

Name: Ike Bradley
Career Record: [click](#)
Nationality: British
Birthplace: Liverpool
Hometown: Liverpool, Merseyside, United Kingdom
Born: 1884-02-11
Died: 1951-05-05
Age at Death: 67
Stance: Orthodox
Height: 5' 2"

One of Liverpool's most popular boxers and a cartoonists dream, Ike Bradley was the first local fighter to compete for a world title in 1908. In fact Ike fought Digger Stanley twice for the World

bantamweight crown, both times suffering defeat at the hands of the Kingston – on- Thames born gypsy.



IKE BRADLEY, of Liverpool.

He had around 400 contests, many in America, and once against the legendary black American George Dixon in Dublin. Although you will be hard pressed to find a reference for this fight – Dixon was drunk when he entered the ring – on Dixons record. After retiring Ike became a familiar face in Liverpool city centre as a taxi driver and was also a second at the Stadium for many years. Ike died in 1951 – aged 68 – and is buried in Anfield cemetery (Liverpool).

The following is an article published in the Liverpool Echo on 3rd November 1973 by Syd Dye.

Liverpool lost one her greatest fighting machines and one of her most loved characters with the death of Ike Bradley at the age of 68 in 1951. The battling bulldog of the British rings at the turn of the century. Ike virtually died in harness for he was sent home ill from his work as a second at the Liverpool Stadium and two days later the spark went out.

It was in 1911 that he met Digger Stanley for the latter's World bantamweight title at the old Pudsey Street Stadium – Liverpool - . Stanley was offered £250 for the contest but before accepting wrote back offering to box anyone else for £100 less. In the event Stanley won on points over 20 rounds, but not before he had broken both hands and also been down for a long count in the 4th.

Bradley rose to the heights after starting his working life as a boy selling newspapers in the streets of Liverpool. He had a yearning to be a fighter and got his early breaks at a Dale Street (Liverpool) arena where the usual pay 5 shillings for a ten round sparring stint with experienced boxers years older than himself.

Crowds of around 50 watched thee sessions and if they liked what they saw threw pennies to the fighters .For extra entertainment they often wamed the coins on the gas flares used to illuminate the hall and pitched them red hot into the ring.

His most important early contest was with Willy Gill for the championship of Liverpool. Gill was saved by the bell in the 9th but went on to win on pions. Ike challenged him to a return and knocked him out in the first at New Brighton – Wallasey - . He also met Willy Collins of Manchester , unbeaten at the time and rated as good as Joe Bowker, then bantam champion of the world.

Ike's backer for a £50 side stake was Mr Clarry Hayes, a solicitor and director of Everton Football Club. He told Ike, “ I am putting all my savings on you. If you lose I can't get married”. Well Ike didn't let him down and he also won a fortune for his many other Liverpool backersfor he was at long odds.

Collins had it all his own way for five rounds but Ike flattened him for the full count in the 6th.

In those days it was an honour for a fighter to box at the National Sporting Club (NSC) . They had to box three round trials to satisfy the promoters that their standard was high enough, but Bradleys fame was such that the trial was waived in his case. Nevertheless Ike made a losingdebut there, going down on points over 15 rounds to Jim Kennedy.

Three nights later he fought London's Johnny Hughes in a scheduled 15 rounds at Pudsey Street – Liverpool – and despite still being stiff and sore from his Kennedy defeat he kayoed Hughes in nine.

Ike went to Newcastle to box Harry Slough of West Hartlepool for the 8 stone championship of England and got £40 for knocking him out in four rounds. Slough demanded a return and three weeks later and Ike kayoed him in the first round.

Slough claimed it was a foul punch and it was agreed that after a rest of 15 minutes the fight should begin again. This time Ike found the going tougher and was all in at the end of the 15th round. A bottle of ammonia was placed under his nose and this did the trick. He came out revived and in the 18th round dropped Slough with a punch that put him out for half an hour.

Ike once stepped in as a last minute substitute for the top of the bill against Billy Lewis at the Adelphi Theatre, Christian Street. He lost on points but so pleased were two of the patrons that one gave him five gold sovereigns, bought him a new suit and took him to Liverpool races. The other took him to a pork shop and said "Order what you like", Ike took him at his word, took one of everything in the shop staggered home under a load of parcels of meat.

Apart from his world title clash with Digger Stanley in 1911 the pair had only met twice earlier—once at Newcastle and a return at the Adelphi Theatre. Stanley won them all although severely tested each time.

In 1906 Ike went to America hoping to meet Jimmy Wilde for the 8 stone championship. The bout fell through and instead he had to settle for a six rounder with Tommy O'Toole who held decisions over Abe Atell and Frankie Neil. He lost on points but stayed on to become highly popular with a "No decisions clash against Tommy Langdon, and points defeats at the hands of Harry Delmont and Freddie O'Brien.

Ike had not the best of luck with decisions or purse money in the states and as four more bouts he had lined up were with fighters about a stone heavier than himself he packed up and returned home to Britain.

He came back to draw with Tibby Watson of Australia then knocked him out in a return in Dublin. He also kayoed Jack Gyons of London twice and outpointed him – the same Gyons who was the first man to lower the colours of Joe Bowker who had been world champion.

Ike also went to Dublin and stopped George Dixon in three rounds. Dixon had been world bantam and feathers champion at the turn of the century and was idolised by Ike. He was a man who earned and gave away three ring fortunes and to whose memory a statue was erected in New York when he died. Ike confessed that in his opinion Dixon was "Blind Drunk" on the night of the fight.

Ike's last contest was against Fred Anderson of London who outpointed him over ten rounds and after his ring retirement in 1917 Ike became a taxi driver and second at the Stadium. His one regret was at failing to beat Digger Stanley in their world title clash. To the end he was convinced he won that fight for he felt Stanley was down for at least 14 seconds. Had he won he would have cleaned up on the American scene for that was where the real money was in those days.



Top row: Hy. Price. Second row (standing): Mr. Wilson (of the Stadium), Nichol Simpson, Dubourg, Mr. J. Harris, and Gunner Rawles. Bottom row: Ike Bradley and daughter, Nat Williams, and Hy. Duncan.

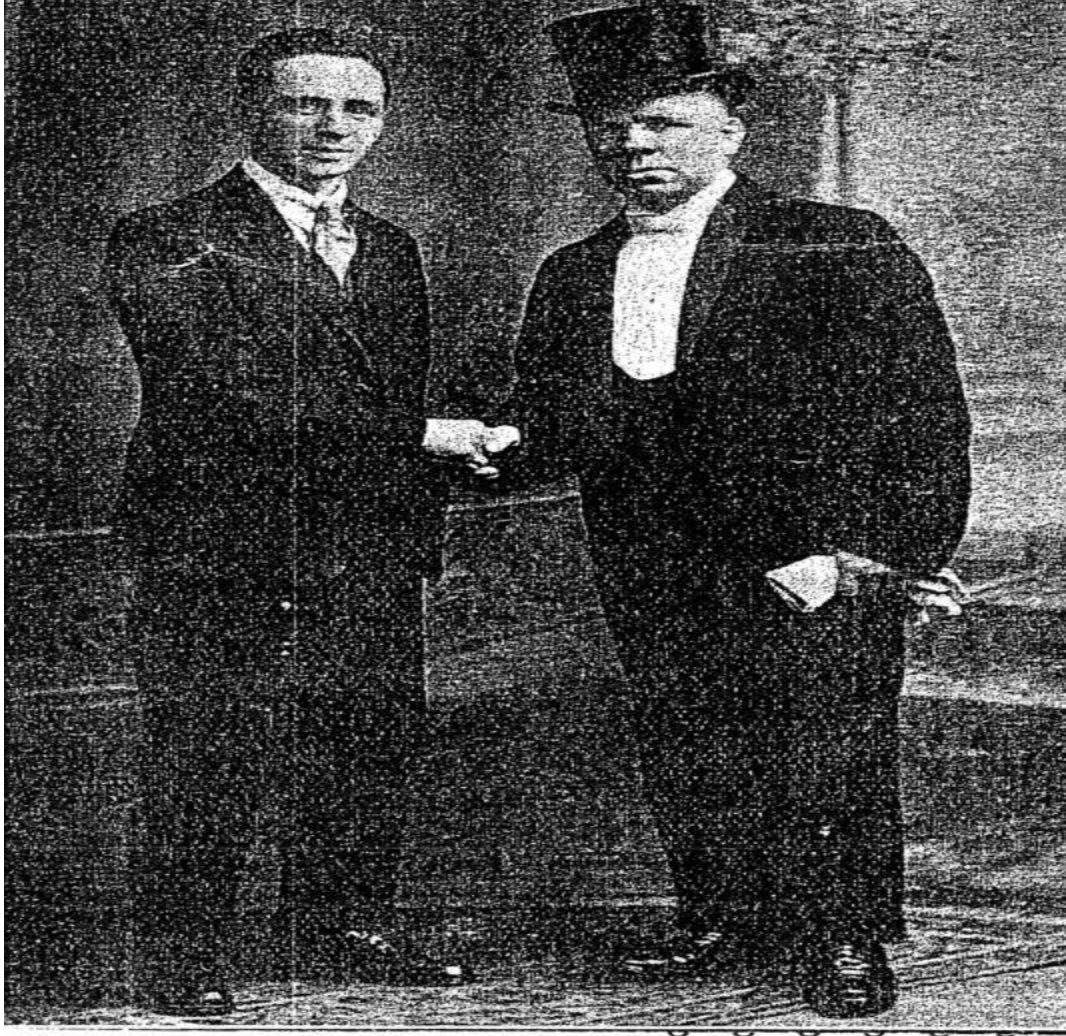
Ike Bradley with his daughter - with his usual happy face



Ike Bradley, the famous Liverpool bantam, with his backer, Mr. Frank Benson, and Bert Sharp, the well-known footballer and brother of Jack Sharp, Lancashire C.C.



Ike Bradley pictured with Dom Volante and old-time boxers following the opening of Bradley's club in Scotland Road in 1930. Left to right: Paddy Carroll (who fought Ted Kid Lewis), Ike Bradley, Charlie Whiteman, Dom Volante, Ted Hughes, Jack Mallon and Paddy Connor.



Ike in his top hat and tails