his family and only pick him up in Bethnal Green in London in 1901. By that time he was married to Annie Hale from Norfolk and had children Peter jr and Ellen both born in London. Peter Gotz worked as a baker.



He had a brother Henry who was a physical training instructor and also a boxer, I suspect that he had a brother William who was also a baker.

The first time I could find him wrestling was in 1902. Jack Carkeek was wrestling at the Euston and Peter Gotz was part of the undercard against Peter Steyn of Islington. Gotz was billed from the Apollo Weight Lifting Club. Gotz won in four minutes, but there we have it, the connection with William "Apollo" Bankier.

By 1907 Gotz had won belts at three weights. His main weight was light weight but to get the competition he needed he had to give weight away. The picture shows him with a Joe Smith belt. Below he is fighting Sandow's pupil, a great rival of Apollo. Advertised as World Middleweight Champion.



At the Alhambra the National Spots Club hosted their yearly tournament. In 1908 Joe Carroll managed to beat Peter Gotz at Middleweight. In 1910 Peter Gotz won at lightweight beating the 1909 winner Tom Rose.

1908 was also a year that saw Peter Gotz in the north, outdoors at Barnsley Football Ground beating Tom Rose who got hurt after a punishing submission from Gotz. Strangely although Rose submitted the betting was cancelled as the injury was considered bad luck. Gotz took some of the purse.

As we went into 1909 Gotz drew at Sadler's Wells Theatre with Henry Irslinger. In June of 1909 Gotz fought at Higginshaw Grounds in Oldham taking on Young Whistler Jack Carroll. Just over an hour and they agreed a draw as Gotz had a Music Hall appearance in Hyde to go to. It transpires that his manager was Joe Smith who was the man behind some of the belts, and also Gotz's brother Heinrich was his second, probably not the same man as brother Henry, the boxer.

1910 saw that win over Rose at Lightweight at the Alhambra. Gotz was seconded by Arthur Gutteridge, now there is a name to ponder.

Jackie Pallo's father was Ernest. Who was Ernest's father?

WANTED, by GOTZ, January 1912
 Wanted, by GOTZ,
 Wanted, by GOTZ,
 Theatres, Halls, Rinks, Picture Halls, for
 First-class Variety Combination.
 Last week did enormous business at the
 King's Theatre, Glasgow.
 This week, New Century Theatre, Motherwell.
 On Monday night we turned hundreds away
 at the Second House. It is the talk of
 Motherwell. Gotz, the Champion of the
 World, is here this week
 P.S.—Who wants Gotz? Feb. 5th (North pref.).
 Sorry cannot take one week South Wales.
 Booked for 4 weeks Leicester Exhibition, April.
 We have the biggest Attraction on the Road.—
 All coms. to Manager for Gotz,
 Adam King.
 Private address, 21, Dunscombe Street,
 Higher Broughton, Manchester.

Turns out to be Arthur. To cloud the issue though Ernest also had a brother Arthur. So uncle or Granddad Gutteridge. Pedigree or what. Jackie!!!!

Peter Gotz handed Tom Rose a crushing defeat. In December 1910 Rose met Gotz at Springfield Park in Wigan and this time Rose was victor. The referee, an ex wrestler called Jack Smith was attacked by Gotz and saved by Rose. Seems to me that an element of theatrical entertainment was creeping in from those Music Halls.

At the end of 1910 Peter Gotz sailed to America on the Campania from Liverpool on the 24th December. You might wonder in all this, what about his family life?

Well I checked this out and in 1911 there was a third child Charles, also known as William, and the children were staying in Norfolk at the maternal grand parents, the unforgettable name of Thurnison Hale and his wife Emma. Hale was a Farm Labourer.

Sadly Peter's wife Annie died in 1907 at only 28 years of age in childbirth which is probably the reason why the children were with Grandparents.

Gotz could only have only been in the USA for a few months as by October 1911 there was a match at the Grand Theatre Bolton between Tom Rose and Bob Somerville from the USA. The match went no falls over ninety minutes with Somerville winning on points to be challenged by Peter Gotz.

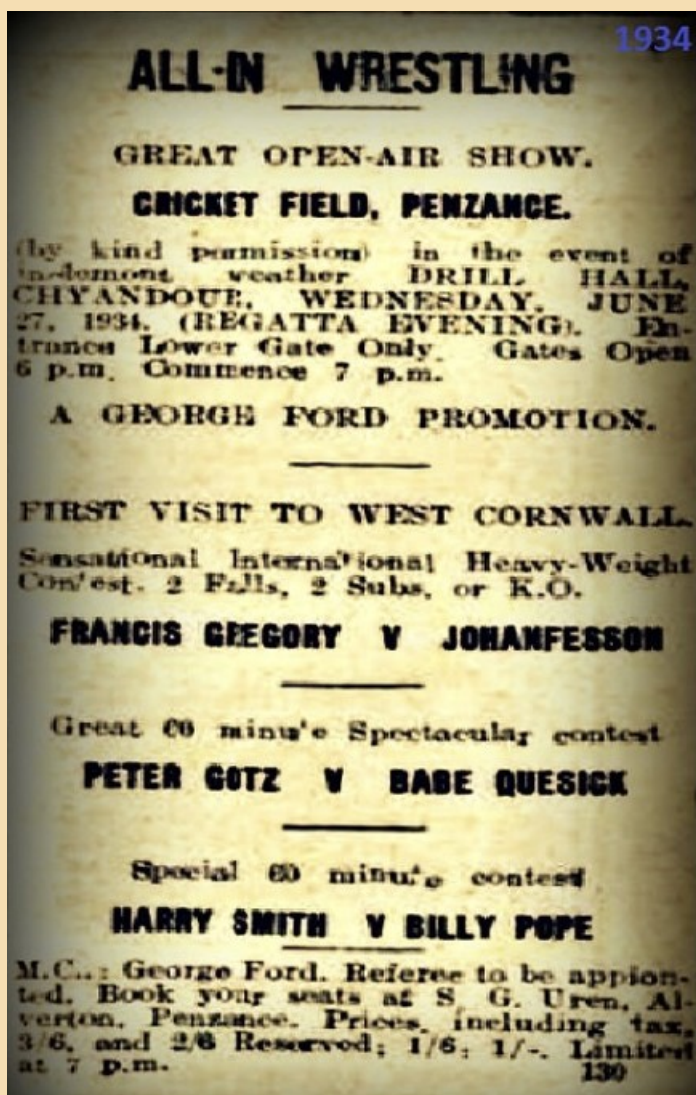
Gotz had met Somerville in March in Massachusetts. To me this all looks well worked out. Gotz must have persuaded Somerville to come to England. As it turns out Somerville although regarded as American had come home. He was actually from Port Glasgow. Other Lancashire heroes Job Shambley and Billy Charnock also appeared on that bill.

The popularity of wrestling in comparison with the Hackenschmidt era was diminishing, but Peter Gotz continued to have a love of the Music Halls. If you can believe the advertisement (January, 1912 above) Peter Gotz was in great demand.

I cannot pretend to know Peter Gotz's movements in the first world war. He was in a strange position being of German birth. From what I can see though he continued to stick with wrestling.

When the new style wrestling came in 1931 Peter Gotz was still very much involved with his own business model, but also found some time to wrestle the new style. Even though they were doing All In Wrestling Carl Reginsky and Bert Assirati were working for Peter

Gotz in the Music Halls. A common link for all this could well have been William Bankier, who knew both worlds. Peter Gotz also trained Jack Quesick, the son of Johanfesson (Joe Shepard). Another man who knew the Music halls.



Almost unbelievable late in 1931 Peter Gotz wrestled another veteran, Jack Carroll (Young Whistler), at the London Sports Club. In 1932 they did it again at the Imperial Hall Barnsley. Also in 1934 they did it at Millbay Rinkeries in Plymouth with Carroll being billed as John Whistler. Even more amazing that match in Penzance with Quesick in 1934, Peter Gotz was 57 years of age.

Also in 1934 was the launch of Miss Peggy Parnell as one of the first Lady Wrestlers.

She was a converted acrobatic dancer trained by Gotz. All in wrestling never seemed to quite take over Peter Gotz as the Music Hall wrestling died out. Instead he took it to the fairgrounds. In 1937 he had a lady wrestler troupe on at the Hull Fair.

At sixty one years old in 1938 Gotz was interviewed and claimed that he was doing up to twenty exhibitions a day on the fairground offering £1 to any man who could go five minutes with him.

Of course another war was coming and in 1939 Peter was given a Male Enemy

Alien Exemption. He was living at 14 Gresham Road Brixton, still a baker but also was a stretcher bearer during the war for Lambeth Borough Council.

I have one last picture of Peter Gotz that really celebrates his life in the Music Halls. A stunning Photograph of those times.

Peter Gotz died in Wandsworth at the end of 1959 age 82.

Special thanks go to Ruslan Pashayev who approached Wrestling Heritage with a keen interest in Catch Wrestling, it's Pioneers and in particular Belts and Title Lineages. After emailing prolifically with Ruslan who is in the USA this writer has learned something about the 1900-1910 decade here in England. He contributed some knowledge and wonderful photographs.

Ron Historyo

Postscript

We were delighted to hear from Carole King, the great niece of Peter Gotz, who added more information

"What may interest you is that there were five brothers including my grandfather & they were all boxers, wrestlers and sometimes both.

My grandfather, Jacob and Philip were in the aliens section of the Duke of Cambridge's Own, Isle of Wight 33rd Middlesex Regiment based at Reading but Peter, Wilhelm (Willy) & Heinrich (Harry) were internees at Knockaloe on the Isle of Man. Henry & Willy were both boxers & after the war returned to Germany, whereas Peter returned to London. Neither Harry or Willy were married so that's probably the reason.

The reason that practically the entire family which includes his sisters husbands & his aunts husbands were bakers & this is because it was a very unpopular job as it meant working nights & it was obviously very hot. Therefore the German immigrants who were way down the pecking order ended up as bakers."