

Profile - Ken Smith

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I was born on the 16th May 1941, to Salvation Army parents with grandparents and great-grandparent who were missionaries in India and South America. Although I no longer have any truck with organised religion, I value the strong moral code instilled in me by such an association and remain interested in the spiritual. I was the eldest of five boys and as it turned out, the runt of the pack, physically. Despite physical limitations which always made it difficult to hold my own against my peers, I consider I was born to be involved with lifting weights, as from a very young age, I was always fascinated by feats of strength, depicted in the "Did you know?" strips in the comics.

At around the age of ten, I tried to make a barbell, using a broomstick and two buckets of bricks. At the age of 14, I saw my first set of weights, stored in a cupboard at school and on one occasion, a bunch of us kids sneaked them out and had a go at putting the total of 110 lbs. (about my body-weight) overhead. Despite being by far the smallest and weakest, I was one of only two lads who succeeded. I had natural technique, something at least to write home about. At the age of 17, I cribbed the "Charles Atlas, Dynamic Tension (plus press-ups)", seven-day free trial; did it religiously for two weeks; put an inch on my arms and two inches on my chest, upping my press-up ability from 20 to 65. Well and truly sold, I bought a chest expander and a doorway chin bar. Two years later at the age of 19, I joined the local bodybuilding club, with the distinction of being what appears to have been one of the weakest beginners ever, despite all my previous efforts. It took me some weeks to be able to bench press reps with a 20 lb. bar plus a 50 lb. disc on each end, although I only weighed 9 stones. Three years later and two stones heavier, I had caught up with all but couple of outstanding naturals and was most fortunate to come under the influence of three individuals. Firstly Reg Park (through his magazine), secondly a big time, but very anti-drug bodybuilder, Albert Cairns (6 x 6 with 220 on the bench at a bulked up 110) and then a little later, the then British Heavyweight Champion, Dennis Hillman.

I learned three important lessons from the first two. Firstly, that the way competitive lifters trained generally was inferior to the way bodybuilders trained, Secondly, to get the best results, it was necessary to continuously attempt to gain muscular body-weight by the process of bulking up and then fining down. Thirdly, to always cast an extremely jaundiced eye on the way naturally talented people train. They get good regardless and lesser mortals who follow them either go nowhere or achieve way below their potential. Such people continue to be a serious problem to me as a gym owner. Dennis Hillman persuaded me to put my money where my mouth was and demonstrate the strength I had built, on the lifting platform. In those days it was common place for weightlifters to come over from the bodybuilding ranks, both here and in the USA. The best weightlifter this country ever turned out was the ex-bodybuilder, Louis Martin.

I did well for some years up to All Midlands level as a weightlifter and powerlifter (Strength Set in those days), setting numerous records on the bench. I became known as a master of body-weight control, able via my study of nutrition and the use or disuse of supplements, to gain or lose very quickly. Nobody ever knew at what body-weight I would appear, going where the opposition was weakest. Ultimately ducking and diving like this worked to my disadvantage, as I will never know for certain what I would have been capable of if I had fully exploited my ability to eat my way up in

muscular body-weight, probably up to as much as 100 kgs., at a height of 5' 5". When I started getting really bulky my lifts would rocket. Based on my heavy 6 rep bodybuilding training poundage's, with the odd Olympic lift session thrown in during a several year period when I didn't compete and let my body-weight increase to around the 87 kg mark (what I weigh now but without the fat), I feel sure I could have ultimately benched in excess of 400 lbs. (182.5) and probably clean and jerked as much. I was fast approaching a 400 lbs. bench at the 87 kgs. Had I gone on up, my subsequent poundage's on the Olympic lifts would almost certainly have qualified me to lift on the British Platform, something I later realised I had no chance of doing at lighter body-weights, as already drugs were playing their part at this level.

In fact, the few years lay-off from competition was mainly due to the disillusionment that set in, when all of a sudden, strange things happened overnight at divisional level. Lifters who had often sought my advice on bodyweight gain, but obviously ignored it, suddenly appeared in my class, having come up two bodyweight classes to beat me and lifters who normally lifted against me in my class appeared two classes above, lifting ridiculous weights. In my naiveté as a straight, morally minded bloke, it took me a while to accept what was really going on, but when I finally did, there seemed little use in continuing to compete. I returned to doing just heavy bodybuilding type work.

I made a brief comeback in my late 30's and lifted for the last time as a weightlifter in the BAWLA at the age of 40 in the 75 kg. class. I was closely beaten into second place by a talented junior lifter who weighed a mere 11 stone 4 lbs. He succeeded with a 130 C & J, whereas I cleaned it but missed the jerk. A few weeks later this young lad appeared weighing more than a stone more with what appeared to be a totally new, heavily muscled body, lifting silly weights. Sadly he went on to hang himself a few years later I only made the brief comeback because by this time I had accumulated several accomplished youngsters with nowhere else to go but the BAWLA. One of them, Richard Guelbert, achieved international status as a junior weightlifter and subsequently got invited to a national squad session. He returned totally disillusioned, as all he had heard was talk of what drugs and how much was being taken by the other lifters in attendance. This disillusionment was conveyed to all my other young lifters who wanted to jack it all in. My attempt to persuade them otherwise was met with the challenge, "What are you going to do about it?" Rising to this challenge was the first step in a chain of events that ultimately led to the formation of the BPA.

Explain a little about drug-free powerlifting.

Drug free powerlifting came into being in this country primarily as a result of the treatment I received when I publicly blew the whistle on what was really going on (drug-wise) in the official weightlifting/powerlifting body. This included several TV interviews and some national press publicity. My picture appeared in *The Sunday Times*, under the heading "Mr. Clean and the Jerks". For my efforts I received the stiffest penalty ever dished out to any athlete in this country; an indefinite (sine die) suspension. Actually, *twice*, as the first time they did this illegally and were warned off by my legal advisor. Andrew Cominos and Tony Cook received the same treatment for publicly defending my actions. I also received anonymous death threats by telephone and an arson attack on the gym, with an anonymous telephone threat to do the same to my house, if my anti-drug activities continued.

Although initially, I was somewhat traumatised by my suspension, in retrospect I regard it a great honour to be so dishonoured by such a bunch of people. I am sure

both Andrew and Tony feel likewise. Out in the cold with obviously a lot of support from genuine lifters and officials, a meeting was held here at Reading and attended by such people from all over the country, with a view to establishing an alternative powerlifting and weightlifting body. It quickly became obvious that Andrew and I were faced with running a national organisation on our own, something at that time we felt was too daunting a prospect, so we threw in our lot with Tony Cook's Guild (BAWG) and their version of powerlifting in 1985. A couple of years later the powerlifting section of the Guild was over-shadowing the all round format and over-burdening Tony Cook with work, so he decided it was time powerlifting went its own way. Fortuitously, at that time I was contacted by Judy Gedney from America, with a view to us amalgamating with the ADFPA in a world body and we were joined by drug free bodies from France, Belgium and Australia. This resulted in the first Drug Free World Championships held here at Reading in 1988. This was an outstanding success and the WDFPF came into being officially. Although I didn't ask for the job, I was voted in as the first President.

Within a few years, the BPA was doing so well it had more platform appearances over a year than the BAWLA. Admittedly the BAWLA's decline in activity was due to even their poor drug testing program. With the heat on them, due to the activities of myself, Cookie and Andrew, plus the BAWG's example of how to test effectively, the BAWLA were forced to start operating the rule (passed a couple of year's previously) that drug testing had to be done at all British Championships. Powerlifters became the patsies as the first testing was done at a British Power. There were 14 positives, but no action could be taken as the samples got spoiled. However, this encouraged the convenient (for some) belief that powerlifting was the most drug ridden sport and although of course, untrue, this has stuck and has been used against it as one of the reasons for keeping it out of the Olympics. This belief was further encouraged when the following year the BAWLA requested stimulant testing only at the British Junior Weightlifting Champs, but steroid testing for the British Junior Power. A majority of the qualifiers didn't show and there was about a half dozen in the audience. At a later date, unable to avoid testing the weightlifters for steroids, this had a knock on effect on all sports here and around the world, as our people rightly complained they were being unfairly subjected to a more stringent drug control policy. Other countries were forced to start following suit. I heard on the grapevine that my name and activities were on the IOC agenda at the meeting prior to the 1988 Games. This I regard as the pinnacle of my weightlifting career, as whilst I once had ambitions to be a world famous weightlifter, I ended up a world notorious shit stirrer, something in retrospect, I am more than happy about. Although drug control efficiency left much to be desired, such as it had become had a devastating effect on world records, being broken somewhere in the world almost every day. After the 1988 Games they ceased entirely for some five or so years, until the body-weight class limits were upped, allowing them to start over.

Initially in the BPA, lifting standards were pretty high in all weight classes and age groups and this was largely due to the fact that many of its initial members were talented anti-drug lifters and officials who had been around a long time and who jumped at the chance to lift under more favourable conditions. The BPA's claimed status as a drug free body was always based upon its willingness to test according to all the recommendations of the drug control experts at the Chelsea IOC laboratory. No other sporting body was prepared to do this at this time. The key factor in an effective testing policy is the targeting of individuals at any level of competition and for any reasons of suspicion. For many years the Sports Council refused to accept this

and it used our insistence on this method of selection to finally off-load us. We had become a severe embarrassment to them, although we did have friends in high places, which made it politically inopportune for them to be seen not giving us any support. Whilst attacking the BAWLA in the press and on TV, both Andrew and I always pointed the finger directly at the Sports Council, as being as much to blame for ineffective testing. It had got around that of all sporting bodies here, we alone were being trusted to choose who should be tested, although this was done in a manner that left no doubt that we were testing the people most likely to be considered suspect. I was summoned to London to meet with Sports Council officials ostensibly to discuss the forthcoming year's drug control requirements. There was no discussion, just an ultimatum. No less than three tests would be done, even at minor events. We would be allowed to choose one candidate but would have to pay for all three tests. This would have burned up the whole of our annual income, much of it largely wasted. This was obviously a deliberate ploy to either, undermine our embarrassingly superior drug control, break us, or off-load us. We kicked the Sports Council into touch and went with the NISSAT Lab in San Diego. This suited the SC and increased the efficiency of our drug control, allowing us to cover any event, even a gym competition, and saved us money on our former program.

What are your best lifts?

I have officially benched 155 kgs., weighing 76 kgs., as a senior, but for reasons explained in the foregoing, I did weights far in excess of this unofficially in training. In later years I have officially benched 145 as a Master 4, weighing 85.7 kgs. and 137.5 as a master 5 in the 82.5 kg class, a couple of weeks after my 60th birthday. As a Master 6, I have benched 130 at 85 kgs. Unequipped, of course. I have squatted 200 as a master 3 (equipped) in the 82.5 kg class, but during my earlier non-competitive years when I returned to heavy bodybuilding work, I was capable of much more than this unequipped. Many years ago, before my long standing back injury (accrued in my early 20's) began to seriously inhibit my deadlift training, I did 220 in the 75 kg class. However, for most of my serious competitive years, powerlifting was just a sideline activity to my main love, weightlifting. I only indulged because of my bench prowess.

As a weightlifter, I regularly clean and jerked 137.5 and have snatched 105. In the days when the press was in I did 120. I view my 120 clean and jerk as a Master 2 as my best weightlifting performance and extremely significant as proof of my current training philosophy and the benefits of powerlifting type training for weightlifters. I had not done a snatch or clean and jerk for two years, prior to the three singles of each done a few days before the event. I had trained only the powerlifts plus standing press and a couple of bodybuilding movements. I had also only done wide stance, bar down the back power squats. This was the first time I ever managed to jerk a close to maximum clean, always bedevilled by an overly flexible, weak and willowy mid section that lead to a career littered with big cleans and failed jerks. This was the final proof of my long held belief that weightlifters, particularly in this country, spend far too much time training the lifts themselves instead of concentrating on building overall strength using powerlifting type movements, in particular power style squats, rather than high bar back, and totally useless front squats. When I get the odd weightlifter to train, I now switch them to power squats and almost overnight their Olympic lifts rocket.

What titles do you hold or have held?

Mostly, numerous titles at South Midlands and All-Midlands level in the BAWLA as a powerlifter and weightlifter, but in later years in the BPA and WDFPF, a British Master 2 and a European Master 2 at 82.5. Unfortunately I rarely got a chance to lift in the drug free body; always far too busy doing numerous officiating jobs for the benefit of others.

What records do you hold or have held?

See previous Best Lifts section.

What is your training regime?

My training routine is the same as that employed by all my lifters and general trainees here from those of advanced ages like me, down to those as young as seven who have trained here. I am able to enforce this routine or something close to it, on all here, as this is a non profit, private club operating in my back garden. In 30 years it has only varied in terms of the number of end (work) sets done. In earlier years we warmed up to three end set of 6-8, except on the deadlift, with always just the one end set. Over the past few years doing more than one work set has proved to have no real advantage over just the one, except on the bench where three end set of 6-8 in a more bodybuilding fashion can be employed intermittently to advantage, particularly with those not naturally designed to be good benchers.

For twenty plus years, prior to settling finally for this routine, I experimented on myself and a host of others, dragged along with me, of both sexes and every physical type on every conceivable routine possible. I kept a training log, detailing my own training and the same for whatever lifters I had in tow at the time. The results, positive, negative or indifferent were always exactly the same for all, so I definitely do *not* believe that what suits one may not suit another. Every human body works on exactly the same physiological principles. Only the degree of efficiency varies. Towards the end of this period, I drew up graphs of my best competition lift performances in an attempt to ascertain what had worked best. The conclusions I came to led me to abandon this log as largely a waste of time. Primarily, everything was body-weight related with little or no variation in pound for pound performances, except when doing rep systems of less than six, where results got progressively worse as the reps got progressively lower.

The more overall work in quantity and frequency done, the more food and supplements I had needed to swallow to gain weight, which of course equalled more expense and more abuse of my digestive system. Also the more overall work in quantity; the more injuries! The only significant gain in pound for pound performances came at the end of this 20 year period, when we came heavily under the influence of Arthur Jones, the creator of the original Nautilus machines and the original high intensity, low volume, relatively low frequency, training to failure with high reps, guru. Despite the benefits, we were forced to modify this system, as it is just too hard and painful for anybody but a masochist. However, the basic principles behind this set the scene for the current routine which employs all the physiological (and logical) principles of maximum bodily adaptation, which includes adequate rest of not only the muscular and joint structures, but also the internal support systems. This latter aspect definitely rules out training on consecutive days (four day split); totally unnecessary to do four days anyway, as a three day per week, alternating upper and lower body split gives an ideal rest period of 3 - 4 days per body part. This does mean training deadlift after squat on the same day, as to do it separately is in direct

conflict with adequate rest and safety principles. It invariably means that basically the same major muscle groups are being worked with just one days rest. Definitely not enough! Many lifters attempt to get around this by training deadlift just once per week, but all this really means is that something dodgy is done only once per week instead of twice.

The upper body split is as follows:- Bench - 6, 3, 6, followed by pull-downs or chins, standing press, curls and a triceps exercise of choice all done for two sets (one a warm-up) of 6-8 reps. Finish off with one set of abbs. on the Roman Chair. The lower body split:- Squat - 6, 3, 6, followed by deadlift - 3, 1, 6, followed by one high rep set of shrugs, one set of 10 to 12 on the leg curl machine for the hamstrings, finishing with two sets of one legged calf raises, a 20 with no weight, plus a 10 with as much weight as possible. Those who get to handle really big weights on the squat (sadly, no longer myself), prefer to add an additional single between the 3 rep second warm-up and their end set. Not only does this system work well for all, I have yet to see anybody who has trained elsewhere on the usual methods, not make immediate progress and sometimes dramatically so, when switched to this routine and that includes weightlifters, who will start their lower body split here with either the snatch or clean for four of five singles, at most (for form) and as a warm-up for the squat. On upper body days they do the same with jerks from the rack.

How long have you been powerlifting?

44 years as a competitor, if the old strength set format (squat, bench and curl) is taken into account. Prior to this, I did four years of bodybuilding training. This gave me enough strength to win the South Midlands 12 stone title in my first competition in 1964. However, for most of my prime years, powerlifting was just a sideline activity to my main love, Olympic lifting. Things changed in the late 80's with the formation of the BPA and the WDFPF and powerlifting activities took over. Unfortunately, I rarely got to actually lift myself; far too busy with officiating duties.

How important are training partners to you?

Not really of any importance at all, as I am self motivated and don't like to rely upon help from anybody except the odd lift off on the bench. Mostly, I have relied upon my wife to do this over the years. With a gym always to hand I have chosen to spend much of my training time alone. This has been particularly useful as, in case anybody hasn't noticed, I talk too much. In recent years I have become more sociable, but I am very choosy as to who I train alongside. Certain people I like and who don't get on my nerves.

What made you become a powerlifter?

Like so many, I was roped in to lift by a persuasive person who felt I had potential. Although primarily an Olympic lifter, in those days there was less of a divide between weightlifting, powerlifting (strength set - squat, bench and curl) and the odd lifts. Many people competed on all three. In fact, the last lifter to get a BAWLA British weightlifting and powerlifting title in the same year, was the superheavy, Brian Saunders, who came from this gym. Another of my lifters, Richard Guelbert, came close with a British Junior Weightlifting Title and a second place in the Junior Power. He was on form to win easily, but seriously damaged a knee in a motorcycle accident. Actually he should still have won, as the eventual winner was given an outrageous gift on his last deadlift, having miserably failed the first two. He behaved so badly on the rostrum he was later disciplined. Both Richard and Brian were outstanding

deadlifters, Richard with a 185 British Junior Record and Brian with a 330 effort. Whilst Richard trained the full deadlift regularly, Brian just dabbled, finishing the odd workout with a 10 rep, stiff legged effort. With my suspension from The BAWLA (the only place to go as an Olympic lifter proper) and my daughter's involvement with powerlifting (no women's weightlifting in those days), I became almost solely embroiled in powerlifting activities. I would like to get re-involved with weightlifting as it is now, with just the snatch and jerk. There must be some drug free powerlifters and allround lifters out there who would be interested in a drug free version. Any offers? I see no reason why this should not be a sideline activity under the BDFPA's umbrella, provided anybody taking part joins the BDFPA.

What is your favourite assistance exercise?

I don't really believe there is any such thing as an assistance exercise for the powerlifts. They are in themselves the ultimate assistance exercises for all sporting activities. Three of the best lifters ever to appear on the BPA./WDFPF platform, Adrian and Annette Blindt and my daughter Suzanne did nothing but the three lifts, plus in the Blindts' case, some heavy Roman Chair abb work, for a long period prior to getting a world title. I have seen plenty of evidence to suggest that working hard on supposed assistance exercises is actually detrimental to progress. Having said this, I have to admit to always having done a specific exercise for each main muscle group and all my lifters over the years, except Suzanne for a period, have done the same. However, we have never been under the illusion that they are necessary from a powerlifting point of view. They have been done partly for ego (physical appearance) and also because from a health, conditioning and flexibility point of view, I believe all muscle groups should get some direct full range work. This appears to have paid off, as despite my age I have lost no flexibility and have no joint problems. I can still perform a squat snatch. I have experimented with part movements, but quickly came to the conclusion they are totally useless, just an egotistical way of over-working joints and tendons. I have actually seen people go backwards on this sort of training, especially if added to full range work. My daughter bombed in the first ever Woman's European Champs, with what should have been an easy deadlift, simply because, despite my protestations, she listened to a certain attractive (to her) IPF World Champion, who advised her to do top part deadlifts to supposedly help her finish.

What is the biggest mistake that beginners make?

Bearing in mind that most people who end up as competitive lifters, do not start out to be such, but just start training to look bigger, the most common mistake is to believe that the more work done, and the more frequently, the better the results, when the opposite is the case. This would include too many sets with too low a rep system, often taken to failure, particularly on the bench; too many curls with little triceps work and the employment of fancy exercises like dumbbell flies, in the mistaken belief that specific areas can be built in isolation. Also of course, avoiding squats and deadlifts. Although this mistake is not just common to beginners, many people do far too many non-productive, but tiring, sets and reps on the way up to the hard and productive end sets. Warm-up work should be cut to the absolute minimum for safety; just enough to set the body up for maximum efforts, with the heaviest possible weights.

What is your advice for beginners?

Firstly to point out that as bigger muscles weigh more than smaller ones, the priority for all, except those who are fat, is to attempt to gain body-weight by eating nutritious foods regularly and frequently. Despite the claim that one can train for strength without increasing size and body-weight, made by some who set themselves up as authorities, there is no known physiological process whereby a muscle can keep getting stronger without some increase in the size and weight of its component parts. The only time this happens is with beginners as they get used to training and tune up their neuromuscular system. This benefit quickly tails off to nothing and for what really should be a most obvious reason. If ever increasing weights could be handled without structural increases, the body would fall to bits.

Secondly, to appreciate that muscles don't grow whilst training, they grow whilst at rest as a result of the stimulation from training and thirdly, not to just blindly follow what others are doing. Not just those who have obviously been training for some time with no appreciable results, but also those who seem to have got the biggest and strongest. So often, members of this latter group are endowed with great natural ability and get good regardless of what they do; often almost everything wrong and such people have been the bane of my life as a gym owner and coach. The best bet for any beginner is to seek the advice of somebody who has a track record for turning out numerous top performers, not just the odd one. And on that score, I will again stick my neck out and repeat my claim that no other gym has consistently turned out more top performers than this one, and by a mile. The only person who has seen fit to challenge me on this one, in terms of numbers over the years, runs a gym that has had numerous known druggers, one of whom got caught twice. Such places don't count in my book.

What are some of your most memorable powerlifting experiences?

Initially, the first IPF Powerlifting Worlds, held in Birmingham in 1975 and then later, the first Women's Worlds held in Hawaii in 1981, where my daughter, Suzanne, came in third. With all the famous names in the powerlifting world in attendance, these events were incredibly exciting. Sadly, at that time we were unaware of what most of these people were really up to and so now, the memories are seriously tarnished. Fond memories remain of Hawaii (not just the beautiful place itself), where I met one of my former heroes, the ex-world champion weightlifter, Tommy Kono and being invited to train as a partner to Harold Sakarta (Odd Job). The second IPF Women's Worlds threw up a seriously memorable experience in a negative sense, as I was sitting close enough to hear the woman who won my daughter's class ask a notorious international drug seller (ended up in Nick) for some injectable dianabol. She had no idea who I was. He replied that they were all taking horse gear at the time, but she declined the offer in favour of the dianabol.

Most memorable in a positive sense, is the time four of us powerlifters, Suzanne, Elly Millington and if you include Darren Clifford and myself, who were formerly weightlifters, attended the BAWG British Weightlifting Championships at Blackpool. We all won our respective classes, with Elly taking the best woman lifter award and Darren the best male lifter, despite just two practice sessions. From memory, I feel sure Annette Blindt, another world powerlifting champion to be, was there and won her class, also. There were some long faces amongst some of the weightlifting and all round purists, which gave me great satisfaction, as some amongst them regard powerlifters as some sort of inferior breed. One of them is notorious for deriding them in his magazine. If ever this was the case, this was proof of my contention that

powerlifting type training is superior to any other for top performance on any weight discipline and not a few other sporting disciplines also.

What is the craziest thing you ever seen in powerlifting?

Whilst I won't single out any particular incident, I do find the antics of certain lifters crazy. Those who do a workout in the warm-up room and those who perform ridiculous antics on the platform prior to lifting; shouting and bawling, shaking the squat bar, half pulling the deadlift bar etc. At a recent British, a lifter rolled the deadlift bar all over the platform and another performed a variety of ballet type movements. As much as anything this peculiar posing type stuff reflects poor coaching, as such antics destroy the focus necessary to perform at best. Such antics also tend to irritate and annoy referees; not likely to be a good idea at all.

What are your future goals?

To stay alive, now that a life-long heartbeat irregularity has progressed to AF (atrial fibrillation) resulting in a degree of heart failure. I am still managing to train though, shit or bust.

What do you think is the most important factor when it comes to upping your lifts?

Training regularly close to the limits of strength, but not to failure and avoiding any last rep that is obviously going to end up gutted out in poor form. This would include doing enough reps (around 6), which allow hard muscular work without over-working joints and tendons. Over-worked, they can take well in excess of a week to fully recover, which means either injury or a lot less productive workouts over a period of time. Steady and consistent progress can be made without boring cycling routines over a long period, but the body doesn't like being forced to its absolute limit and beyond on a regular basis.

Do you think powerlifting should become an Olympic sport?

Yes and no. Yes, because powerlifting has more right to be included than many sports now taken on board, certainly any team games. Unfortunately its inclusion has always been opposed by the weightlifting hierarchy who fear an easier version of lifting weights would undermine their own activities. Certain weightlifting officials have wielded considerable influence in the IOC (it's one of the original sports) and the IPF have played right into their hands by failing to appreciate that supportive apparel makes powerlifting as a sport look a joke. This has always been a trump card for the opposition. As far as I am concerned and certainly now that there is an unequipped section, nobody who values the sport should ever appear on the platform in supportive gear and least of all, anybody who would like to see powerlifting take its rightful place in the Olympic movement.

As far as "no" is concerned, it has to be pretty dead certain that powerlifting's inclusion would likely totally undermine the BDFPA and the WDFPF. From the general public's point of view, the ultimate status for any athlete is to take part in the Olympic Games. How many times have I been asked whether some top powerlifter from here will be at the Olympics? A further disincentive for lifters to choose the BDFPA/WDFPF, is that the IOC have now at long last taken on board the necessity for target testing and this has been mopping up the druggers, even to the extent that two former leading weightlifting nations were banned from the last Games. The only possible advantage would be the status that goes with competing at an Olympic

Games. With the high level of powerlifting activity at present around the world, which would obviously increase, only a very small percentage of lifters would ever get to go and the chances of a medal for most would be extremely remote. Apart from this, there are several other points on the downside well worth mentioning. They are not speculative. I have been there!! They all involve a loss of personal freedom

Firstly, with IOC acceptance would come a sizable Sports Council Grant. Back in the 1980's the BAWLA were getting £240,000 per year, although they only allocated around £10,000 of it to powerlifting. A former Minister for Sport told me that giving grants to sporting bodies is much favoured, as they get used to it and then cannot manage without it. With the money comes a degree of government control, although this doesn't stop top officials cashing in with free trips and general expenses. Squad sessions become mandatory, with personal coaches deliberately excluded. These have often been run by coaches (?), who have never produced a lifter, but who attempt to pinch and control other peoples'. This happens in other sports also. Often they know little, or a lot less, than the coaches at grass roots level, who do actually produce them. Also, they interfere with the training systems that have been responsible. On one squad occasion, they attempted to force the lady lifters to go to their absolute limits and beyond, two weeks prior to the World's. Team officials get little or no credit from individual performances, but do from any team aspects. Thus the lifters can lose control of their attempts, forced to take safe poundages for team point placings, rather than to chance a win, higher place or record attempts; a disincentive for lifter participation and audience enthusiasm. Suzanne was subjected to this on one occasion and not allowed to attempt a world record bench press. If one does not obey, there is the threat of losing a future team place. It was partly to avoid any possibility that this unseemly business should bedevil WDFPF lifters that I proposed at the inaugural meeting that there should be no team considerations at internationals. This was accepted unanimously. Sadly, this has now gone by the board and I already hear rumblings of discontent. Team considerations in any individual sport are always a recipe for trouble.

Finally, control over who gets drug tested is lost, with control handed over to people who don't have any real understanding of a sport and the effects of drugs on performance. Out of fear of litigation, it would seem, there was always strong resistance to target testing (officially), an absolute priority, and also to having every member, however lowly, on the list for a possible test; again a priority as druggers don't just start indulging when they get good, they often start from the word go, as nobodies. When a test can be targeted at anybody of any performance level and the results published, everybody can see that the most likely miscreants are being selected. As far as I am aware, only the BDFPA/WDFPF does this, so it might well not be acceptable to the IOC. I think overall, my answer to the question heading this section, has to be a resounding **no!!**

How do you see the future of powerlifting?

Powerlifting will continue to grow, undoubtedly to a point where, unless the Olympic movement continues to overload its program, it will be difficult to keep it out, but with two provisos. Firstly, equipped lifting will have to go, as it destroys the credibility of the sport. The introduction of unequipped lifting is clearly causing an enormous surge in membership and this has to be the way to go with all the effort put into unequipped events. Secondly, there is a need for a total rules revision, as it is quite ridiculous to have so many causes for failure on three simple lifts. People want to see the strongest person win, not the tidiest lifter.

What does your diet consist of?

Organic meat, eggs, cheese, yogurt, vegetables and salad with the odd piece of fruit thrown in, but then always eaten at least 20 minutes before a meal, as fruit digests very quickly and doesn't combine well with other foods. I have periods where I will eat a couple of slices of toast with my breakfast, but in general I eat no cereal products, regarding them as basically low nutrient, fattening foods. I dislike fish, so never eat it. I regard eggs as *the* super-food, the ultimate whole food. On so many occasions I have seen weight trainers add extra eggs and make immediate and very noticeable improvement. Whilst alcohol consumption is questionable, I am very fond of a drink, as most who know me are well aware.

What makes the difference between an average lifter and a champion?

Basically natural ability, but most that have this under-achieve, because things come too easy and they don't have to learn much. Mostly they end up playing golf, an activity I always maintained I wouldn't be interested in until I was at least 90. However, I have seen many lifters with only moderate ability and occasionally less, achieve great things by wising up and sticking doggedly with it over a period of years.

What training style do you think works best?

Fairly strict style, but not ultra strict as this compromises the weight that can be handled too much, pushing the exercises in the direction of isolation movements, which don't work well.

Do you think bodybuilding exercises should be in a powerlifter's routine?

Yes, but only for the reasons explained earlier and not under the illusion that they are powerlifting assistance exercises. However, I have every reason to believe the powerlifts themselves should be trained in a more bodybuilding fashion, with between 5 and 8 reps. One of the major advantages of more bodybuilding type training is that any bodyweight gain is more likely to be a higher percentage muscle, whereas, with the low rep stuff it is more likely to be fat.

What are your favourite supplements?

Creatine, multi-vitamin/minerals and vitamin C, with the odd specific thrown in to satisfy a perceived need, like fish oil. Whereas the taking of multivitamin/minerals etc. are a wise safeguard for all, whether training or not, I regard creatine as the master supplement for anybody who wants to achieve their maximum strength performance. However, there are two provisos. Firstly, it should be taken as part of a superior product like the "Starmax Hyperform" which also contains the amino acid glutamine and a little maltodextrine. Secondly, it should not be mixed with beverages, but put directly into the mouth and masticated to nothing with at most a tiny sip of water. The foremost creatine researcher, Professor Roger Harris, has confirmed to me that capitalising on bucal cavity absorption would be of some advantage. Everybody here, over the past ten years, who has taken this product this way has showed marked and immediate improvement and it would appear more so than elsewhere. The only person here, who has expressed any doubts as to its value, is a bloke who persists in mixing it with beverages.

I have personally taken creatine with just one three week break (forgot to take it with me on holiday) since 1996. At that time as a Master 4 lifter, I had been a lacto/ova vegetarian for 26 years and it had begun to dawn upon me that I seemed to be loosing

strength faster than other long term lifters of my age. My bench had slumped to 105 x 6 with a best single of 130. I was assured that as vegetarians run low on creatine and consequently have more muscle receptors to compensate; my progress initially would be greater than normal. Three months later I did 130 x 6 and a record 145 single in the 82.5 kg class. Even now, 12 years later at 67, with inevitable age decline, my bench has not yet quite slumped to the level at which I started on creatine.

As an aside, with my general involvement in the health and fitness field, and also personal involvement with a large number of people in a big company (BT), I have known an awful lot of vegetarians. All, bar one, past the age of 50 and in some cases before, have accumulated a serious health problem, often in the direction of heart and artery problems (including myself) the very thing such a diet is supposed to prevent. One, a vegan, died at the age of 35 from a pulmonary blood clot. The bar one, is a bloke who will eat as many as 30 eggs per day. He checked out with a cholesterol level of 3.5. Although my experience in this direction must be considered anecdotal evidence, if the claims made by vegetarian advocates for the health benefits have any validity, surely with so many subjects, I would have seen some evidence to substantiate them. I have seen none, only the opposite.

What has powerlifting taught you?

Nothing that I would not have learned, or should have learned, if operating in any other field of activity. Wherever we operate, the lessons we have to learn in life, or fail to learn, are the same.

What does powerlifting mean to you?

For genuine lovers of great strength, unequipped powerlifting is the ultimate expression. No matter whether one has a particular liking for the Olympic lifts or the strange multitude of odd lifts, powerlifting type movements form the basis of the strength training required to do these well. Powerlifting has something for everybody interested in building strength, health and fitness. It can be great fun, although this is often spoiled by ill feeling that basically stems from having a multitude of causes for failure, surrounding three simple movements. It would also be a lot more fun to me, if the ludicrous spectacle of people wrapped up like mummies would disappear. All competitive sport has much to do with ego, but in my view, using all these artificial aids must surely be the biggest ego trip of all. I see nothing of benefit to powerlifting as a sport, by performing in this manner, quite the opposite.