

# Wilf Paish MBE 1932 -2010

We are all saddened to hear of the death of legendary coach Wilf Paish MBE this morning (29th January 2010).



Although he had been ill for several years he always seemed to pull through crises and return undaunted. The world of athletics will be a poorer place without him.

Our condolences go to Wilf's family and friends.

## Funeral Details

St Oswalds Parish Church, Guisley, Leeds LS20 9BB,

Tuesday 9th February 12:30

[Location Map](#)

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## Comments

- Added: 29/01/2010 17:23:02

A great man & a great coach, the world of Athletics will be forever grateful for his knowledge, humour & humility. We may never see his like again.

By **william h courtney**

- Added: 29/01/2010 20:39:35

A GREAT person and coach who will be missed, he always had time for everyone and I learnt a lot from him since been a kid.

By **Paul Wilson**

- Added: 29/01/2010 21:20:50

I'm sad to here this news, Wilf touched us all, having spent many a night at a cold carnegie track with my coach, sharing the same space as Wilf was a pleasure and fun. He gave me lot's of advice and inspiration. He inspired old and young and is a legend, rest well Wilf your sadly missed

By **Rob Cameron**

- Added: 29/01/2010 23:27:46

Wilf has been an inspiration to me and many from the early 80's Carnegie days (Anyone remember "This is Your Life" with Tessa being a surprise guest?) through to the encouragemrnt he gave my daughter Alex on the track. From first meeting Wilf you sensed something special, dediction is an understatement! Beckett's Park will never be the same again without his presence up at the throws area. God bless Wilf.

By **Russell Bell**

- Added: 30/01/2010 11:36:05

I will miss Wilf so much -Friday night circuits booming out when to stop and start the the exercises, Sunday mornings throwing coaching ('make a bow', your foot is going up your arse!' , ' my granny could do better than that!') -always encouraging and concerned about every individual and remembering athletes from 40 years ago!

By **Caroline Marler**

- Added: 30/01/2010 12:21:42

Sad news indeed - but what a footprint Wilf leaves behind - honest, competent, dedicated, and time for everyone.

By **Malcolm Heap**

- Added: 30/01/2010 12:44:51

I had some great training sessions and specific debates with Wilf. As a aging Karate Athlete adapting to Athletic Thowing Events, he once asked me what I thought about Cricket? My teasing response was "its a girlies game". His response is not publishable! If there is a creator, I would bet Wilf has got them doing push ups by now! What a character and coach.

By **Tony Balko**

- Added: 30/01/2010 14:50:46

Small in stature but with a big heart and a massive fund of athletics know how, who will be missed by all who knew him, whether as an athlete or a coach. I am indebted to him for encouraging me to become involved in coaching in the mid 70s when I was a member of Lincoln Wellington, and for his help and advice during the following 30

years. A massive loss to the sporting world in general and athletics in particular.  
Graeme Nicholson

By **Graeme Nicholson**

- Added: 30/01/2010 16:21:53

Wilf Paish was my examiner for my first coaching badge. I passed but probably learned more from Wilf that day than was in the whole syllabus!! A great guy, quality coach and enthusiast with a better grasp of what the sport needs than most people over the past forty years.

By **Dr Phil Thomas**

- Added: 30/01/2010 17:14:58

A very good friend of Wilf George Kirby heard the news of his passing yesterday. Wilf travelled far and wide to deliver to others his superb knowledge of our sport and was a regular visitor to Witton Park. His unique style made him very special and all of us here in Lancashire will miss him.

By **Tony Wood**

- Added: 30/01/2010 21:23:10

Saddened to hear the news. Wilf was a one off. So many funny memories of our warm-weather training trips and his dodgy stopwatch, making us think we were doing 400m reps in sub 50 seconds!

By **Paul Cooper**

- Added: 30/01/2010 23:27:35

I was coached by Wilf for 3 years when I was at uni & I'll be forever grateful for what he taught me. A truly wonderful man who will be greatly missed in the athletics world. Thank you for everything Wilf. Rest in peace xx

By **Amy Fendley**

- Added: 31/01/2010 18:10:04

On behalf of St Helens Sutton AC, may we wish Wilf's family and close friends our condolences. He has been an inspiration to many and will be a sad loss to the sport.

By **Adrian Webb (Chairman)**

- Added: 31/01/2010 19:30:26

Athletics is the poorer for Wilf's passing. A motivator to all his athletes, coaches and parents. Yes, he had time for everyone, if you wanted Wilf's help, he was there. His

influence and contribution to British athletics over the years will not be surpassed. My thought are with the family at this sad time. God bless you Wilf, SIMPLY THE BEST. Bryan Murray

By **BRYAN MURRAY**

- Added: 31/01/2010 21:22:17

Athletics is definitely a poorer sport without the great man. My memories of him are as a teenager going to one of his workshops put on for those at grassroots level. His advice stayed with me throughout my period in athletics. Deep respects to his family.

By **Claire Wood**

- Added: 31/01/2010 21:35:22

Whilst watching the Indoor Athletics from Glasgow, I was very saddened to hear the news of Wilf's passing. As a club athlete, I will cherish the coaching and attention he gave me during the winter training sessions at Old Hall and the invites to Beckett's Park in the summer. Your knowledge, inspiration and commitment will be greatly missed in the world of sport. God bless Wilf.

By **Andy Nagy**

- Added: 31/01/2010 22:21:48

It is with deep saddness that I have just learned of Wilf's passing. I first met him at the age of 13, watching him strut about and although he was small in stature, huge in opinion and advice. Without doubt, his passing will leave a large hole to fill, but with many memories to smile about. My thoughts are with his family. Andy Rodgers

By **Andy Rodgers**

- Added: 31/01/2010 23:29:43

Wilf taught me how to teach throwing events and so much more. I use his phrases now years later. Chin - knee toe-see the bow -let it go. Not much good at the shot putt son ,try the high jump, next week try the javelin etc. The Old Holborn tobacco tin with his bits of string. His exemplary footwork. He predicted rotational movement in shot when everyone was still copying Danek. He even knew which fast bowlers would get injuries by watching their action. You knew you were in the presence of a master of his trade. R.I.P.

By **Ernie Greenwood**

- Added: 01/02/2010 03:11:00

Saddened to hear about the loss of a great man. News has reached me all this way in Australia. I had the pleasure like many others to be coached by such an inspirational man and our times on the track will be cherished, and remembered with laughter and

fondist memories. A true motivator who we could never let down even when he asked us to shovel the snow off the track we laughed and did this for the love of the sport and the love of a wonderful coach. He has helped many with his technical advice but also off the track with words of wisdom and words of advice. For this guidance I am truly thankful. God bless you Wilf, thinking of you and your family at this sad time  
RIP xxxx

By **Jane Wellock**

- Added: 01/02/2010 13:46:43

Wilf , Words cannot begin to describe just what an influence you have had on my life. You were a great man, coach , friend , mentor and helped mould me into the man I am today. Over the past 21 years of working with you in my own Athletics career and coaching roles within our group , I have had nothing but respect and admiration for the time and effort you have put into enriching other peoples lives. You have been an example worth following and left behind a great Legacy. You were always there when I needed help and advice on many levels wether personal or sporting , a wealth of knowledge on any subject and always available when needed. My son looked upon you with same admiration that I did and he will miss you greatly as will I. RIP Wilf Paish M.B.E With Love Mark Gulliver (Multi Event Thrower) and Jordan Gulliver

By **Mark Gulliver**

- Added: 01/02/2010 15:31:14

I,too,remember Wilf with great affection,especially when many years ago,when examining me for my coaches'award he asked me about three questions and passed me with a simple remark,"You'll do for me, Walter". That was the essence of the man,direct and straight to the point,at the same time accompanying his words with a wry smile. He was one of the old school who knew what our sport is all about. His common sense and touch will be sorely missed. Walter Nicholls.

By **Walter Nicholls**

- Added: 01/02/2010 18:58:17

I go back to 1965 with Wilf when I taught at Leeds Grammar School. He would spend days coaching the schools team at Lawnswood and at the same time training the next generation of coaches. Nothing was too much trouble and he was just as interested in helping modest performers as he was potential internationals. His knowledge was exception, his motivational skills even greater. Sadly missed by the whole world of athletics

By **Roger Norton**

- Added: 01/02/2010 22:37:46

Wilf was a great man who coached us on many occasions and we learnt a lot from him he will be sadly missed by the many freinds he made at Bury Athletic Club

**By Amy & Holly Chapman**

- Added: 02/02/2010 12:32:52

Already left a message on AW facebook page. My wife Sharon & I got into coaching through Wilf over 30 years ago. My daughter refereed to Wilf as 'Uncle Wilf'. We all had total respect for his standards, knowledge, infectious desire to educate yet keep things simple. We enjoyed many happy hours with probably the greatest all round coach ever!! RIP Wilf

**By John M Cooper**

- Added: 02/02/2010 13:03:34

I read Roger Norton's remembrances of Wilf and could only smile. I was one of those young Leeds Grammar School boys that Wilf helped at Lawnswood about 45 years ago. He had a huge impact on me then, something that has stayed with me all this time. When I came back from teaching in Carlisle after a long period, I started coaching at Becketts Park and tentatively re-introduced myself to him and was astonished to find he remembered me and that I had bought my first pair of spikes from him. This was the measure of the man. His knowledge, experience and enthusiasm can never be replaced. I will miss very much being around him, he inspired me to be the best I could be. Mike Stayman

**By Mike Stayman**

- Added: 02/02/2010 14:46:31

A true motivator who gave his life to British Athletics. Many like me owe a great debt to his approach to coaching; he had time for athletes of all levels. Along with fellow national coaches he attended many Inter-Services coaching courses in the 70's. He will go down in history as one of Britain's finest athletics coaches, and sadly missed. Condolences to his family.

**By Trevor Walhen**

- Added: 02/02/2010 17:10:33

I was fortunate enough to have dear Wilf as my athletics lecturer during the early '80s at Carnegie. He was absolutely passionate about his sport and a total inspiration to us all, even us non-athletes - although he never forgave me for bending his prized possession on its first outing.... a brand new high jump bar. Small in stature but a giant of a man. Deepest sympathy at this very sad time to all his family

**By Christine McCormick**

- Added: 02/02/2010 21:38:43

I was devastated to hear about Wilf's passing. There are not many people that would sacrifice so much of their time to help others, but Wilf always had time for you. Wilf

was a truly selfless man, and I am very fortunate to have had the opportunity to be his student. My training sessions on Wednesday afternoons that I used to have with Wilf are something that I will not easily forget.

By **John Fletcher**

- Added: 03/02/2010 13:29:55

I cant put into words what i feel about this man, he was a true inspiration to everyone he knew.He was a lovely caring person,and as a coach, he was a genuis,he drew such respect,you would hang onto his ever word.Simply there will never be another Wilf,thanks wilf always Sue samme

By **Susan Samme**

- Added: 03/02/2010 20:20:33

A man quite small in stature, But with a massive heart and pride, A burning desire for excellence, Always raging deep inside. Some say "arrogant" some say "cocky " But not a malicious bone in sight, An attitude borne out of confidence, For "Old Wilf" was always right. Champion of the underdog He would work all day and night, No stranger to adversity, Always fighting for what was right. So raise your glasses to a legend, A man who lived his dream, No tears for Wilf's in heaven now, Running the angel's athletics team. (and they better be giving nothing less than 200

By **Trevor Bailey**

- Added: 04/02/2010 13:55:16

Truely a remarkable man and coach,I am proud to say i was coached by Wilf in the 90's (while in training for football season), an inspiration to all who met him,Wilf thanks for sharing your time,your knowledge and your love .Your legacy lives on, I know you'll always be watching. Our deepest sympathy go out to your family. God Bless you Wilf.

By **Andy & Alex Kiwomya**

- Added: 04/02/2010 16:36:20

For many years Wilf was our chief athletics coach on the Blackpool Easter School. Over the years he enthralled us with his stories including the infamous one about the rooky discus thrower who was attempting to throw with his palm uppermost. "Turn it over." barked Wilf. The man took Wilf literally, turned the discus over and proceeded to throw palm uppermost. The year I was Principal of the Easter School, Wilf offered to give me a lift to the Thursday night dance. We arrived late. Wilf had stopped on the prom, switched on his CB radio and had a very instuctive conversation with a fellow coach in the States who had sought his advece. At our executive meeting this week we held a minutes silence in memory of this great man. My only regret is that Wilf was not coaching at Carnegie the year I was there. He would have made me a far better athletics coach than I ever was.

**By Trefor Jones**

- Added: 04/02/2010 19:13:01

I met Wilf ten years ago when we were both in the heart unit LGI, and before he went down to theatre Wilf asked me to fasten the bows on the back of his gown for him. As I got down on my knees behind him he said, If the wife walks in now she will not believe you. God bless Wilf

**By peter askins**

- Added: 06/02/2010 13:55:20

I met Wilf aged about 12 years old when I was running training at Cleckheaton one Sunday morning. Intrigued as I watched him, in his Great Britain tracksuit, coaching a junior international discus thrower, he invited me to have a go. Within an hour I was doing some basic drills and was throwing the discus. Wilf coached me then for 6 years and onto county and junior international level. More importantly, his dedication, spirit, enthusiasm was infectious and his influence on me as a young man and beyond has and will stay with me forever. A truly wonderful man whose technical coaching brilliance is but one small part of his contribution to the many young people who have had the fortune to come in contact with him. I will remember him fondly and be in debt to him always. My thoughts are with his family who supported Wilf and selflessly allowed him to be the man he was and allowed us to have so much of his time.

**By Andy Martin**

- Added: 07/02/2010 13:12:38

In the 70's Wilf with his legendary Friday Evening extreme fitness session at Sheffield University helped me to reach a fitness level to enable me to be selected for the Yorkshire Rugby Team when I was 27. At the time I thought my time had passed. What I learnt then made me the fittest number 3 in the county. I have used this knowledge to coach very successfully some of the best rugby teams in Yorkshire and France. Thank you Wilf I will never forget your motivation. Derek Sherlock.

**By Derek Sherlock**

- Added: 08/02/2010 15:36:28

Having known Wilf for many years and spent many a happy hour chatting to him, he will be sadly missed. He coached both my children Martin a Decathlete and Helen a gymnast turned hurdler. We first met 30 years ago and it felt like Wilf would always be around, we will all miss him and remember what an inspiration what a gentleman and the best mentor a coach or athlete could have.

**By Sandra White**

- Added: 08/02/2010 16:53:14



I Knew Wilf during his coaching days with tessa Sanderson, and found him to be the perfect gentleman, and dedicated to his sport, his death has come as a shock to me and is a very sad day indeed for sports. It was a pleasure to have known him.

**By Clement Procope**

- Added: 09/02/2010 22:18:23

tha can't put in what God left out. I suspect that you and God will get on just fine. Goodbye my dear, dear friend. Words fail me. Plyometrics in gym one/two at Carnegie (hour and a half) and then back to back fiftys (hour) and then he said...right warm up finished...let's start work...what a legend. 30 years I knew you..and still too short a time. God Bless.

**By Wayne Pawson**

- Added: 10/02/2010 00:03:25

I met Wilf in 1991, not like him to take on a Volleyball player, especially one thats 5'4 so loads of bounds and leaps later I made the National team. 28 caps in total! He also was cupid.. he introduced me to Mr A.M.Bruce Craven in 1991 telling Bruce he should show me the refec. because I was too skinny ... the rest was history for a long time, even threw th Javelin for LMU as was! God Bless Wilf you'll be missed, but you can now boss Bruce some more!! xx

**By Julia Carroll**

- Added: 22/04/2010 03:37:19

In 1984 a man in my community in the states had two sets of Olympic Games tickets, intending to sit besides Wilf Paish in the Athletics stadium. The American couldn't attend, I bought both sets of tickets, and delivered one set to Mr. Paisch. He was coaching Peter Elliot at the time in 800m, and I was thrilled to have met him and only now learned of his passing. I just wanted to include my comments because, as you realize, Mr.Paisch was an enormous influence in the UK but also worldwide. Peter Van Aken, Poughkeepsie, New York, USA

**By peter van aken**

- Added: 24/10/2012 19:12:06

I am now aged 67 years old and was coached by Wilf Paish between 1962 and 1972. Just this past weekend I was reminiscing about my youth and fun in Athletics as a young person and I thought of Wilf and wondered about him. I decided to research his name on the internet only to find that I must be the only person who was unaware of his sad passing almost 3 years ago. I have read every one of the preceding obituries and fully concur with every accolade and tribute paid to a wonderful person. In 1962 as a member of Ilford AC Wilf took me under his wing and coached me for the next 10 years. I was 16 years of age and became Essex Junior Long Jump champion under Wilf's expert coaching and care. My career as an athlete under Wilf's guidance

benefitted enormously. Wilf was a teacher at Wanstead County High School until he accepted the position as National Coach for the North of England and moved to Roundhay, Leeds. Distance did not deter Wilf from continuing to coach me by letter and telephone, and indeed I remember fondly my regular weekend excursions to Leeds to stay with him in his home as his guest, and to travel all points North in all weather conditions for intense training sessions, and then wearily travel back to London on Sunday evenings. Even now I still have copies of Athletics Weekly magazine going back to those memorable days. A truly amazing man was Wilf and I am not surprised to read of the warm love and esteem he was held in by so many people. Last but not least Wilf RIP. Roger Spreckley

By **Roger Spreckley**

- Added: 08/06/2013 23:37:46

I had the privilege of taking my coaching badges with Wilf and attended his courses at the Blackpool Easter school. I coached a 110m hurdler who eventually represented England at U 17 level. I went over to Cleckheaton many times and I have never met anyone with such a passion for athletics and was a true gentleman. It was a pleasure to know and work with him and his passing is a sad loss.

By **frank hessey**

- Added: 24/07/2013 17:47:53

I have just watched a news bulletin about athletics and how the Olympics inspired our youngsters to want to be involved, only to find that there are insufficient people available to help/coach them. At this point I remembered Wilf so decided to look him up on the internet to discover that he had passed away, sadly. Although I was training as a P.E. teacher, I had limited exposure to all the aspects of athletics during my education, I played cricket, tennis and rounders instead. Wilf taught me all the basics of every athletic discipline needed for me to teach athletics to my youngsters. He was amazing, my memory of discus and shot were:- Chin, Knee, Toe alignment, something that I have always taught. He obviously made a great impression on me and gave me the tools to do my job and it would be amazing if we could have more people like him to enable other youngsters to get involved.

By **Geraldine Buckland**