



## Made in Derby 2018 Profile

### Louis Martin

Hailed as Britain's greatest-ever weightlifter, Louis Martin won four world mid-heavyweight championships, Olympic silver and bronze medals and three Commonwealth titles – and he loved Derby.

He is the only Briton to have been world champion on the Olympic lifts and described as a “larger than life” character with a “charisma about him and an infectious laugh and smile”.

Louis was born in Jamaica in 1936 and immigrated to Derby in the mid- 1950s. He died at the age of 78 in 2015.

Within four days of arriving in Derby, Louis had got a job, found lodgings and discovered a gym.

Derby people took Louis to their hearts and he returned their affection a hundredfold by bringing back medals and eventually setting up a series of gyms in the city where he coached upcoming youngsters.

He was a good friend to many people but to his son Richard, he was his “best friend” and also “a legend, outstanding as a father, as a person and as a weightlifter”. Sentiments echoed by his other son, Louis junior.

Louis's outstanding weight-lifting career kicked off in 1959 at his first world championships in Warsaw, Poland, when he defeating the 1956 Olympic gold medallist Arkady Vorobyov of the Soviet Union.

He held World Championship titles in 1959, 1962, 1963 and 1965; World Championship silver medals in 1961 and 1964; and European Championship titles in 1959, 1962, 1963 and 1965. He won a European silver medal in 1961 and Commonwealth gold medals in 1962, 1964 and 1970.

In 1960, he won bronze at the Rome Olympics and silver at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. In the 1964 Olympics, Louis came second to another Russian, Vladimir Golovanov, although he defeated him in the 1965 world championships for his fourth global title.

Louis was awarded an MBE in 1965 for his services to weightlifting. He lunched with the Queen at Buckingham Palace, attended her garden parties, been named one of Derby's leading citizens and had his effigy in Madame Tussaud's.

In 1966, he carried the England flag at the Commonwealth Games and then 46 years later, at the age of 75, he was chosen – as president of The British Weightlifting Association – to carry the Olympic flame on its tour of the UK ahead of the London Games.

Louis married Derby girl Ann Robinson in November 1964 causing a sensation because it was a mixed marriage – something largely unheard of the time but sufficient to see them as part of a feature in the first colour edition of the Sunday Times supplement. She died in 2007 after 42 years of marriage.

