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Bro. JAMES WILLIAM CARRUTHERS

Jimmy Carruthers, World Empire and Australian Bantamweight Boxing Champion, was born at the Sydney suburb of Paddington on 5 July 1929.

He was educated at Paddington Technical School and he began boxing in the Police Boys' Club. He won the Australian amateur bantamweight championship in 1947.

He represented Australia in boxing in the bantamweight division at the Olympic Games in London in 1948. He did not win a medal but he had won two bouts when a cut eye forced him to forfeit his third bout.

Carruthers turned professional in 1950 and the following year, he won the Australian bantamweight title from Elley Bennett.

On 15 November 1952, Jimmy Carruthers became Australia's first 20th Century official world boxing champion when he defeated South African, Vic Toweel at Johannesburg for the World and British Empire bantamweight titles.

Toweel was knocked out in the first round. The fight lasted just 139 seconds and Carruthers threw 147 punches and it was one of the fastest knockouts in boxing history. Toweel threw just one punch which missed. In one of the great Australian sporting statements, Carruthers said:

> "I visited him in hospital later and tried to mag with him, but he was a bit browned off with me."

On his return to Sydney, Jimmy Carruthers received a tumultuous welcome.

Welcome home Jimmy.
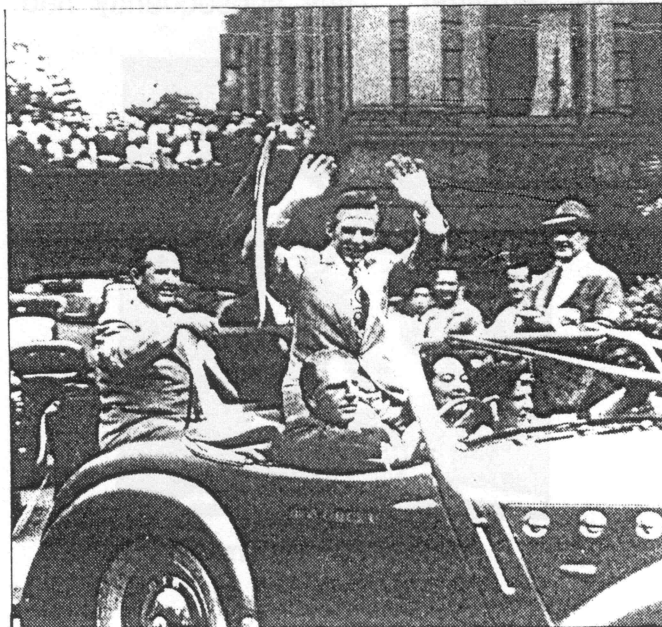
The smiling champion.

Carruthers defended his world and empire titles against Vic Toweel at Johannesburg on 21 March 1953. Carruthers won by a knockout in the 10th round.

On 13 November 1953 he won a decision on points in defence of the title in a 15 round contest against American, Henry 'Pappy' Gault in an outdoor bout at the Sydney Sports Ground. The 32,500 attendance was the largest in Australia to that time.

On 29 March 1954 he won a non-title bout of 12 rounds on points against Bobby Sinn at Sydney and on 2 May 1954, he defended the title with a points win over 12 rounds against Chamrern Songkitrat at Bangkok. The bout was fought barefoot in heavy rain.

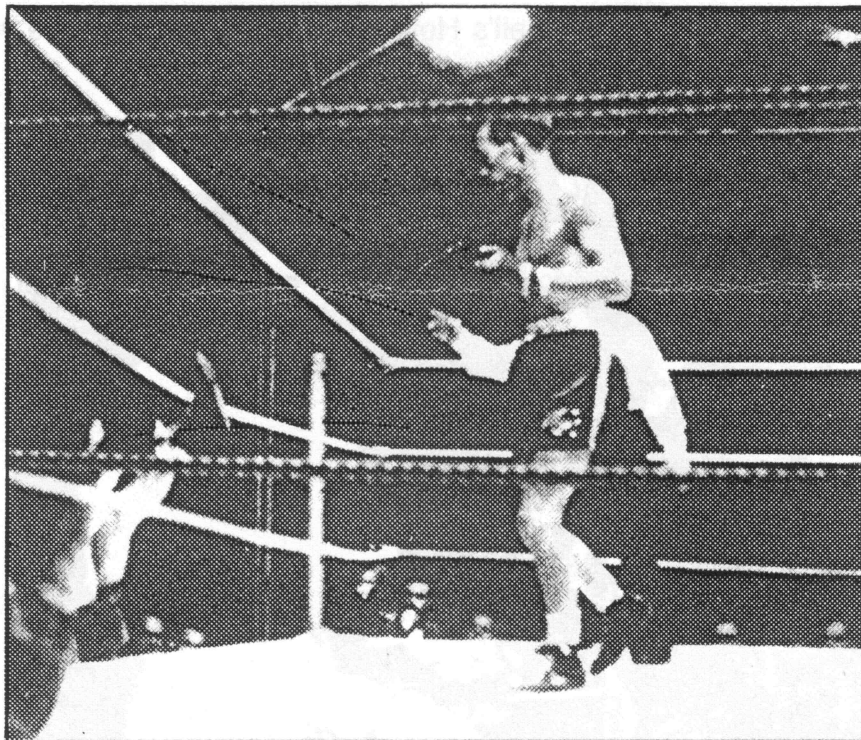On 16 May 1954, Jimmy Carruthers announced his retirement as the undefeated champion.

On 10 February 1951, three months before he won the Australian title, James Carruthers married Myra Hamilton. They subsequently had two sons and two daughters.
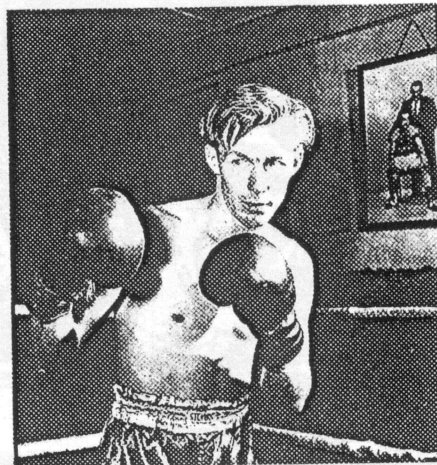
Jimmy Carruthers.
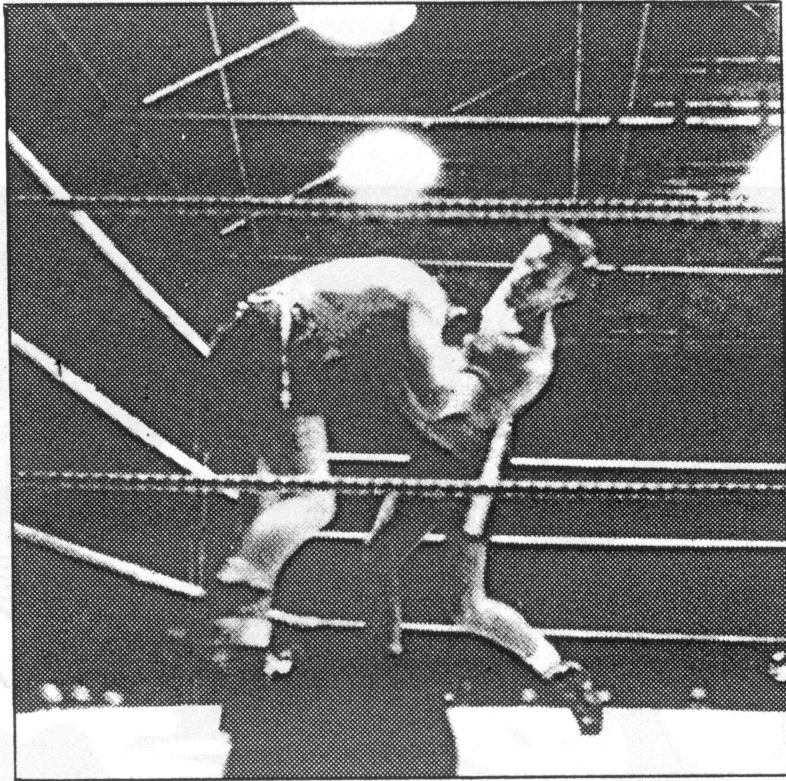
Carruthers v Toweel
Johannesburg 1952.

Carruthers v Toweel
Johannesburg 1952.

When he retired, Carruthers had earned £64,500 as a professional boxer and he said "I shall never don the gloves again. This is not an overnight decision as you might think, but a planned event in my life. [1]
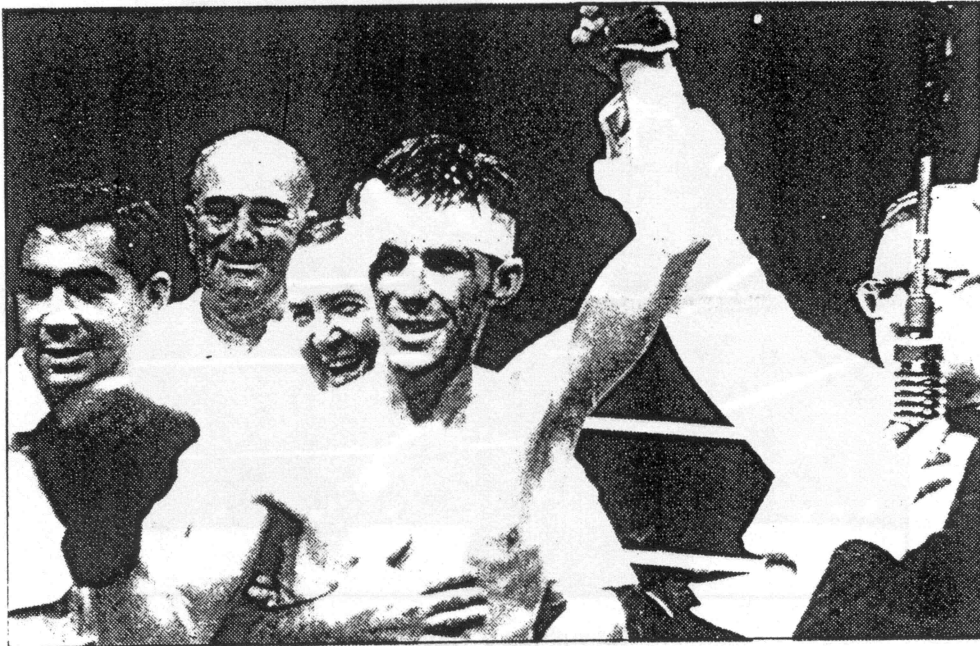
Jimmy Carruthers after
his win over 'Pappy' Gault
13 November 1953.

After his retirement, he bought the Bell's Hotel at Woolloomooloo. The venture was a financial failure.
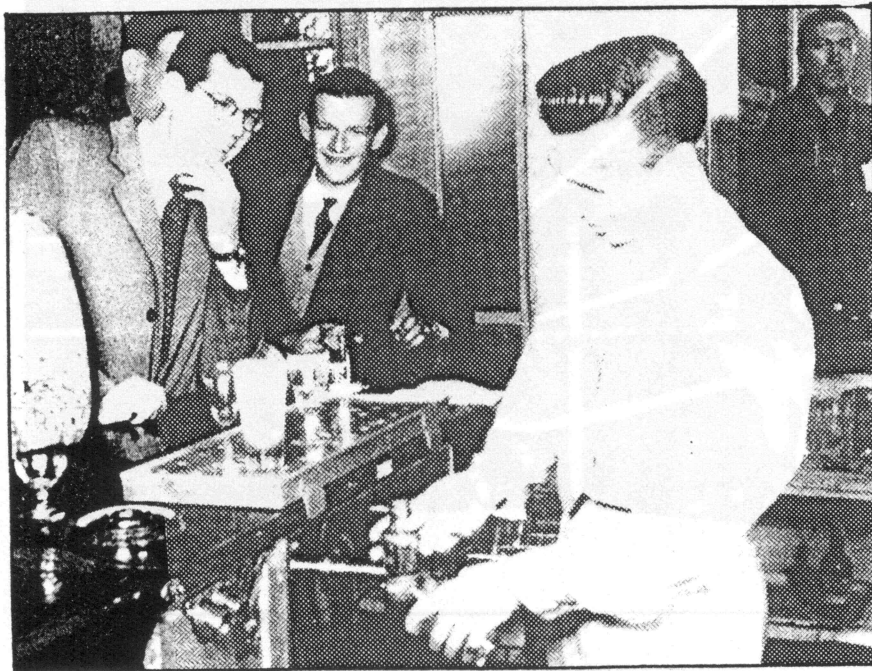
Carruthers fought in the heyday of wireless broadcasting of major sporting events and many boxing enthusiasts spent their Monday evenings listening to the 2SM commentary of Frank Hyde describing the bouts from Leichhardt Stadium or the old Sydney Stadium, built at New South Head Road, Rushcutters Bay in 1908.

Armchair pugilists punched at the air with imaginary uppercuts and gave freely of their advice to the referee.

Sydney Stadium

Frank Hyde became friendly with the fighters particularly with Jimmy Carruthers. Hyde said:

> I'll never forget the day that Jimmy leaned over my shoulder at the Stadium and said, 'Frank, I'm making a comeback.'
>
> 'Jimmy', I Said, 'that's the saddest news I've ever heard. This is one game where there is no comeback.'

Carruthers first comeback fight as a lightweight was at Sydney on 11 September 1961, seven years after his retirement as World bantamweight champion. He was defeated on points over 12 rounds by Aldo Pravisani.

As Frank Hyde put it:

> At his peak, Carruthers wouldn't have given Pravisani a job as his sparring partner. But that's life. That's the game.

Carruthers had six comeback fights. His final bout was on 18 June 1962 against Jimmy Cassidy at Wellington, New Zealand. Carruthers lost on a foul in the eighth round.

The southpaw who later became a referee, was a tough little customer and he shared the 'secret of his success' with Natural Foods, and Jimmy Carruthers' vegetable juices and health sandwich counter opposite Hyde Park became a Sydney landmark.

The Carruthers family established their home at Ocean Street, Narrabeen and at one time, he was a shopkeeper at the northern peninsular suburb of Avalon.

Bro. James William Carruthers was made a mason on 2 May 1956 in Lodge Sydney No. 505, United Grand Lodge of New South Wales.
He was passed on 4 July 1956 and raised a master mason on 2 January 1957.
He called off on 1 December 1971.

In 1958, he attended the 4th annual (Royal) Freemasons' Benevolent Institution ((R)FBI) swimming carnival at Coogee.

JIMMY CARRUTHERS World, Empire and Australian Bantamweight Champion
Professional Record

1950

Aug	15	Ted Fitzgerald	Leichhardt	KO	3
Oct	13	Ron Wilson	Melbourne	KO	5
Oct	19	Fred Kay	Leichhardt	KO	12
Nov	20	Keith Francis	Sydney	KO	10
Dec	12	Jimmy McFadden	Sydney	KO	9

1951

Jan	22	Bluey Wilkins	Sydney	WP	12
Mar	5	Bob Scrivano	Sydney	KO	1
Apr	2	Billy Herbert	Sydney	KO	10
May	14	Elley Bennett	Sydney	WP	15
		(Won Australian bantamweight title.)			
Aug	27	Enrique Morales	Sydney	KO	7
Nov	26	Luis Castillo	Sydney	WP	12

1952

Mar	13	Taffy Hancock	Leichhardt	KO	7
Apr	7	Ray Coleman	Sydney	WP	12
May	12	Johnny O'Brien	Sydney	WP	12
Nov	15	Vic Toweel	Johannesburg	KO	1
		(Won world and Empire bantamweight titles.)			

1953

Mar	21	Vic Toweel	Johannesburg	KO	10
		(World and Empire bantamweight titles defence.)			
Nov	13	Henry "Pappy" Gault	Sydney	WP	15
		(World bantamweight title defence.)			

1954

Mar	29	Bobby Sinn	Sydney	WP	12
May	2	Chamrern Songkitrat	Bangkok	WP	12
		(World bantamweight title defence.)			
		Announced retirement May 16, 1954. Made comeback 1961.			

1961

Sep	11	Aldo Pravisani	Sydney	LP	12
Nov	20	Wally Taylor	Sydney	LP	12
Dec	15	Don Johnson	Melbourne	KO by	5

1962

Mar	9	Louis Magnifico	Adelaide	KO	2
Mar	29	Johnny Jarrett	Woodville	KO	2
June	18	Jimmy Cassidy	Wellington, NZ	LF	8

Summary of record:

TB	KO	WP	LP	LF	KO by
25	13	8	2	1	1

Abbreviations:

T.B.	Total bouts	L.P.	Lost on points
K.O.	Won by knockout	L.F.	Lost on foul
W.P.	Won on points	K.O. by	Lost by knockout

FOOTNOTE

Bare-knuckle boxing, although discouraged and later outlawed, can be traced back to the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. Bored military officers organised all the early fights, between willing convicts at secluded bushland areas around the settlement.

Gloves were first used in an exhibition on 8 November 1834, when pupils of boxing tutor, Abraham (Alby) Davis boxed exhibitions at the Dolphin Inn in Elizabeth Street, Sydney. The first recorded fight with gloves took place on 25 July 1849, when William Thompson, athletics champion of the Colony, knocked out Bill Sparkes in five rounds at the Tennis Court Inn in Sussex Street, Sydney.

The first championship fight with gloves took place on 26 July 1884 when Bill Farnan knocked out Peter Jackson at the Victoria Hall, Melbourne, to win the Australian Heavyweight Championship.

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The first world championship fight in Australia was held on 3 September 1890 at Larry Foley's White Horse Hotel in Sydney, when Australia's Albert Griffiths (Young Griffo) stopped New Zealand's 'Torpedo' Billy Murphy in 15 rounds to win the Featherweight Championship. Despite the fact that Murphy, who had won the title in the USA on 13 January 1890, had remained undefeated and the Australian contest was staged under full championship conditions, Young Griffo was not recognised as champion in the USA. American promoters believed world championships could only be contested in the United States. Reason has prevailed in more recent years and Young Griffo's championship win is now universally recognised.

Australian World Champions

Albert Griffiths, Featherweight Title, 3 September 1890.
Les Darcy, World Middleweight Title, 22 May 1915.
Jimmy Carruthers, Bantamweight Title, 15 November 1952.
Lionel Rose, Bantamweight Title, 27 February 1968.
Johnny Famechon, Featherweight Title, 21 January 1969.
Rocky Mattioli, Junior Middleweight Title, 6 August 1977.
Lester Ellis, Junior Lightweight Title, 15 February 1985.
Jeff Fenech, Bantamweight Title, 26 April 1985.
Barry Michael, Junior Lightweight Title, 12 July 1985.

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